
Listserv Summary: FBI Director Comments on China

March, 2018

An inquiry was made to the AIEA listserv asking if any member institutions have framed, or been asked to frame, a response to the recent comments on China made by the FBI Director in February 2018. Information on the FBI Director's remarks are available at the following two links:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/15/fbi-director-testifies-chinese-students-and-intelligence-threats>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/china-threat-to-america-fbi-director-warns-2018-2>

Summary of responses:

In general, most respondents indicated that they were watching the issue but were not issuing statements. One university reflected that we can't be in the business of reacting to various and sundry politicized statements from Washington. A minority of institutions have statements prepared related to their Confucius Institutes (example below), and an even smaller minority are reaching out to specific constituents to emphasize the important contributions of Chinese students and scholars to the campus community and to academic inquiry.

Example of message related to Confucius Institutes:

We are proud of the international partnership we have with China through our Confucius Institute (CI). The principles it represents in global inquiry and cultural competency, and the opportunities it provides in learning, discovery, teaching, research and relationship building for our students and faculty enrich our campus and our state. The CI cultivates academic, research, and cultural connections between the university, the state, and China. By building transnational conduits, CI provides rich access to the Chinese language, culture and art for students on our campus and in our K-12 schools.

In carrying out this work, we are strongly and consistently committed to academic freedom. This foundational principle is reflected in all CI-related documents and in governance and oversight procedures.