

BLINN COLLEGE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS MANUAL

SUBJECT: Research Security Program Framework

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 20, 2024

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE: CU(LOCAL)

PURPOSE

Although the Blinn College District (hereafter referred to as the “District”) does not actively participate in dedicated academic, scientific, or technological research programs as a function of its purpose as a Texas Junior College, it is mandated by Texas Senate Bill 1565 from the 88th Legislative Session and *Texas Education Code*, Section 51.956 to establish a policy framework for research security.

Therefore, this policy framework identifies the elements and responsible persons involved in the Research Security Program for the District and is intended to enable the District to promote secure research while mitigating the risk of foreign influence and intellectual property theft should the District engage in directed research either as an independent initiative or as a part of a collaborative partnership between other institutions of higher education, university systems, or private sector entities. The provisions of the Research Security Program are established to promote organizational culture and compliance with the rules and regulations of both state and federal governmental entities. The overarching goal is to strengthen and protect institutional research while fostering an active and international collaborative environment.

OBJECTIVES

The District will endeavor to maintain a secure environment for the conduct of research and the management of research assets, including protection of intellectual property and research data. The District will provide the necessary infrastructure and personnel to uphold compliance with all applicable ethical, legal, regulatory, contractual and system requirements in securing research, and to promote an organizational culture of compliance.

The Research Security Program presents a framework designed by the District to protect sole or collaborative research from undue foreign threats by striking a balance between openness and security. The Research Security Program has three primary objectives:

1. Fostering a philosophy that focuses on safeguarding the integrity of research and intellectual property while promoting and maintaining a culture that stimulates international engagement and collaborative endeavors;
2. Compliance with all applicable federal, state, and District standards for research security, as well as other ethical, legal, regulatory, and contractual obligations; and
3. Ensuring that the District community is well-informed and able to provide feedback to the Research Security Program by implementing strategic education and outreach.

PROGRAM SCOPE

The research security risk areas include, but are not limited to, research data security, foreign travel security, foreign relationship oversight, and management of foreign visitors and scholars. The Research Security Program shall implement a risk-based approach to ensuring data security within the scope of the District's research and information technology-based enterprises. Core components of this program will include:

- Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment
- Export Control (international and private sector research collaborations, international travel, vendor assessments, international shipments, and international visiting scholars)
- International Travel Oversight and Security
- Disclosures to Federal Funding Agencies
- Intellectual Property Disclosure and Safeguards
- Cybersecurity
- Research Data Maintenance

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

A Research Security Advisory Committee (RSAC) will be established by the District's Research Security Officer (RSO) to provide guidance regarding areas of risk, facilitate inter-campus collaboration, ensure program components operate effectively, and help facilitate outreach across the District.

Membership will include representatives from District Academic Technology Services, Institutional Research and Effectiveness, Academic Affairs, Applied Sciences (Workforce and Economic Development), the Office of Grants, Resources, and Development, and any other groups or persons as designated by the District Chancellor.

The RSAC will be responsible for:

- Advising the RSO on matters related to research security
- Environmental scanning of ongoing federal funding agency research security requirements and guidance
- Reviewing current and ongoing efforts for effectiveness
- Conducting risk assessments
- Reviewing and recommending training opportunities
- Coordinating internal monitoring and reporting incidents to the RSO, who shall then report such incidents to the RSO's immediate supervisor and Vice Chancellor

RESEARCH SECURITY OFFICER

The Blinn College District appointed a RSO as part of Texas Senate Bill 1565 and Section 51.956 of the Texas Education Code, who is responsible for ensuring the Research Security Program continues to meet all required federal, state, and District standards should they become necessary. The RSO will:

1. Facilitate the implementation of the federal and state requirements related to research security;

2. Work closely with the RSAC to ensure that investigators have relevant information regarding the evolving landscape for international activities and research security;
3. Conduct early risk assessments and take appropriate actions to mitigate institutional risks;
4. Develop, implement, and provide oversight of policies, procedures, and associated research security training; and
5. Attend the annual Academic Security and Counter Exploitation Seminar hosted by Texas A&M University.

DISTRICT FACULTY AND RESEARCHERS

All researchers are expected to adhere to research security related policies and procedures of funding agencies and the District to mitigate risks to crucial research data and intellectual property. Researchers must ensure that all information provided to the District and funding agencies is thorough and accurate.