



November 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chair, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member, Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and McCarthy, Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Members Granger and Leahy:

As president of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I write to thank you for your continued work on the FY 2021 appropriations process as well as a supplemental appropriations pandemic relief package. I urge you to quickly come to bipartisan agreement to pass robust FY 2021 and supplemental funding bills before the end of the year.

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. Annually, APLU's 197 U.S. member campuses enroll 4.1 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.1 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct \$42.4 billion in university-based research.

As Congress continues to work toward an agreement on pandemic relief funding this year, APLU urges inclusion of \$120 billion<sup>1</sup> for institutions of higher education to partially mitigate the challenges facing students and institutions due to COVID-19. APLU also requests that Congress allocate \$26 billion<sup>2</sup> in relief funding for federal research agencies to support the research workforce, mitigate the disruptions to research and core research facilities, and ramp up research that has been halted or slowed, in addition to extending the paid leave tax credit to state entities such as public universities, among other essential priorities<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aplu.org/members/councils/governmental-affairs/CGA-library/updated-covid-19-relief-higher-education-request/file>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aplu.org/members/councils/governmental-affairs/CGA-library/association-letter-requesting-inclusion-of-the-rise-act-in-covid-19-relief-bill/file>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aplu.org/members/councils/governmental-affairs/CGA-library/aplu-covid-19-priorities/file>

It is also crucial Congress completes the FY 2021 appropriations process by the December 11 deadline. Additional continuing resolutions will fail to capitalize on the meaningful work of this Congress in addressing budget caps last year and will cede the opportunity to make important increases to key investments in student financial aid and scientific research. In an extremely limited budget year, we are grateful that both the House and Senate bills provide increases to many APLU member priorities. As Congress negotiates FY 2021 appropriations legislation, APLU urges that the strongest possible funding levels for important higher education and research programs prevail in the final bill, and we respectfully submit our revised appropriations requests below.

## **Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies**

### **National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

Public land-grant universities and non-land grant colleges of agriculture are critical to training the next generation of agricultural and food scientists, economists, and agribusiness professionals who will solve societal challenges related to farm profitability, climate resilience and environmental sustainability, and food access and nutrition. APLU appreciates the House's support for 1890s historically black land-grant institutions and 1994 tribal land-grant institutions, which reflects our request for both **Evans-Allen research of \$73 million** and **1890s extension of \$62 million**, bringing the levels for those programs to parity in accordance with the goals laid out in authorization language<sup>4</sup>.

Additionally, the increases provided in the House bill for **Research Grants for 1994 Institutions (\$4 million)**, **Extension Services at 1994 Institutions (8.5 million)**, and **Payments Funding for 1994 Institutions (\$4.5 million)** will provide Tribal Colleges with increases critical to support programs for Native American students to build scientific capacity, implement youth development and technical assistance programming via Extension, and to strengthen Tribal College higher education programs. **APLU member institutions are deeply concerned with the continued flat funding of the Hatch and Smith Lever programs, which have not kept up with inflation over the past five years.**

APLU applauds the work of both chambers in supporting a **\$10 million increase to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)**. AFRI is essential for addressing national research and extension priorities. APLU members are deeply concerned about the cuts in the Senate bill to the **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**. Supported by EFNEP, the Cooperative Extension System programs at land-grant universities reach hundreds of thousands of low-income adults and youth in rural and urban communities each year to address food security and nutrition challenges. APLU urges Congress to **maintain EFNEP at the House level of \$70 million or higher in FY 2021.**

## **Commerce, Science, Justice, and Related Agencies**

### **National Science Foundation (NSF)**

As the only federal agency investing mainly in fundamental, basic research, we strongly urge Congress to provide maximum funding for this critical agency in the final bill. NSF-supported

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<sup>4</sup> Section 1445(a)(2) National Agricultural, Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3222(a)(2)) as amended by section 7122 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which requires that not less than 30% of the Hatch Act appropriation be appropriated for 1890s Evans Allen research program. Section 7121 of FCEA amended section 1444(a)(2) (7 U.S.C. 3221(a)(2)) to require that at least 20 percent of the total appropriations for each fiscal year under the Smith-Lever Act be allocated for payments to 1890 Institutions for extension activities.

research in all fields of science and engineering has yielded breakthroughs leading to novel technologies – stimulating new industries and enhancing human health and national security. We greatly appreciate both chambers’ rejection of the President’s FY2021 recommendation to cut the NSF’s budget and instead recommend increases to NSF. We request Congress provide at least the House’s level of **\$8.550 billion** for the NSF in a final bill.

#### National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

APLU urges Congress to appropriate at least **\$7.275 billion**, the Senate’s recommended level, for the NASA **Science Mission Directorate (SMD)**, which will maintain the balance of the SMD portfolio, while accommodating the planned cost growth of missions in development and maintaining support for individual investigator grant programs and new competitive mission opportunities across all mission sizes. APLU further requests **\$1.206 billion** for the **Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)**, which is consistent with the Senate level. STMD improves NASA’s technological capabilities across a wide array of areas—from propulsion and power generation to materials science and high-performance computing—that help the agency achieve mission requirements across all its directorates.

APLU also requests funding the **Aeronautics Research Directorate** at **\$828.7 million**, consistent with the Senate’s level. Increased investment in aeronautics research such as hypersonics, new methods of propulsion, and material science are crucial to furthering our nation’s space program. Lastly, we ask Congress to fund the **Space Grant Program** at no less than **\$50 million**, which is the House level. This important program brings universities together across the country to support and expand science and engineering education related to aerospace.

#### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

APLU urges Congress to fund NOAA’s **Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)** at **\$584.4 million**, consistent with the House level. The OAR provides research funding for oceans observations, monitoring, and modeling to address extreme weather events, wildfire predictions, flooding, and other processes at the ocean and atmosphere interface. Without OAR’s facilities, analytical experts, and strategic connection to APLU public institutions, we would not have information essential to estimating the timing and intensity of ocean-related weather events, greenhouse gas modeling, and optimal standards for minimizing the biological impact of seismic drilling.

APLU supports the Senate level of **\$76 million** for the **NOAA Sea Grant program**. The NOAA Sea Grant program provides solutions to the issues affecting our nation’s coastal communities, including the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, and communities on the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific coasts. Finally, we urge Congress to fund NOAA’s **Marine Aquaculture program** at **\$13.5 million**, as proposed by the Senate. APLU member institutions use essential funds from this program to support aquaculture. This industry supplies more than 50 percent of our nation’s seafood production, protects habitats, and enhances coastal resilience<sup>5</sup>.

#### National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST)

APLU encourages Congress to fund the **Manufacturing Extension Program (MEP)** at **\$153 million**, consistent with the House’s level. The MEP is as a catalyst for strengthening American manufacturing by transforming the sector into a more efficient and powerful engine of innovation. Additionally, we urge Congress to increase the **National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI)** to no less than the House’s level of **\$17 million**. NNMI manufacturing institutes bring

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/aquaculture>

together industry, universities, and the government to develop and accelerate the commercialization of innovative manufacturing technologies.

#### Economic Development Administration (EDA)

We urge Congress to fund the **Regional Innovation (RI) Program** at no less than **\$38.5 million**, consistent with the Senate's level. The RI Program builds capacity to turn new technologies and innovations into jobs through proof-of-concept and commercialization assistance and through early-stage risk capital for investors and entrepreneurs.

#### Defense

APLU is deeply concerned by the diminished basic research funding levels put forward by the Senate in their Defense Appropriations bill. The Senate levels represent a 7.5 percent decrease in basic research programs across the board at the Department of Defense (DoD). As other nations, particularly China, increase investments in research and development<sup>6</sup>, now is not the time to disinvest in critical DoD university research programs that lead to new knowledge and technologies that protect the health and security of our country. **We strongly urge that a final agreement include at least the House level of \$2.621 billion for defense basic research including the House's FY 2021 funding levels for Army and Air Force University Research Initiatives and Navy Defense Research Sciences.** These funding levels will help maintain our military superiority and lead the world in innovation. Furthermore, APLU urges Congress to fund the **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency** at **\$3.512 billion**, consistent with the House's level.

APLU further requests Congress fund the **Minerva Research Initiative (MRI)** at least at levels consistent with the House recommendation of **\$17 million**. Thanks to university research funded through the MRI, DoD personnel have the tools to better understand sociopolitical implications in various regions that impact national security and will be more adaptable to future technological capabilities such as artificial intelligence. Unfortunately, in FY 2018 MRI received 175 applications, but due to resources was only able to fund 12 projects<sup>7</sup>. By only funding seven percent of applications, our military is potentially leaving on the table new and outstanding social science ideas that enable us to maintain U.S. superiority and meet current and future national security challenges in improved and innovative ways.

#### Energy, Water Development, and Related Agencies

APLU's members conduct a majority of university-based research funded by the Department of Energy. As you reconcile differences in legislation, APLU urges you to include at least the House recommended level of **\$7.050 billion** for **DOE's Office of Science**. With these increased funds, DOE could advance new strategic investments in emerging and critically important areas of research such as quantum science, genomics and engineering biology, microelectronics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, while preparing the next generation of American scientific and engineering talent.

APLU also supports the House level of **\$435 million** for **ARPA-E**. ARPA-E advances high-potential, high-impact energy technologies. Thanks to federal investment in ARPA-E, 88 companies have been formed, 4,256 peer-reviewed journal articles have been published to advance knowledge, and 643 patents have been issued by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsb20201/global-r-d>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.doncio.navy.mil/CHIPS/ArticleDetails.aspx?ID=12286>

## **Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**

APLU appreciates the House-recommended levels for key priorities within the Interior appropriations bill. The United States Geological Survey's (USGS) **Water Resources Research Act** funding, which provide support for the National Institutes for Water resources, addresses critical water management challenges like invasive species, ecological and biodiversity issues, and water usage factors. The 10 percent increase to this program in the House bill brings the appropriation to **\$11 million** in FY 2021, allowing support for essential research in aquatic invasive species in the Mississippi River basin, a key transport waterway, as well as poly- and perfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) investigations. The House bill provides **\$25 million** in support for the USGS **Cooperative Research Units** to support increased youth involvement in resource management, capacity for more fisheries evaluations, and the development of an additional unit at a land-grant university.

APLU urges Congress to support the House level of **\$745 million** for the **Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Science and Technology**. This Office supports the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) grant program, which is critical for extramural research in all the areas that EPA focuses on, including chemical, environmental health, and water safety research. Finally, APLU urges Congress to fund the **Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)** at the authorized amount of **\$16 million**, with \$8 million in the US Department of Interior Wildland Fire Management budget and \$8 million in the USDA Forest Service Wildland Fire Management budget. In FY 2018, JFSP funding was cut in half, eliminating funding for new fire science research under the program. During a time when our nation struggles to find creative solutions for addressing aggressive forest fires, we cannot neglect our commitment to science-based fire management solutions.

Lastly, APLU appreciates both the House and Senate's rejection of the Administration's proposal to close the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). We urge members to incorporate at least the House level of **\$170 million** for the **National Endowment for the Humanities**. NEH is a vital source of funding for scholars and researchers whose work helps the public and policymakers better understand and address the social, economic, political, and cultural challenges facing our nation and world today.

## **Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies**

### **Health and Human Services**

APLU appreciates the support of many member of Congress to the world's premier biomedical research funding agency, the National Institutes of Health (NIH). We are grateful for the increases provided in both the House and Senate bills. Realizing that the House included pandemic relief funding in their FY 2021 NIH levels, APLU requests that Congress fund **NIH's base budget at least at \$43.680 billion**, the amount included in the Senate Appropriations bill. Now more than ever, our country needs the scientific and medical advances supported by NIH to bolster the health of citizens and our nation's economy. We appreciate the deep commitment that the Appropriations Committees and others in Congress have demonstrated to the NIH over recent years and encourage you to sustain this important effort.

We also greatly appreciate the House and Senate's commitment to continue the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) as a standalone agency and advocate that members incorporate the House's level of **at least \$343 million** to fund **AHRQ**. Additionally, as demand for healthcare services intensifies across the country, and we look for equitable vaccine dissemination solutions in light of COVID-19, APLU encourages members to increase funding for **Title VII**

**health professions programs and Title VIII Nursing Workforce Development programs at the Health Resources Services Administration** at the House recommended level of **\$782.5 million**.

### Education

APLU urges increased support for federal student aid and higher education programs, which is needed to expand access and affordability for students while enhancing our nation's competitive edge through a skilled workforce. Investments in these programs continue to demonstrate a significant return, growing our economy and improving the health and well-being of our society.

APLU supports the appropriations necessary to reach the **maximum Pell Grant award** of at least **\$6,495**, which is the award level proposed in both the House and Senate bills. Yet APLU urges appropriators to leave intact the program reserves—rather than rescind these funds as the Senate bill proposes—to protect the long-term fiscal health of the program and support improvements such as continued inflation adjustments. We further request that members support at least the House levels of **\$880 million** for the **Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant** and **\$1.210 billion** for the **Federal Work Study** program.

At a time when more fields require increased skills and further postsecondary education, we strongly urge members to make increased investments in the **Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need** program and request that members agree to at least the House level of **\$24 million**.

APLU strongly recommends funding **Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)** and **TRIO Programs** at least at levels consistent with the House, **\$370 million and \$1.11 billion**, respectively. APLU institutions receive TRIO and GEAR UP grants to partner with community organizations and schools to encourage and ensure access to higher education and success in college. APLU further urges members to support at least the House level of **\$80.3 million** for **Title VI International Education Programs** and to fund the **Institute of Education Sciences** at levels at least consistent with the Senate at **\$635.5 million**.

### State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies

#### U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

APLU urges a continued strengthening of international agricultural research partnerships by providing the **Feed the Future Innovation Labs** with an FY 2021 appropriation of **\$60 million**. We further request the inclusion of the appropriation in the bill rather than a joint explanatory statement as has been the practice in most recent years. A \$5 million increase over the FY 2020 level would provide the Labs with funding essential to address COVID19 food insecurity challenges, including a dramatic increase of 22 percent of food insecure people across the globe. Currently, the 20 Feed the Future Innovation Labs, led by 13 U.S. universities in partnership with over 40 other U.S. universities, including seven Minority Serving Institutions, work with USAID missions and developing country research institutions to provide reliable, science-based information about food production, access, and processing for global communities during shocks like the current pandemic. We urge Congress to support this critical U.S.-led global science and innovation network.

Thank you for considering our views and for your leadership during this extraordinary time of crisis. Please do not hesitate to let me know how APLU can be a resource as you move forward with the appropriations process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter McPherson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Peter" and last name "McPherson" clearly distinguishable.

Peter McPherson  
President  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

Cc:

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy, Water Development, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies