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### NIH Embraces Efforts to Thwart Foreign Entities, Recommends Similar Strategies for Universities

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By Theresa Defino

The researcher told her Wayne State University (WSU) colleagues that her recurrent travel to China was to help her mother, but what wasn't disclosed was that she also was running a "shadow" lab back home.

"I must say, this is a situation that probably occurs on many of our campuses," said WSU President M. Roy Wilson. But he personally only learned what was happening when officials responded to a letter this summer from NIH Director Francis Collins. That August missive warned university leaders that "foreign entities" were targeting U.S. research enterprises and to look at their institutions for signs of trouble (*RRC 9/18, p. 1*).

Upon reflection, the investigator's actions "were suspicious," Wilson admitted, but at the time such concerns weren't top-of-mind, and warning signs were missed. The need to raise awareness of the threats—and activities that are already happening under the radar—are among a recent set of recommendations that hit home with Wilson.

In fact, some stem from Wilson's own experiences, which he used to inform his role as the co-chair of the NIH Working Group on Foreign Influences on Research Integrity, which reports to the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) of NIH.

Raising awareness is probably the easiest and least controversial of the recommendations. Others would increase both required reporting of and penalties for failures to disclose foreign support. Seemingly small changes to better safeguard confidentiality in peer review include forbidding the downloading of applications, a proposed move that already proved unpopular among the working group itself. Recommendations for universities and others that "host foreign scientists" include strengthening information and physical security and implementing processes to audit disclosures (see sidebar).

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