

September 30, 2021

## ASBMB recommendations on implementing NSPM-33

The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology is an international nonprofit scientific and educational organization that represents more than 11,000 students, researchers, educators and industry professionals. The ASBMB strongly advocates for strengthening the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce, supporting sustainable funding for the American research enterprise and ensuring diversity, equity and inclusion in STEM.

The ASBMB recognizes the substantial efforts undertaken by federal funding agencies to address the issue of foreign influence to research integrity and research security. However, to prevent foreign influence in federally-funded research while maintaining openness, transparency and international collaboration, the ASBMB urges the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to include the following recommendations when formulating implementation guidance for the [National Security Presidential Memorandum 33](#):

**Recommendation 1:** In accordance with other federal government reports, such as the [National Science Foundation's Fundamental Research Security report](#) and the [Government Accountability Office report on Enhancing Policies to Address Foreign Influence](#), the ASBMB urges OSTP to encourage federal agencies to harmonize conflict of interest (COI) and conflict of commitment (COC) disclosure requirements. Doing so would aid the scientific community by reducing the administrative burden of reporting on scientists and ensure an equitable disclosure system that catches genuine bad actors.

**Recommendation 2:** Agencies must define non-financial conflicts of interest, such as multiple professional appointments, in their conflicts of interest and disclosure policies. Considering a [significant number of investigations](#) have been opened under the National Institutes of Health, NSF and other federal funding agencies as a result of non-financial conflicts of interest, agencies must clearly define what non-financial conflicts of interest entail to ensure that scientists can accurately report potential conflicts of interest.

**Recommendation 3:** The OSTP must urge federal agencies to be transparent about their investigative process on violations of research integrity. According to a GAO report, [three of the five federal research funding agencies](#), the NIH, NSF, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy (these five agencies account for almost 90 percent of all federal research and development expenditures at universities) lack written procedures for handling allegations of failure to disclose required information. Without formal written procedures and progress reports from agencies to address violations of research integrity, trust will erode between the scientific community and federal funding agencies.

**Recommendation 4:** Lastly, OSTP must ensure that the Department of Justice's China Initiative does not fuel racial profiling of Chinese, Chinese American, Asian and Asian American scientists or scientists who collaborate with Chinese research institutions. While there are genuine cases of violations of research integrity and intellectual property theft, there are significant concerns that the DOJ is racially profiling scientists: [nearly 100 members of Congress](#) are urging the Justice Department to investigate issues of racial profiling with this initiative and prominent organizations, such as [Amnesty International](#) and [Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC](#), have similar concerns.