

September 4, 2019

Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier, OSTP  
Dr. France Córdova, NSF  
Dr. Francis Collins, NIH  
Washington, DC

Dr. Chris Fall, DOE  
Dr. Michael Griffin, DOD

Dear Drs. Droegemeier, Collins, Córdova, Fall, and Griffin:

As leading science, engineering and international education organizations – representing hundreds of thousands of scientists, engineers and educators around the world – we recognize the need to maintain a balance between an openly collaborative scientific environment and protecting our economic and national security. However, that balance will be compromised if actions are implemented that take an overly broad approach to addressing a critical issue at the forefront today, rather than a more targeted response. Any response should consider the impact on both the overall scientific enterprise and on individual scientists and its development should include the input of the science and engineering community.

Our organizations and members are witnessing an escalating concern among U.S. and international scientists that new policies and procedures under consideration to minimize security risks will have the unintended effect of harming the scientific enterprise. Many scientists—both U.S. citizens and foreign nationals—who properly follow codes of conduct, regulations, policies and laws, may inappropriately be harmed in response to the misconduct and illegal actions of others.

As you know well, for more than half a century, the U.S. has been the undisputed global leader in science and technology. This leadership is due, in large part, to the U.S. ability to attract scientists and students from around the world, who make countless contributions to the global scientific enterprise. Scientific progress and U.S. economic development have been vastly accelerated by bringing international minds together and has helped to drive innovation and discoveries in cancer and genetics, the physics of gravitational waves, advancements in green chemistry, improving food safety, and other significant contributions.

Recent events make clear that scientific integrity and security concerns are compelling the federal government—both Congress and the Executive Branch—to revisit policies and procedures regarding foreign nationals who study, work or collaborate with U.S. scientific and academic institutions.

While we must be vigilant to safeguard research, we must also ensure that the U.S. remains a desirable and welcoming destination for researchers from around the world. Finding the appropriate balance between our nation’s security and an open, collaborative scientific environment requires focus and due diligence.

We ask that you consider a wide range of stakeholder perspectives as your agencies work together through the new NSTC Joint Committee on Research Environments to develop policies and procedures that address issues related to international researchers’ participation in the U.S. scientific enterprise, and we would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

American Anthropological Association  
American Association for Anatomy  
American Association for Dental Research  
American Association for the Advancement of Science  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Immunologists  
American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM)  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Astronomical Society  
American Chemical Society  
American Educational Research Association  
American Geosciences Institute  
American Institute of Biological Sciences  
American Institute of Physics  
American Mathematical Society  
American Meteorological Society  
American Nuclear Society  
American Physical Society  
American Physiological Society  
American Society for Cell Biology  
American Society for Engineering Education  
American Society for Microbiology  
American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics  
American Society of Agronomy  
American Society of Human Genetics  
American Statistical Association  
Association for Computing Machinery (ACM)  
Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologists  
Biophysical Society  
Coalition for the Life Sciences  
Crop Science Society of America  
Ecological Society of America  
Entomological Society of America  
Federation of American Scientists  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Geological Society of America  
Institute of Food Technologists  
Institute of Mathematical Statistics  
International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences  
NAFSA: Association of International Educators  
National Cave and Karst Research Institute  
New Mexico Academy of Science  
New Mexico Geothermal LLC  
New York Academy of Sciences  
Paleontological Society

Parapsychological Association  
Research!America  
Social Science Research Council  
Society For Biomaterials  
Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM)  
Society for Neuroscience  
Society for the Study of Evolution  
Society of Toxicology (SOT)  
Soil Science Society of America  
The International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE)  
The Oceanography Society  
OSA—The Optical Society  
Western North American Region (WNAR) of the International Biometric Society (IBS)

cc: Lisa Nichols, OSTP  
Rebecca Keiser, NSF  
Michael Lauer, NIH  
Bindu Nair, DOD  
Lisa Porter, DOD  
Shawn Sullivan, DOE