Higher Education Research Security Council
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 16, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Board Conference Room | Claiborne Building, Sixth Floor

Members Present	Affiliation
Dr. Kim Hunter Reed	Board of Regents representative; Chair
Barry Milligan	Designee of the Lieutenant Governor
Harry "Skip" Philips	Assistant Chief Deputy Attorney General; designee of the Attorney General
John Scurich, Proxy	Chairman of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security
Chase Hymel, Proxy	Chief Information Officer, Office of Technology Services or her designee
Dr. Sean Courtney	Research Security Officer, Louisiana State University and A&M; LSU Board
Dr. Krista Queen	Research Security Officer, LSU Health Sciences Center – Shreveport; LSU Board
Dr. Michael Stubblefield	Research Security Officer, Southern University and A&M; SU Board
Tommy Screen	Research Security Officer, LCTC; LCTC Board
Cheryl Duhon	Research Security Officer, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; ULS Board
Dr. Fareed Dawan	Faculty member with research experience, Southern University and A&M; SU CAO appointment
Dr. Jean Fotie	Faculty member with research experience, Southeastern Louisiana University; ULS CAO appointment
Dr. Thomas A. Chambers	Loyola University New Orleans; LAICU

Dr. Chad Steele	Tulane University; LAICU
Christopher Michael Dressler	Tulane University; LAICU
Dr. Pawel Michalak	Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine; LAICU
Kaneisha Akinpelumi	Xavier University of Louisiana; LAICU
Agent John Doyle, Proxy	FBI special agent, New Orleans Field Office
Members Not Present	**Affiliation**
Sen. Caleb Kleinpeter	Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Homeland Security
Dr. Graça Vicente	Faculty member with research experience, Louisiana State University and A&M; LSU CAO appointment
Lieutenant Scot W. Greig	Designee of the Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police

CALL TO ORDER/ ROLL CALL

Dr. Kim Hunter Reed called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2026. Roll was taken by Ms. Brianna Golden Phillips, and a quorum was established.

WELCOME/ INTRODUCTIONS

Dr. Reed welcomed the members to the first meeting of the Higher Education Research Security Council. She explained that the Council was established to bring together expertise from higher education, state government, the Legislature and federal law enforcement to protect research and intellectual property developed in Louisiana. She noted that the meeting would provide an overview of Act 505 of the 2026 Regular Legislative Session, existing state requirements and the federal research security landscape, to establish a foundation for the Council's work. Members then introduced themselves and briefly described their roles and affiliations.

ACT 505 OVERVIEW

Ms. Golden Phillips provided an overview of Act 505, the Research and Education Protection Act of 2026, which establishes a statewide research security framework for Louisiana's public and nonpublic institutions of higher education to protect against foreign adversary influence.

She outlined the Act's three primary entities with responsibility for implementation:

1. **Higher Education Research Security Council:** Responsible for developing a model research security policy, providing annual training, reviewing certain gifts, contracts, and

partnerships involving foreign adversary sources, and addressing enforcement, whistleblower protections, and reporting requirements.

2. **Board of Regents:** Responsible for maintaining a public portal, developing a research and cultural exchange policy, coordinating with the Office of Technology Services regarding educational technology associated with foreign adversaries, and fulfilling applicable reporting requirements.
3. **Higher Education Governing and Management Boards and Institutions:** Governing and management boards are responsible for adopting research security policies informed by the Council's model policy. Institutions are responsible for implementing applicable disclosure, screening, review, and approval requirements.

Dr. Reed emphasized that the Council's model research security policy will serve as the foundation for subsequent governing board and institutional policies. She encouraged members to draw upon their respective expertise and institutional perspectives as the Council begins its work.

FEDERAL RESEARCH SECURITY LANDSCAPE- SHEEO PRESENTATION

Mr. Tom Harnisch, Vice President for Government Relations at the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO), provided an overview of the federal research security landscape and recent state-level activity. His presentation addressed the following:

- **Federal Reporting Requirements:** Section 117 of the Higher Education Act, which requires institutions to report certain foreign gifts and contracts, as well as federal requirements related to research security training and institutional research security programs.
- **Pending Federal Legislation:** The proposed DETERRENT Act, which would lower foreign gift and contract reporting thresholds and expand reporting requirements to include certain faculty and staff.
- **Proposed Federal Regulatory Changes:** Potential revisions to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance that could further restrict federally funded collaborations with designated foreign countries and entities.
- **State-Level Approaches:** Recent research security initiatives in states such as Texas and Florida, which have adopted additional measures to address research security concerns.

Mr. Harnisch noted that federal research security requirements continue to evolve and encouraged Louisiana to consider alignment with federal requirements, while considering institutional capacity, transparency, and the continued protection of legitimate international research partnerships.

Dr. Reed emphasized the importance of identifying gaps in existing requirements and avoid unnecessary duplication of federal mandates, particularly regarding training and disclosure requirements. Dr. Michael Stubblefield asked whether Louisiana should establish additional state requirements or focus on aligning with existing federal regulations. Dr. Reed agreed that the Council should first evaluate whether current federal requirements adequately address the state's needs before recommending additional requirements. Mr. Barry Milligan also highlighted the importance of building upon existing institutional efforts and ensuring that implementation of the legislation is mindful of institutional resources and capacity.

Dr. Reed reiterated that Louisiana's research security framework should remain flexible and responsive to evolving federal requirements and emerging threats while taking institutional capacity into consideration.

STATE AND FEDERAL ALIGNMENT

Ms. Carrie Robison, Deputy Commissioner for Research and Sponsored Initiatives at the Board of Regents, provided an overview of ways in which Act 505 aligns with existing state and federal research security requirements. She explained that research security encompasses more than research activities alone and includes facilities, funding, personnel, student training and recruitment, intellectual property, and technology.

Ms. Robison highlighted several areas addressed by existing requirements, including foreign gift and contract disclosures, institutional oversight, research and academic partnerships, annual research security training, international activities, technology restrictions, reporting, and enforcement. She further explained that Act 505 builds upon Louisiana's existing framework through additional Council review of certain partnerships involving foreign adversary sources, development of a statewide model research security policy, enhanced enforcement and whistleblower protections, and additional technology-related requirements.

Ms. Robison emphasized the importance of protecting publicly funded research from foreign influence, theft, and other security risks while preserving legitimate research collaborations. She noted that implementation will require continued coordination and attention to institutional disclosure and screening practices, training, technology safeguards, and evolving federal requirements.

DISCUSSION

Dr. Reed invited Senator Barry Milligan to respond to the presentations. Senator Milligan noted that Act 767 established the initial reporting framework, while Act 505 expands the state's approach to include training and other research security requirements. He emphasized the need to remain aligned with changing federal requirements while avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens. He also discussed using OTS and technology to streamline reporting and data collection and raised concerns about potential changes to federal screening requirements.

Special Agent John Doyle agreed that the goal is not to inhibit research, but to protect it through greater visibility, training and disclosure. He emphasized that the Council's work should create greater agility rather than adding new layers of requirements. Dr. Reed asked the FBI to continue helping the Council identify emerging threats, and Special Agent Doyle noted that continued communication and collaboration would be important.

Mr. Skip Phillips asked how the Council would investigate prospective research sponsors when their ownership or affiliations are not readily known. He also asked whether the Attorney General's Office could assist with background investigations and suggested considering criminal penalties for intentional violations of the Act. Senator Milligan noted that determining the true ownership of an entity can be difficult and raised questions about who would conduct and fund those investigations.

OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Mr. Chase Hymel, representing the Office of Technology Services (OTS), discussed OTS's role in working with the Board of Regents and institutions to identify technology associated with foreign adversaries. He explained that institutions may use existing software inventories to identify technology currently in use and strengthen vendor contracts to require disclosure of product ownership and origin.

Mr. Hymel emphasized that OTS intends to work collaboratively with institutions to determine appropriate next steps for addressing identified technology rather than simply issuing a list of software to be removed. He also noted that some reporting requirements may be automated using existing institutional technology resources.

Dr. Sean Courtney asked how institutions should address federal restrictions on equipment that may contain components from foreign countries of concern. He noted that LSU is developing a Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) program and that identifying the origin of every component within a piece of equipment can be challenging. Mr. Hymel suggested that vendor contracts could include requirements for manufacturers to disclose product components and their countries of origin. He acknowledged that reviewing software will likely be more straightforward than evaluating hardware. Dr. Courtney agreed, noting that software vendors can generally provide information about their products, whereas comparable information may not always be readily available when purchasing equipment.

Mr. Milligan shared that Louisiana previously encountered similar challenges when aligning state electronic equipment purchases with federal requirements. He explained that vendors were required to certify compliance and could be responsible for replacing equipment at their own expense if prohibited components were subsequently identified. He noted that these requirements focused primarily on future purchases rather than requiring a comprehensive review of all existing equipment.

Dr. Reed emphasized the importance of coordination among OTS, institutional chief information officers, and research security officers as the Council develops its model policy. She also noted that Act 505 requires OTS and the Board of Regents to develop a plan to eliminate educational software from foreign adversaries. The Council will continue working with OTS and institutional partners to address related software and hardware considerations.

SYSTEM PRACTICE UPDATES

Dr. Reed invited representatives from each system and institution to provide an overview of current practices related to employment, international agreements, research partnerships and funding, enrollment, and research security.

University of Louisiana System

Ms. Cheryl Duhon provided an overview of the University of Louisiana System, which hosts eight universities, including UL Lafayette and Louisiana Tech as its two research universities. Using UL Lafayette as an example, she explained that the university conducts standard employment screening and requires annual outside-employment disclosures. Research and research-support positions receive additional screening, including ten-year background checks and restricted-party screening involving publications, authors and co-authors.

Ms. Duhon explained that international agreements are reviewed through Global Engagement and may also receive academic, legal, research security, export control and intellectual property review. She noted that UL Lafayette does not currently have an agreement involving a foreign adversary country. Sponsored research also goes through pre-award and post-award review, including disclosures, sponsor requirements, certifications and restricted-party screening. Students are not currently asked about participation in a malign foreign talent recruitment program at enrollment, but additional screening applies when a student enters a research or research-support role. She stated that the Higher Education Foreign Security Act of 2022 (HEFSA) has provided a foundation for these practices and that Act 505 will add to that existing structure.

Mr. Skip Phillips asked whether those practices were consistent throughout the UL System. Ms. Duhon responded that the System's initial review focused on determining whether the other institutions had the necessary infrastructure in place. Dr. Stubblefield added that all institutions have grant operations and generally have similar written processes, although implementation and effectiveness may differ among institutions.

Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges

Mr. Tommy Screen provided an overview of the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges (LCTC), noting that its 12 institutions have a more limited research footprint than the other public systems. He explained that employment applicants are not currently required to disclose foreign affiliations, although they must establish their eligibility to work in the United States. Proposed cultural exchanges must be reviewed and approved by the System office, but none of the colleges currently has a cultural exchange program.

Mr. Screen noted that LCTC has had a policy since 2007 requiring proposals submitted to Board of Regents Sponsored Programs to be routed through the System office for review. He stated that LCTC currently has no foreign research agreements or foreign research funding. International students provide required immigration and financial documentation, but the student application does not ask about participation in a malign foreign talent recruitment program. He noted that the System could add such a question if required.

Dr. Reed asked whether the federal F-1 visa process already includes screening related to malign foreign talent recruitment programs. Dr. Courtney stated that federal processes include screening against restricted entities and individuals and indicated that he would confirm how those requirements relate to institutional screening. Dr. Reed emphasized the importance of determining what is already required federally before adding state requirements, which may be duplicative.

Southern University System

Dr. Michael Stubblefield and Dr. Fareed Dawan provided an overview of the Southern University System. They explained that Southern already has policies addressing outside employment, research, financial conflicts of interest, sponsored programs and award administration. However, employment processes do not currently require applicants to disclose involvement with malign foreign entities, and existing international agreement processes do not provide a centralized inventory or uniform research security assessment specifically addressing Act 505.

Dr. Stubblefield explained that international agreements and research activities are currently routed through offices like Research and Strategic Initiatives and Sponsored Programs. He noted that system-level policies provide a mechanism for maintaining consistency across campuses and that Southern is working to consolidate its policies into a public-facing portal. Southern also collects international academic credentials and immigration and financial documentation through its enrollment processes. Dr. Stubblefield and Dr. Dawan stated that Act 505 requirements can be incorporated into these existing processes while the systems continue to pursue appropriate international research and academic partnerships, including opportunities with U.S. allies.

Louisiana State University System

Dr. Krista Queen and Dr. Sean Courtney provided an overview of research security practices across the LSU System. Dr. Queen explained that before formal employment offers are made research and research-support applicants are screened under HEFSA, including background and restricted-party screening. Employees must annually disclose outside employment and professional activities and report changes within 30 days. Visiting scholars and international collaborations are also subject to appropriate screening, including restricted-party and export-control reviews. Federal requirements further require certifications regarding participation in malign foreign talent recruitment programs. Dr. Queen noted that LSU A&M has one international contract involving a foreign country of concern that is reviewed annually but remains dormant. Dr. Courtney explained that LSU is working to close the agreement with Mega Robo Technologies because the individuals involved in the original collaboration are no longer at the university. He also discussed LSU's review of sponsors and funding sources, including an instance in which LSU terminated a relationship with a Louisiana agricultural company after determining its ownership ultimately traced to ChemChina.

Dr. Courtney outlined LSU's research security program, which focuses on cybersecurity, training, export controls, international travel, and disclosure requirements. LSU conducts annual research security training and enhanced screening of research personnel, requires researchers to attest that they are not participating in malign foreign talent recruitment programs before grant submissions, and requires disclosure of foreign gifts and sponsorships. He also highlighted travel safeguards, including a clean-loaner-laptop program to protect university data and intellectual property abroad. LSU is further expanding research security staffing and intelligence capabilities to better assess collaborations, publications, grants, and other relationships.

Tulane University

Mr. Christopher Dressler and Dr. Chad Steele provided an overview of Tulane University's research security practices, noting its extensive international footprint across research, education, clinical activities, travel, visiting scholars and institutional partnerships. Research security is integrated into existing compliance and risk-management functions, including export controls, international travel, foreign collaborations, personnel screening and international agreements.

Mr. Dressler explained that research-related employment and certain student positions may require background checks, restricted-party screening and additional attestations regarding foreign talent recruitment programs, funding and professional affiliations. International academic and research agreements undergo security, legal, reputational and operational reviews, with higher-risk matters elevated to senior leadership or outside counsel. He emphasized that Tulane evaluates each matter

individually and has declined proposed hires and agreements when identified risks could not be adequately mitigated.

Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

Dr. Pawel Michalak provided an update for the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). He noted that VCOM is a private nonprofit institution with four campuses and that its research footprint is growing but remains smaller than those of several other institutions represented on the Council. He stated that VCOM's internal review had not identified any institutional agreements, partnerships or donations involving foreign adversary countries or entities.

Dr. Michalak explained that VCOM has existing processes governing research, sponsored projects, employment and cybersecurity but has not yet adopted a policy specifically addressing Act 505. He stated that VCOM administration and legal counsel are reviewing the Act and will implement any additional necessary policies or procedures before the Act becomes effective. He added that VCOM is looking to the Council and Board of Regents for guidance and will provide a more comprehensive update at a future meeting.

Loyola University New Orleans

Dr. Thomas A. Chambers provided an overview of Loyola University New Orleans' research security practices, noting that most existing processes align with Act 505, although additional requirements and policy updates will be necessary. He highlighted the challenges these requirements may create for smaller institutions with limited staffing and resources, particularly as Loyola expands its research portfolio.

Dr. Chambers also emphasized Loyola's extensive international engagement, including exchange programs, international students, faculty and dual-degree partnerships, which support the university's financial sustainability and Catholic and Jesuit mission. He noted that Loyola intends to comply with state and federal law while recognizing potential First Amendment considerations related to its international activities as a religious institution. Loyola is currently reviewing and updating its policies to ensure compliance with Act 505.

NEXT STEPS, FUTURE MEETINGS

Dr. Reed identified the following areas of continued work for the Council:

- Development of the model research security policy and review of comparable policies and practices from other states and institutions.
- Continued engagement with federal law enforcement, led by Mr. Skip Phillips, regarding intelligence gathering, investigative resources, and the Council’s preapproval responsibilities.
- Continued coordination among OTS, institutional chief information officers, and research security officers regarding hardware and software requirements.
- Review of existing federal requirements to identify areas of alignment and potential gaps in Louisiana’s implementation of Act 505, including disclosures, training, and public portal requirements.

Dr. Reed also recommended convening institutional research security officers for a workshop to discuss existing practices, identify implementation needs, and provide feedback to the Council.

Ms. Golden Phillips indicated she would circulate details for the next scheduled meeting in November, presentation materials, and links to policies referenced during the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No additional public comments were offered.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Reed requested a motion to adjourn. On motion of Mr. Skip Phillips, seconded by Senator Barry Milligan, the Council adjourned at 11:46 a.m.