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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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May 31, 2023

Mark Zupan
President
Alfred University
24 N Main St, Alfred, NY 14802

Dear Mr. Zupan,

The Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Cyber, Information Technologies, and Innovation write to express our deep concern about your hosting of a Confucius Institute while conducting critical military research for the Department of Defense (DOD). Confucius Institutes are “funded by the CCP Propaganda Department” and “overseen by personnel based in Chinese embassies and consulates,” according to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission.¹ In 2022, you were awarded a \$13.5 million DOD research grant for hypersonic weapons while simultaneously hosting a Confucius Institute and partnering with a Chinese university “actively engaged in defense research” on behalf of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA).² To put it plainly, you are conducting advanced, hypersonic weapons-related research while actively partnering with a Chinese university that performs similar research for the PLA. We seek additional information regarding this alarming matter and Alfred’s commitment to safeguard sensitive U.S. military research.

As you know, Section 1062 of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) prohibits the DOD from providing funds to “institution[s] of higher education that hosts a Confucius Institute” after October 1, 2023.³ Despite this looming deadline, Alfred University was awarded a 5-year contract worth \$13.5 million, to “improve the performance of ceramic materials used in weapons (i.e., cruise weapons).”⁴ The grant does not end until 2027, so unless Alfred University closes its Confucius Institute or receives a waiver, this grant will be in violation of the

¹ Alexander Bowe, *China’s Overseas United Front Work Background and Implications for the United States*, U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMM. (Aug. 24, 2018) available at www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China%27s%20Overseas%20United%20Front%20Work%20-%20Background%20and%20Implications%20for%20US_final_0.pdf.

² *China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)*, AUSTRALIAN STRATEGIC POLICY INSTITUTE (Nov. 19, 2019) available at www.unitracker.aspi.org.au/universities/china-university-of-geosciences-wuhan/.

³ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, H.R. 6395, § 1062, 116th Cong. (2020).

⁴ *Fiat ARL at Alfred University*, ALFRED UNIVERSITY (May 2, 2022) available at www.blog.alfred.edu/president/2022/05/02/fiat-arl-at-alfred-university/.

law as of October 1, 2023.⁵ As a result of Section 1062, over one hundred U.S. universities shut down their Confucius Institutes as of June 2022.⁶ However, Alfred University continues to operate a Confucius Institute to this day.

Confucius Institutes were originally established as a part of the United Front Work system of the CCP in order to expand the Chinese government's influence abroad.⁷ Confucius Institutes play an instrumental role in establishing under-regulated research partnerships between U.S. and Chinese universities. The People's Republic of China (PRC) often assigns Chinese universities to partner with U.S. universities that have research strength in targeted technologies that correspond to areas the Chinese universities are tasked with developing in China. Some of the Chinese civilian universities partnered with U.S. universities under the Confucius Institute agreements are involved in supporting China's military industrial complex.⁸

On top of its affiliation with a Confucius Institute, Alfred University has entered into a research agreement with China University of Geosciences in Wuhan, which maintains a research program in advanced materials science—a research area closely related to the DOD-funded research at Alfred University.⁹ China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) also participates in classified PLA defense projects.¹⁰ In 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation found that “foreign state adversaries seek to illicitly or illegitimately acquire U.S. academic research and information to advance their scientific, economic, and military development goals.”¹¹ It is vital to U.S. national interests that sensitive military research is safeguarded from our foreign adversaries.

In light of these significant concerns, the Select Committee seeks additional information regarding Alfred University's efforts to protect sensitive national security and American taxpayer-funded research from theft or compromise. We respectfully request you provide the following information no later than June 14, 2023:

1. All correspondence—including letters, emails, and electronic documents—between Alfred University and China's Office of Chinese Language Council International (Confucius Institute Headquarters) regarding the establishment of Alfred's Confucius Institute;
2. A copy of the agreement (and annexes) establishing Alfred University's Confucius Institute;

⁵ *Supra*, n. 3; *Confucius Institute Waiver Program Guidance to U.S. Institutions of Higher Education*, U.S. DEP'T OF DEFENSE (Mar. 28, 2023) available at www.basicresearch.defense.gov/Portals/61/Documents/Academic%20Research%20Security%20Page/Confucius%20Institute%20Waiver%20Program%20Guidance_3.28.2023.pdf.

⁶ *How Many Confucius Institutes Are in the United States?*, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOLARS (Mar. 23, 2023) available at www.nas.org/blogs/article/how_many_confucius_institutes_are_in_the_united_states.

⁷ *Supra*, n. 1.

⁸ Craig Singleton, *The Middle Kingdom Meets Higher Education: How U.S. Universities Support China's Military-Industrial Complex*, FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES (Dec. 2021) available at www.fdd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/fdd-monograph-the-middle-kingdom-meets-higher-education.pdf.

⁹ See www.chxy.cug.edu.cn/xygk/xyjj.htm.

¹⁰ *Supra*, n. 2.

¹¹ *China: The Risk to Academia*, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (2019) available at www.fbi.gov/file-repository/china-risk-to-academia-2019.pdf.

3. All documents and information regarding financial contributions made by those affiliated with Alfred University's Confucius Institute—including those below the \$250,000 threshold for required annual reporting under Sec. 117 of the Higher Education Act;
4. All documents and information regarding Alfred University's Confucius Institute including all corporate documents, personnel and financial information;
5. All documents and communications relating to the partnership agreement between Alfred University and China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) in 2009 and collaborations between Alfred University and China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) since 2009; and
6. All documents and communications relating to Alfred University's formal and informal collaborations and exchange agreements with other PRC academic and research institutions in science and technology disciplines.

The House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party has broad authority to “investigate and submit policy recommendations on the status of the Chinese Communist Party’s economic, technological, and security progress and its competition with the United States” under H. Res. 11.

To make arrangements to deliver a response, please contact Select Committee staff at (202) 226-9678.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Mike Gallagher
Chairman