



October 19, 2016

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
Chairman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations,
and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Subcommittee on State,
Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graham, Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

On behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), I thank you and your Congressional colleagues for passing the September short-term continuing resolution, providing a path forward for fiscal year 2017 appropriations action before the end of this year. We urge Congress to complete the FY 2017 appropriations process this fall and to send the President bipartisan funding legislation by the end of the calendar year.

As the House and Senate State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittees work to reconcile your positions on funding for FY 2017, I urge you to make research and higher education programs a priority. These investments continue to demonstrate a significant return, improving the health and wellbeing of society and strengthening our international standing and national security. Below, I reiterate APLU's funding requests for FY 2017 in the SFOPs Appropriations bill and urge that you prioritize these important programs in the final package.

APLU is grateful that both the House and Senate bills provide funding to support the Feed the Future Innovation Labs, however, we are very concerned that the Senate appropriation of \$32 million is a vestige level of funding from when the program was comprised of only ten Collaborative Research Support Programs (CRSPs). Under the Feed the Future Initiative, the program has expanded from ten CRSPs to 25 Innovation Labs with more than 60 U.S. universities throughout the nation engaged in their research. APLU strongly supports the appropriations level in the House bill of \$60 million, which is consistent with our request. Under the Senate bill, funding would be cut \$18 million from FY 2016 levels. We strongly urge you to fund the program at the House level of \$60 million to ensure that the United States can best leverage our universities'

scientific capacity to solve agricultural problems and make the progress needed to achieve global food security. As one example of their impact, a researcher affiliated with the Innovation Lab for Assets and Market Access at the University of California – Davis earned two prestigious awards for critical research which has led to the mitigation of livestock losses caused by severe draught in eastern Africa. Dr. Andrew Mude earned the 2016 BIFAD Award for Scientific Excellence in a Feed the Future Innovation Lab and the 2016 Norman Borlaug Award for Field Research and Application, endowed by the Rockefeller Foundation.

In addition to the Feed the Future Innovation Labs, we request your support for the House level of funding for USAID’s Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN). HESN presently supports partnerships with seven top universities to identify new science and technology solutions for the world’s most challenging development problems. For example, Texas A&M University’s Center on Conflict and Development helps to alleviate conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by using innovative mapping technology to resolve land disputes. The HESN program is essential to supporting long-term, scalable, and sustainable international development solutions.

APLU strongly supports both the House and Senate bill and report language which directs “**not less than \$35 million for new partnerships**” between U.S. universities and universities in developing nations. APLU appreciates that the Senate report language directly highlights “the work of land grant institutions of higher learning with specialized capabilities and encourages USAID to partner with such organizations.”

We are also grateful that the House report language clarifies that the \$35 million is intended to “**build institutional capacity** of universities and colleges in developing nations through partnerships with United States universities.” APLU urges you to retain the language in both the House and Senate bills relative to “new partnerships” to ensure that USAID is sufficiently investing in and expanding these critical programs, with a particular emphasis on institutional capacity building. Partnerships with U.S. universities help institutions in developing countries produce the entrepreneurs, policy makers, teachers and technologies that adapt and sustain U.S. development investments. The USAID-funded iAGRI project led by the Ohio State University takes a model approach to collaborative partnerships and institutional strengthening. Only when there is a sufficient cohort of well-educated, dynamic leaders in developing countries will development truly flourish.

We appreciate your recognition that investments in higher education help to create the conditions for significant economic growth, stability and security in developing nations, and that in turn, these benefits accrue to our own country as the world becomes more stable and safer. Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations, including that we strongly urge the FY 2017 funding process is completed this year. Please consider APLU a resource as you work to finalize FY 2017 appropriations.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson
President
APLU

cc: Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader Harry Reid
Speaker Paul Ryan
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Thad Cochran
House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Barbara Mikulski
Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and
Related Programs