

Contracts and Grants Office
Gevirtz Graduate School of Education

University of California
Santa Barbara CA 93106-9490
education.ucsb.edu/contracts-grants

October 28, 2019

Re: Supporting International Engagement and Research Integrity
To: SBADM-L@listserv.ucsb.edu
From: Joseph Incandela, VC for Research, info@evc.ucsb.edu

Dear Colleagues:

UC Santa Barbara provides a unique environment in which scholars and students strive together to expand fundamental knowledge of society, the natural world, and what it means to be human. Our mission “to serve society as a center of higher learning, providing long-term societal benefits through transmitting advanced knowledge, discovering new knowledge, and functioning as an active working repository of organized knowledge” is advanced by our extensive network of collaboration spanning the state, nation, and world. Critical to this mission is UC Santa Barbara’s commitment to global engagement and an open research environment. Recently, several federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Energy, have publicly communicated specific concerns to universities across the country around “foreign influence” on federally sponsored research. The term “foreign influence” in this context refers, in part, to attempts by foreign governments to exploit U.S. researchers for their gain. Leading research universities across the country are committed to protecting our collective research enterprise. This recent statement by the Association of American Universities member Presidents and Chancellors reaffirms their “commitment to protecting our nation’s values while working with the government to protect our nation against foreign threats to our scientific enterprise.”

Federal agencies are particularly concerned about the failure to disclose foreign financial support on grant applications, the failure to disclose foreign conflicts of commitment or interest, and the improper sharing of confidential materials (e.g. those available through peer review). As both an institution of higher learning and a recipient of federal research funding, we have a responsibility to assure transparency and integrity in all of our research. To help us all understand our disclosure obligations to the university and to federal sponsors, the Office of Research Integrity has prepared a website that provides guidance on this matter. We urge you to review these guidelines. Maintaining the public's trust is essential, and transparency with respect to our international relationships plays an important role in that process. UCSB's global impact is enhanced when the public and our Federal sponsors know that we have robust processes in place that protect the integrity of our research.

UC Santa Barbara remains committed to the freedom of inquiry and open innovation. We support a diverse global community of researchers and we are proud of our history of international collaboration. We understand that both are critical to our university’s research mission. The broader questions of “foreign influence” that have been raised, and the ways that they might impact our mission, require broader discussion. We are committed to working in the spirit of shared governance with the Academic Senate in the coming year to more fully understand the challenges and implications that these and other issues raise for our university.