



ASSOCIATION OF  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC AND  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES



August 4, 2015

The Honorable Shaun Donovan  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Donovan:

On behalf of our associations' more than 200 member research universities, we urge you to uphold the President's commitments to federal investments in higher education and research as you develop the Administration's FY 2017 budget.

We greatly appreciate that increased investments in higher education and scientific research remain a priority for the President. Unfortunately, the Budget Control Act (BCA) has created harmful limitations on the ability to invest in these areas. The current sequester-budget caps stand in the way of federal investments in research and higher education that have made possible new businesses, as well as entire new industries that drive the U.S. economy and strengthen national security. Finding a solution to this dysfunctional budget process is necessary to be able to support the new innovations and technologies made possible through scientific and engineering discoveries.

As countries like China and South Korea continue to see the value of higher education and research and grow their investments in these areas, we risk falling behind due to the restraints of our current budget environment. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences states in its 2014 report, *Restoring the Foundation: The Vital Role of Research in Preserving the American Dream*, "There is a deficit between what America is investing and what it should be investing to remain competitive, not only in research but in innovation and job creation." The current reality is that other countries are outpacing the United States in annual percentage growth of research and development funding. In order to stave off an innovation deficit and maintain our competitive edge, the U.S. needs to invest in research and offer access to higher education to all who seek it.

We respectfully request that you consider the following to help achieve the President's vision for U.S. higher education and scientific research in FY2017.

To educate and prepare the next-generation workforce, we must continue to open the doors to higher education for as many Americans as possible through expanded investments in the Pell Grant and other federal student financial aid programs. These programs provide students access to college and facilitate the pathways of success and completion for students who are needed to fill high-skilled positions at American manufacturers, businesses, classrooms, hospitals, laboratories, and offices.

In addition to robust support for student aid programs in the FY2017 budget, we ask that the Administration's budget include strong funding levels for graduate education across federal agencies. These programs are

important to our nation's competitiveness as they help prepare graduate students studying in areas of national need. Additionally, we ask that the Administration's budget include robust funding for the Department of Education's Title VI international education programs that are the primary federal supporter of foreign language and cultural education at U.S. universities and help to increase the global capacity of all students.

To keep the U.S. the global innovation leader through new technologies, medical advancements, improved business practices, new companies, and jobs, we urge that the Administration's FY2017 budget make strong investments in federal science and research agencies, including:

- the National Institutes of Health,
- the National Science Foundation,
- the Department of Energy's Office of Science and ARPA-E,
- the Department of Defense and DARPA,
- the National Aeronautics and Space Administration,
- the National Endowment for the Humanities,
- the Department of Agriculture – particularly AFRI and the other agriculture research and extension programs,
- the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and
- the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

Each of these federal agencies supports research, researchers, and students vital to our nation's innovation capacity. We support the *Restoring the Foundation* report's recommendations for annual real growth in basic scientific research of at least four percent at these agencies.

In closing, we urge the Administration to continue to work toward a long-term budget deficit reduction agreement that allows for sufficient investments in high priority areas such education and research. Thank you for considering our views on the FY2017 budget.

Sincerely,



Hunter R. Rawlings III  
President, AAU



Peter McPherson  
President, APLU

cc: John Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy  
William D. Adams, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities  
Charles Bolden, Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Francis Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health  
France Cordova, Director, National Science Foundation  
Arne Duncan, Secretary, Department of Education  
Ashton B. Carter, Secretary, Department of Defense  
Willie May, Acting Director, National Institutes of Standards and Technology  
Ernest Moniz, Secretary, Department of Energy  
Kathryn Sullivan, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture