

January 22, 2020

Dr. Lawrence S. Bacow  
President  
Harvard University  
Massachusetts Hall  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Dr. Bacow,

I write to inform you of my dismay over recent actions by Harvard faculty Dr. Walter Willett and Dr. Frank Hu and their associates, Dr. David Katz and the True Health Initiative (THI). Their actions, as described in a recent [JAMA article](#), are unethical, distort the results of important scientific research, and, in our opinion, are false and harmful to Texas A&M University and its faculty. These are serious matters that undermine the values espoused by your institution and must be corrected immediately.

I trust you were as surprised as I was after reading the JAMA article and ask that you take a look at the outrageous actions by THI. JAMA found that THI and several of its council members, including Harvard faculty Dr. Willett and Dr. Hu, mischaracterized scientific research and falsely accused Texas A&M scientists of selling out to industry interests. According to JAMA, THI not only broke journal embargo policy but apparently used automated bots to flood the email inbox of the Editor in Chief of the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Several of your faculty are involved as council members or advisers of THI and collaborated with THI in their effort to discredit scientific evidence that runs contrary to their ideology. I can assure you that Texas A&M's research is driven by science. Period.

In addition to my concern about JAMA findings, I am attaching [an illustration](#) Dr. Willett presented at a cardiology conference to attack a distinguished Texas A&M professor and the university itself as being influenced by industry. This unsubstantiated claim has been independently rejected and shown to be false in the JAMA article.

At this time, we have no hard basis to show that these actions against Texas A&M and its faculty are endorsed or condoned by your institution, and we hope we can work together to resolve this problem. Such resolution should include a serious assessment by Harvard of its affiliation with THI and a comprehensive ethical review into any Harvard faculty involved with THI. Several

scientists have severed ties with THI because of the issues discussed in this letter. Texas A&M applauds the stand taken by these scientists and encourages Harvard to show the same courage.

Texas A&M asks that Harvard join us for a purely scientific approach to nutrition for the sake of public health and public trust and reject the politics and unethical actions of THI that have sought to discredit science and interfere in the scientific process.

Sincerely,

John Sharp  
Chancellor