



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

January 15, 2021

Chancellor Mark Mone
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Office of the Chancellor
Chapman Hall 202
2310 E. Hartford Ave
Milwaukee, WI 53201

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Preliminary Inquiry Regarding Possible Violations of 20 U.S.C. § 1011f

Dear Chancellor Mone:

Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. § 1011f, requires the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (“UWM”) to disclose gifts, contracts, and/or restricted and conditional gifts or contracts from or with foreign sources to the U.S. Department of Education (“Department”). These reports are posted at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/school/foreign-gifts>.

UWM is [classified](#) as a “Carnegie Research-1” or “R-1” institution and ranked 192nd in the nation by total R&D expenditure according to [data reported](#) by the National Science Foundation. The NSF reported UWM’s 2017 R&D expenditures at \$54,000,000. Carnegie R-1 institutions conduct the bulk of U.S. academic research and are collectively entrusted with billions in taxpayer funds each year. They also tend to collaborate closely with foreign sources, accounting for over eighty-five percent of all funds [reported](#) to the Department. UWM’s self-described collaboration with foreign sources includes partnership agreements with over [200 institutions](#) worldwide and [information and support](#) online for the development of international agreements.

However, UWM has apparently never filed a Section 117 report. By comparison, Auburn University-Montgomery, ranked by NSF 788th in total R&D expenditures at \$430,000, reported twenty-four foreign contracts in the period from 2013 to 2017. Given UWM’s extensive self-described engagement with foreign sources, the Department is therefore concerned UWM may be violating Section 117. Consequently, we are opening this preliminary inquiry, directed by the Department’s Office of the General Counsel with support from the Office of Federal Student Aid, to determine the nature and extent of UWM’s Section 117 violations, if any. Please arrange for UWM’s general counsel to contact Paul R. Moore, Chief Investigative Counsel, and/or Kevin D.

Slupe, Special Counsel, at his or her earliest convenience to discuss your Section 117 compliance in more detail. Also, UMW should produce the following records within twenty-one days:

A. True copies of all gift or donation agreements and/or contracts, whether restricted and conditional or otherwise, by and between UWM and any “foreign source” as defined at 20 U.S.C. § 1011f(h)(2). The relevant time for this request is January 1, 2016 to the present.

B. All records in UWM’s possession or control relating or referring to Section 117 compliance activities and obligations. The relevant time for this request is January 1, 2016 to the present.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Reed D. Rubinstein
Principal Deputy General Counsel delegated
the Authorities and Duties of the General Counsel

cc: Paul R. Moore
Chief Investigative Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Department of Education
paul.moore@ed.gov

Kevin D. Slupe
Special Counsel
Office of the General Counsel
U.S. Department of Education
kevin.slupe@ed.gov