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Memo

To: Associate Deans Research, ORU Directors

Cc: David Peters, Interim Provost and Vice-President Academic
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Yvette Munro, Vice Provost Students
Deans

From: Amir Asif, Vice-President Research & Innovation
Vinitha Gengatharan, Assistant Vice-President, Global
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Alice MacLachlan, Vice-Provost & Dean, Graduate Studies

Date: April 3, 2025

Subject: **US Research Funding and Collaboration**

Following the memo sent on February 18, 2025 (attached) I am writing to inform you of additional developments regarding American research funding and collaborations.

Denial of Entry and Travel Advisories:

- The US has implemented more stringent immigration enforcement measures, including aggressive questioning at the US border and fingerprinting requirements. The Trump administration has announced that Canadians intending to stay in the US for more than 30 days will need to register with US immigration authorities starting April 11, 2025.
- There have been cases where Canadian researchers have been denied entry to US and have been asked to get a VISA if they want to enter US. A French researcher was denied entry because they had messages critical of the U.S. administration on their phone which was examined at the border. [French scientist denied entry into the US, French government says | Reuters](#)
 - a. Clean Laptops and Phones: UIT is exploring the possibility of launching a program where York members can obtain a clean laptop and phone for travel. Supply is limited for now because the program hasn't launched. If people need a secure laptop phone while traveling on York business, they can contact Jean Chan Kong our Acting Chief Information Security Officer at jeanck@yorku.ca.
- Canada, UK, Germany and others have issued travel advisories for the US:



- a. [Canada updates US, China travel advisories after recent frictions](#)
- b. [Detentions at US border prompt UK, Germany, and Nordic nations to revise travel advice](#)
- Several US universities have advised their international students and staff to not to leave US until things are more clear. Cornell University, for example, recommended that individuals from countries previously targeted by travel bans should not leave US during the duration of their program.
- The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has expressed concerns about the US administration's actions potentially undermining the integrity and independence of academic research in Canada. [Trump administration threatening Canadian researchers | CAUT](#)

Recommended Travel Precautions:

- Given these circumstances, Canadian university researchers are advised to be extra careful when traveling to US. By taking the recommended precautions below, researchers can better navigate the evolving travel landscape and minimize potential disruptions to their work.
 - a. **Review Travel Plans:** Assess the necessity of US travel, considering potential delays and complications at border crossings.
 - b. **Prepare Documentation:** Ensure all travel documents, visas, and supporting materials are current and readily accessible.
 - c. **Stay Informed:** Regularly consult official government advisories and institutional guidelines for updates on travel policies.
 - d. **Consider Alternatives:** Explore virtual collaboration tools or alternative research destinations to mitigate travel-related risks.
 - e. **Consider travelling by air rather than by road:** Canadian air travelers cross the border in Canada whereas those travelling by road have to transit into US territory to cross the border.

Travel Advice from FGS:

- ADRs, ADs Grad, Graduate program directors and chairs are encouraged to distribute the travel advice from York International to all graduate students and graduate supervisors
- Graduate students preparing for international travel may find the FGS [“Graduate Student Risk Assessment”](#) tool useful
- Students who are unwilling/unable to travel to conferences or other professional activities, due to the current geopolitical situation, may experience more significant disappointment or opportunity cost, given their early career status. Supervisors and program directors are encouraged to explore alternatives and look for ways to support their students.

Travel Advice from York International:

- See attached memo which includes emergency contact information for those traveling into the US.
- Given the current tensions between Canada and the US, it is important for travelers to be aware of a few key points:
 - Border officials may vary in their approach (aggressive vs lenient), and their requests for documentation can be unpredictable.

- According to US Customs and Border Protection (CBP), officers have the authority to inspect travelers' electronic devices, including phones, laptops, and cameras, and request any type of supporting document for the said trip into the US. While CBP states that such searches are rare, they are conducted to help prevent activities such as terrorism, child exploitation, and drug smuggling.
- Travelers should be honest when speaking with border officials, answering questions directly while providing only the information requested.

Research Funding Implications:

- Tariffs: Tariffs could have an impact on industry partnered programs such as NSERC Alliance and CFI vendor discount.
- Federal funding: US institutions are experiencing substantial reductions in federal research funding, which may pose challenges for current and future collaborations with US organizations.
 - a. Columbia lost \$400M: [Columbia research takes immediate hit from Trump funding cuts](#)
 - b. John’s Hopkins lost \$800M: [Johns Hopkins laying off more than 2,000 workers after dramatic cut in USAID funding | CNN Politics](#)
 - c. NIH F&A (indirect cost rate) capped at 15% (down from up to 50%): [NIH Issues Guidance Capping Grant Indirect Cost Rates at 15%, Drawing Multiple Legal Challenges Affecting Research-Based Organizations and R&D Innovation | News | Haynes Boone](#)

CFI and NSERC Alliance Risk Mitigation Strategies:

- ORS, SIRI and Research Accounting recommend the following risk mitigation strategies:
 - a. CFI Risk Mitigation Options:
 - i. Identify alternative suppliers.
 - ii. Reduce the CFI component to align with any decrease in the industry match.
 - iii. Research accounting is in touch with all CFI recipients and will increase the frequency of meetings with SIRI to monitor spending and matching on a monthly basis.
 - b. Alliance Risk Mitigation Options:
 - i. The risk is minimal as ORS and Research Accounting only establish the industry match once it is received
 - ii. The primary risk is with SME partners.
 - iii. Consider requesting a no-cost extension from NSERC to provide industry partners with additional time to meet their match commitments.

US Research Collaborations – Potential Future Risks and Steps Taken:

- York receives approximately \$3 to \$5 million annually in direct research grants from US funding agencies. These funds now face potential delays, increased reporting requirements, and, in the worst-case scenario, possible loss. As a precaution, York has advised researchers with active US federal funding to prepare for potential funding interruptions and those with

pending applications to anticipate delays. Principal Investigators are encouraged to sign up for agency or sponsor alerts where available. We are working with the Ontario Council of University Research (Ontario VPs Research) and other institutions to stay on top of all available information. VPRI will communicate with active grant holders directly as further information becomes available.

- An indirect impact is the hesitation in submitting new research grant proposals in partnership with US researchers. Due to the uncertainty caused by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directive, York researchers are reluctant to submit grant applications or participate in proposals led by their US collaborators for US funding agencies.
- Increased Reporting: A recent York example is the United States Department of Agriculture–Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS). They informed us that US government agencies are asking for additional information and reassess foreign assistance programs under Executive Order 14169 (Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid). As a result, a York researcher receiving funds from USDA-ARS has been asked to submit a comprehensive outreach form (Partners Data Collection Sheet) containing very problematic questions. Similar requests have reportedly been received from National Institute of Health and other US funding agencies. At this stage, the submission of the form is voluntary, and we advise our researchers not to submit a response and inform ORS if and when a request is received.

Please also see CBC News about Université de Montréal travel guidelines: [Université de Montréal publishes travel guidelines for students, staff heading to the U.S. | CBC News](#)