

# Classified Research at Notre Dame Faculty Senate Briefing



October 2017

## Classified Research at Notre Dame

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- This initiative is a result of requests by faculty beginning about 5 years ago. Those faculty now number about 10.
  - So far all requests are cases where *the test article, not the method*, is classified.
  - Examples: hypersonics, biometrics, trusted electronics, turbomachinery
- The VPR put together an *administrative* task force to benchmark other universities, understand what was required to be able to accept classified research and the benefits/costs.

## Findings of the Task Force (1)

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- Many important technologies began their life as classified research projects (e.g., the internet, GPS, supersonic flight)
- Research is classified to keep **some** aspects secret to the federal government (similar to proprietary research for companies). Many aspects can be published.
- There is nothing intrinsically unethical about classified research.
- 140 universities (including at least 29 AAU universities) accept classified research. Classified research is the subject of current discussion at several more AAU universities – generally there is movement toward more universities accepting classified research

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## Findings of the Task Force (2)

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- The federal government is increasingly adding restrictions on research due to international security, defense and competitiveness issues. We may not be able to continue certain existing projects unless we can accept classified research.
- 2 models
  - through university
  - through a separate legal entity
- Logistically, accepting and conducting classified research at Notre Dame using either model is feasible.

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## Benchmarking

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- About half of AAU universities accept classified research; about a quarter of AAU private universities accept classified research (Cal Tech, CMU, MIT, JHU and USC)
- 80% of AAU, including 70% of privates, accept grants and contracts with restrictions such as export control
- Several universities report considering accepting classified research as the federal government increases the frequency of classifying research

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## Most Significant Supportive Arguments

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- For the faculty requesting classified research, these projects are the most advanced opportunities in their discipline
  - They have explained to me how they will be able to publish results of their work
  - They have explained to me how graduate students will benefit either directly or indirectly
- Many of our alumni and sponsors recommend that Notre Dame participate on behalf of global security and national defense – they encourage Notre Dame to have a voice

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## Most significant Controversies/Risks

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- **Concern for ethical oversight**
  - NDR has plans to establish a faculty Research Review Committee to assist the VPR in evaluating classified research projects.
- **Open publication of discovery**
  - Requirement that a significant part of the research be publishable (e.g., classified test article is replaced by a standard test article)
- **Limitation on student access**
  - Students must benefit directly or indirectly (e.g., open and available state of the art facilities when classified projects are not active)
- **Compliance**
  - Doable for all cases considered to date – extension of export control procedures we have in place

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## Research Review Board

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- Purpose: standing committee to consider ethical questions about classified research
- Composition: 3-5 faculty with expertise on applied ethics
- Process: see attached **“Draft Process – Research Review Board”**

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## Draft Proposal for Discussion

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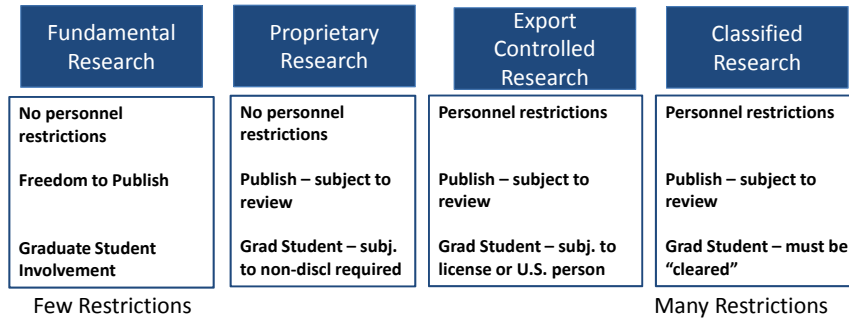
- Allow limited opportunities for classified research on campus
  - All classified research proposals must be reviewed by the Research Review Panel
  - No Top Secret or SCI level research, only confidential and secret classifications allowed
  - There must be potential publishable discovery from the program
  - Potential student benefit, either direct or indirect, must be shown

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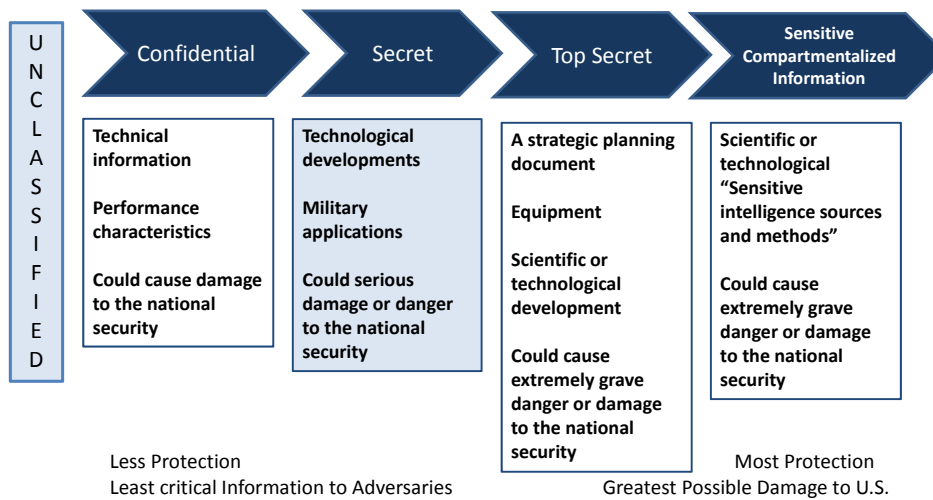
## Additional Slides

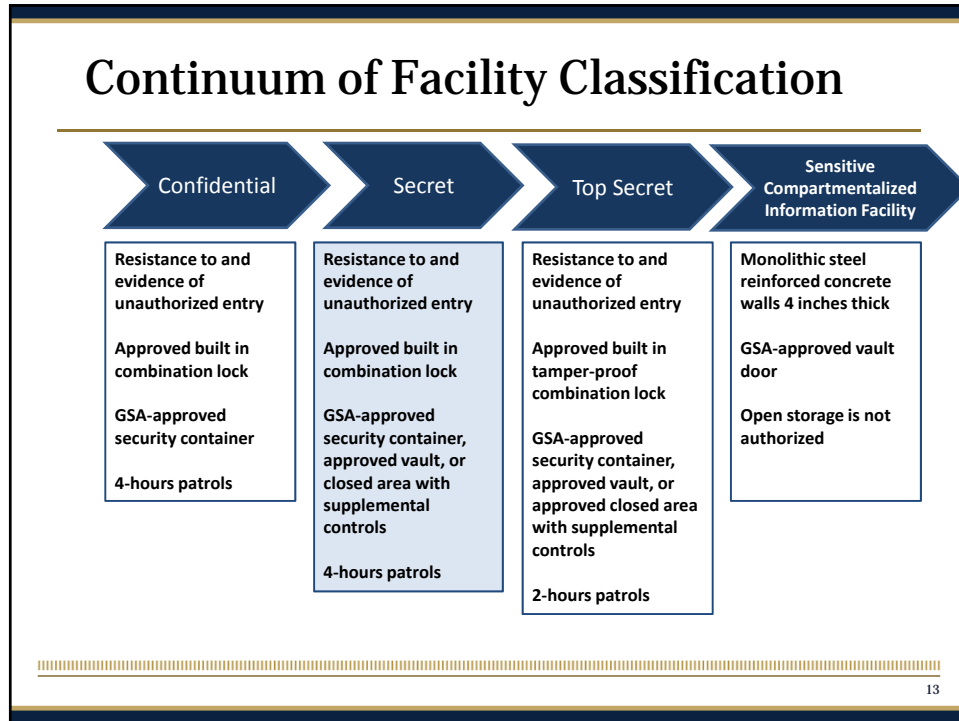
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## Variations on Academic Research Model



## Continuum of Clearances/Facilities/Projects





## What is a SCIF

- SCI is Sensitive Compartmentalized Information
- SCIF is the facility in which SCI can processed and stored.
- SCI is usually associated with intelligence sources and methods (intelligence agents and how they obtain the information they use).
- We are not seeking to conduct SCI research.

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