

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2024

Dr. Ángel Cabrera
President
Georgia Institute of Technology
223 Uncle Heinie Way, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30332

Dear President Cabrera,

We write to request information about Georgia Institute of Technology's (Georgia Tech) use of its U.S. Department of Defense-affiliated institute to fund sensitive research with military applications conducted with Tianjin University, a Chinese university with significant ties to the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Tianjin University is deeply embedded in the People's Republic of China's (PRC) system of military-civil fusion, under which purportedly civilian companies, universities, and technologies are leveraged for military ends. Tianjin University is supervised by the PRC's State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense, the stated goal of which is to "strengthen military forces with additional personnel and more advanced equipment."¹ Tianjin University houses major defense laboratories and was involved in a trade secret theft scheme to steal technology with military applications from U.S. companies, activities for which it was placed on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Entity List in 2020.²

Despite Tianjin University's links to the PLA and its efforts to steal dual-use U.S. trade secrets, Georgia Tech has continued collaborating with the university as it has done since at least 2013.³ While Georgia Tech is now prohibited from exporting sensitive technologies to Tianjin University due to the Entity List's prohibitions, it has collaborated with Tianjin University and at least one other PLA-linked entity on developing sensitive technologies.

In 2024, Georgia Tech announced that Georgia Tech and Tianjin University researchers created the world's first functional graphene semiconductor, a technology that has significant military applications.⁴ The technology may have applications for quantum computing capabilities that will power advanced autonomous weapons systems, cyber activities, and more. The research was conducted with support from Georgia Tech's U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)-funded

research institute.⁵ Pro-PRC media described the research as important to technology that could allow the PRC to break through U.S. “chokepoint” export controls on advanced semiconductors.⁶

The Georgia Tech-Tianjin University graphene semiconductor research occurred through a joint laboratory between the Tianjin University International Research Center for Nanoparticles and Nanosystems (Tianjin Nanosystems), of which a Georgia Tech professor served as director, and the PLA-linked company Bright Stone Innovation Technology Group.⁷ One Bright Stone majority-owned subsidiary is a PLA supplier, while another majority-owned subsidiary has contracted with a now-sanctioned Iranian company.⁸ Tianjin Nanosystems also set up a joint lab with Beijing 718 Yousheng Electronics, which has submitted at least 490 bids to PLA entities including the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).⁹ CASC is a major state-owned PLA contractor focused on space and missile technology.

In addition, Georgia Tech’s continued collaboration with Tianjin University raises questions about Georgia Tech’s compliance with the Entity List—which prohibits exports from Georgia Tech to Tianjin University—given the high degree of collaboration between the two. For example, in 2020 and 2021, Georgia Tech received millions of dollars from the PRC for a “new research program at Georgia Tech - Shenzhen” and a “new innovation research initiative at Georgia Tech-Shenzhen.”¹⁰ Relatedly, it is not clear that Georgia Tech has fulsomely disclosed its funding for its broader Tianjin University initiatives. The Shenzhen government has allocated at least \$250 million for the construction of the Georgia Tech Shenzhen Institute (GTSI) campus, signifying its importance to the PRC government.¹¹ However, Georgia Tech does not appear to have reported that funding to the U.S. Department of Education, according to a review of public data.¹²

With these concerns in mind, please provide responses, as well as documents sufficient to show the following, by no later than May 23, 2024:

- 1) A list of all entities that Georgia Tech has been involved with at Tianjin University, including Tianjin Nanosystems, GTSI, or Tianjin University laboratories. Please include a description of the entity and nature of involvement.
- 2) A list of all Georgia Tech professors or researchers who have worked with Tianjin University in any capacity since 2010, including but not limited to research collaboration with Tianjin University faculty and teaching or training Tianjin University or GTSI students.
 - i. Please provide documentation of Georgia Tech’s vetting of the faculty to be hired in Shenzhen.
 - ii. Please note whether any of these professors or researchers have received federal funding, including funding through the Georgia Tech Research Institute, and please note the year of funding, federal grantmaking institution,

and purpose of the grant. Please also describe the subject and nature of their work with Tianjin University, including the entities with which they work(ed).

iii. Please provide all contracts between Tianjin University and the Georgia Tech faculty who collaborate with or work for Tianjin University or affiliated entities.

- 3) A list of all entities (including companies, individuals, or government bodies) that GTSI, Tianjin Nanosystems, or other Georgia Tech-affiliated programs at Tianjin University have met with, accepted funding from, or conducted research with, including joint laboratories or strategic cooperation agreements. Please include the name of the entity, the nature of the collaboration, and the dates of collaboration.
- 4) A list of all conferences for which a Georgia Tech-affiliated entity at Tianjin University, including GTSI or Tianjin Nanosystems, was the host or co-host, and the associated list of attendees, date, title, and agenda.
- 5) A list of all PRC companies that have conducted recruiting events at Georgia Tech-affiliated entities at Tianjin University.
- 6) A list of all current GTSI students or alumni and their current or past job affiliations. Please also note any GTSI alumni who are pursuing or pursued Ph.D. level research at Georgia Tech and their fields of research.
- 7) A list of all research collaborations between Georgia Tech faculty and other Chinese entities currently on the U.S. Department of Commerce's Entity List.
- 8) Georgia Tech's and GTRI's research security policies and regulations governing collaboration with foreign entities.
- 9) All memoranda of understanding, contracts, agreements, their annexes, and amendments to date between Georgia Tech and Tianjin University.
- 10) All Georgia Tech meeting minutes that refer to Tianjin University.
- 11) All meeting minutes from the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia that refer to Tianjin University.
- 12) All GTSI meeting minutes.
- 13) All GTSI policies and procedures.
- 14) All documents referring to Tianjin Nanosystems, including:

- i. All documents referring to Tianjin Nanosystems' collaboration with Beijing 718 Yousheng Electronics or its subsidiaries.
- ii. All documents referring to Tianjin Nanosystems' collaboration with Bright Stone.

15) All documents referring to the Georgia Tech (Shenzhen) Education Foundation.

16) Please describe in detail the process by which Georgia Tech assesses whether to report grants, contracts, or other funding on the U.S. Department of Education's portal under section 117 of the *Higher Education Act*, the name and title of the person responsible for reporting, as well as who actually reports.

17) The section 117 portal shows the following funding or gifts to, or contracts with, Georgia Tech originating in China:

Start Date	Amount	Description
2/3/2020	\$2,480,340	To establish a new innovative research initiative at Georgia Tech-Shenzhen
3/10/2020	\$745,000	Support new research program at GT Shenzhen
5/28/2021	\$1,350,000	To establish a new innovation research initiative at Georgia Tech-Shenzhen
6/2/2021	\$745,000	Support new research program at GT Shenzhen

Please provide a detailed rationale for why Georgia Tech has not reported, at a minimum, the \$250 million given by the Shenzhen government for the construction of GTSI.

18) Does Georgia Tech contend that it has fully reported its foreign gifts and contracts under section 117 for each year it has received such gifts and contracts? Please explain in detail.

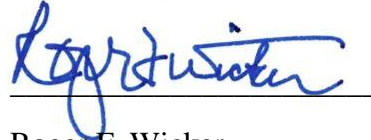
19) Provide all communications and correspondence, including but not limited to electronic mail ("email"), email attachments, texts, letters, memoranda, and other documentation and virtual meeting recordings associated with Section 117, of or between U.S. Department of Education officers or staff (during the period January 1, 2020, through the date on which the search for the records is conducted) and Georgia Tech officers, staff, or contractors.

We look forward to your timely responses.

Sincerely,



John Moolenaar
Chairman
Select Committee on the CCP



Roger F. Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services



Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce

¹ *Tianjin University was approved by the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense and the Ministry of Education to jointly build a university*, SOHU (July 7, 2016, 9:13 P.M.), https://web.archive.org/web/20240130155901/https://www.sohu.com/a/102157403_355396; *State Administration for Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense*, STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, https://web.archive.org/web/20240130161720/http://english.www.gov.cn/state_council/2014/10/06/content_281474992893468.htm (last visited Feb. 14, 2024). The PRC's State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense seeks to create "universities with national defense characteristics" including by setting up defense laboratories and research areas at "civilian" PRC universities. Alex Joske, *THE CHINESE DEFENCE UNIVERSITIES TRACKER*, AUSTL. STRATEGIC POL'Y INST 1, 9 (2019), <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2019-11/The%20China%20Defence%20Universities%20Tracker.pdf>.

² Addition of Entities to the Entity List, Revision of Entry on the Entity List, and Removal of Entities From the Entity List, 84 Fed. Reg. 83416 (Dec. 22, 2020); *Tianjin University*, AUSTL. STRATEGIC POL'Y INST, <https://unitracker.aspi.org.au/universities/tianjin-university/> (last visited Feb. 27, 2024).

³ *About GTSI*, GEORGIA TECH SHENZHEN INSTITUTE, <https://www.gtsi.edu.cn/en/story> (last visited Feb. 27, 2024).

⁴ Press Release, Georgia Tech, Researchers Create First Functional Semiconductor Made From Graphene (Jan. 4, 2024); *How Can Graphene Have a Significant Impact on CyberSecurity?*, NANOEMI, https://nanoemi.com/case_study/military-defense/#:~:text=One%20of%20the%20most%20promising,and%20body%20protection%20for%20soldiers (last visited Feb. 27, 2024).

⁵ In the research paper, a GT researcher thanked the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), which is a DOD University Affiliated Research Center, for its financial support. Jian Zhao et al., *Ultrahigh-mobility semiconducting epitaxial graphene on silicon carbide*, 625 NATURE 60, 61 (2024); *UARC*, GEORGIA TECH RSRC. INST., <https://www.gtri.gatech.edu/about/working-with-gtri/contract-vehicles/uarc> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024); *2023 Annual Report*, GEORGIA TECH RESEARCH INSTITUTE, <https://gtri.gatech.edu/newsroom/gtri-2023-annual-report> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024). See also National Nanotechnology Initiative, LINKEDIN (2022),

https://web.archive.org/web/20240206175136/https://www.linkedin.com/posts/national-nanotechnology-coordination-office_at-the-edge-of-graphene-based-electronics-activity-7011815422052245504-uN5t/?originalSubdomain=lk (thanking the Department of Energy and National Science Foundation for funding graphene research between Tianjin and GT).

⁶ *Important achievements in getting rid of US sanctions / Tianjin University's world's first graphene semiconductor processes data 10 times faster than silicon*, SINGTAO (Jan. 5, 2024, 11:53 A.M.), <https://www.singtaousa.com/4719231>.

⁷ "This major breakthrough published in *Nature* is one of the research and development projects carried out by the Tianjin University Akashi-Zhiyuan Graphene (Nano) Materials Joint Laboratory." *The scientific research results of Tianjin University Akashi Innovation Joint Laboratory were released in Nature, and the world's first functional semiconductor made of graphene was released!*, BRIGHTSTONE MEMS, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240131190103/http://www.brightstonemems.com/?jitian/94.html> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024). See also *Center Introduction*, TICNN, <https://web.archive.org/web/20240214183552/http://ticnn.tju.edu.cn/zxjs.htm> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024).

⁸ Documents on file with Select Committee; Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Treasury, Treasury Sanctions Key Actors in Iran's Steel Sector (Jan. 5, 2021). Another Bright Stone research institute has worked with a blacklisted research institute of the China State Shipbuilding Corporation.

Akashi Zhiyuan Advanced Technology Research Institute, BRIGHTSTONE-IAT,

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240214184209/http://www.brightstone-iat.com/a/about/> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024).

⁹ Documents on file with Select Committee; *About Us*, TICNN,

https://web.archive.org/web/20240131194851/http://ticnn.tju.edu.cn/about_us.htm (last visited Feb. 14, 2024). CASC specializes in space and missile technology. GTRI's UARC DOD primary sponsor is the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center. *UARC*, GEORGIA TECH RSRCH. INST., <https://www.gtri.gatech.edu/about/working-with-gtri/contract-vehicles/uarc> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024).

¹⁰ *College Foreign Gift and Contract Report*, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, <https://sites.ed.gov/foreigngifts/> (last visited Feb. 14, 2024).

¹¹ *Tianjin University Georgia Tech Shenzhen Campus Construction Engineering General Contracting II Bidding Announcement*, BUREAU OF PUBLIC WORKS OF SHENZHEN MUNICIPALITY, https://web.archive.org/web/20240130192933/http://szwb.sz.gov.cn/gwszwfw/zbcx/zhaobgg/content/post_10234204.html (last visited Feb. 14, 2024).

¹² *College Foreign Gift and Contract Report*, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, <https://sites.ed.gov/foreigngifts/> (last visited Feb. 27, 2024).