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In tech race with China, U.S. universities may lose a vital edge

在与中国的科技竞赛中, 美国大学或失去关键优势

The U.S. is still out in front of global rivals when it comes to innovation, but American universities—where new ideas often percolate—have reason to look over their shoulder. 论技术创新, 美国仍然在全球遥遥领先。然而, 美国的大学院校, 作为传播创新思想的重要媒介, 如今却有必要感到警惕。

That's especially true for technologies like 5G phone networks and artificial intelligence. They're exactly the fields where President Donald Trump recently insisted the U.S. has to lead—and also the ones where Asia, especially China, has caught up.

尤其在 5G 电话网络和人工智能等科技领域, 压力更是不小。美国总统特朗普近来强调, 在这两个领域, 美国必须始终保持领先姿态。然而, 也正是在这两个领域, 亚洲各国, 尤其是中国, 已经迎头赶上。

Universities from China get more patents than their U.S. peers in wireless communications, according to research firm GreyB Services. In AI, 17 of the top 20 universities and public research organizations are in China, with the Chinese Academy of Sciences topping the list, says the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva.

科研服务公司 GreyB Services 的数据显示，在无线通讯领域，中国大学院校获得的专利数量已超过了美国大学。同时，总部位于日内瓦的世界知识产权组织表示，在 AI 领域，申请专利最多的 20 所大学院校和公共研究机构中，有 17 所设在中国，其中，中国科学院位居榜首。

There's a special place for universities in the ecosystem of research. Universities groom future scientists and can be incubators for pie-in-the-sky ideas—some of which turn out to be game-changers. The list ranges from Google's search engine to DNA technology that's behind a whole industry of gene-manipulating treatments.

大学在科研生态系统占据了特殊地位。大学培养未来的科学家，也是很多“异想天开”想法的孵化器——其中一些想法最终改变了行业的格局，包括谷歌的搜索引擎和 DNA 技术，后者促成了基因编辑治疗这整个行业的诞生。

However, government grants to universities have been stagnant for more than a decade, meaning they've declined in real terms and as a share of the economy.

然而，政府给大学的拨款金额已经十多年不见增加，这就意味着，在通货膨胀下，实际拨款在减少，在经济中的占比也有所下降。

"If you look at the federal dollars, they've not really changed substantially," says Stephen Susalka, head of AUTM, a technology transfer association whose members include 800 universities. "Other countries are catching up. We can't sit on our laurels."

美国大学技术经理人协会（AUTM）是一家负责技术转移的组织，其成员包括 800 所大学。协会负责人斯蒂芬·苏萨尔卡表示，“看看联邦政府的拨款，你会发现基本上没有太大变化。其他国家正在迎头赶上，我们不能安于现状。”

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重点词汇

edge/edʒ/

n. 优势，优越之处

- 英文释义：an advantage over other people
- 搭配短语：gain a competitive edge

out in front

遥遥领先

- 例句: He is out in front in the opinion polls.
- 搭配短语: be out in front of sb.

percolate/'pɜ:kəleɪt/

v. 扩散, 流传; 渗透

- 英文释义: to spread slowly
- 例句: Sea water percolates down through the rocks.
- 例句: The story has begun to percolate through the crowd.

look over one's shoulder(s)

焦虑不安

- 例句: He may have escaped the police for now, but he'll spend every waking hour looking over his shoulder.

catch up

赶上, 达到同样质量 (或水平)

- 英文释义: to reach the same quality or standard as someone or something else
- 例句: He was off work for a while and is trying to catch up.

patent/'pætnt/

n. 专利

- 英文释义: a licence covering an invention

top/tɒp/

v. 为...之首; 超过, 胜过

- 搭配短语: top the list
- 例句: Tourists from Northern Europe topped the list of visitors.

groom/gru:m/

v. 使 (某人) 做好准备, 训练

- 英文释义: to prepare someone for a special job or activity
- 搭配短语: groom sb. to do sth.
- 搭配短语: groom sb. for doing sth.
- 例句: He was groomed to run the family companies.
- 例句: He was groomed for running the family companies.

incubator/'ɪŋkjubeɪtər/

n. 孵化器；鼓励或培养新的想法产生的地方

- 相关词汇：incubate (v. 孵蛋)
- 搭配短语：business incubators

pie-in-the-sky/paɪ ɪn ðə skaɪ/

adj. 希望渺茫的；难以实现的

- 例句：It's just pie-in-the-sky if you ask me.

game-changer/geɪm 'tʃeɪndʒər/

n. 游戏规则改变者；打破格局者

- 例句：Huawei's new product might be a game-changer.

grant/grænt/

n. 政府拨款，补助金

- 词性拓展：grant (v.)
- 搭配短语：student grants (n.)
- 搭配短语：a research grant (n.)

stagnant/'stæɡnənt/

adj. 停滞不前的，无变化的

- 英文释义：not growing or developing
- 搭配短语：a stagnant pond
- 搭配短语：a stagnant economy

in real terms

按实质计算，考虑通货膨胀影响计算

sit on one's laurels

满足于既得成就，不思进取

- 相关词汇：laurel (n. 月桂树)
- 搭配短语：win/gain laurels
- 同义短语：rest on one's laurels
- 例句：He retired at the peak of his career and is sitting on his laurels.