January 8, 2010

CONTENTS
CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW
EXECUTIVE BRANCH
AAU President Urges PCAST to Focus on Challenges Facing Research Universities  NEW
ARPA-E to Host Energy Innovation Summit March 1-3  NEW
DOD Announces New Members of Defense Science Board
Committee Examining Student Aid Regulations Requests Assistance from Campuses  NEW
OTHER
CNSR, Congressional R&D Caucus Plan January 19 Briefing on Defense Basic Research

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

Congress remained out of session this week. The House will return for the second session of the 111th Congress on Tuesday, January 12. CongressDaily reports that the House will meet only on Tuesday and Wednesday, with floor activity limited to suspension votes. House Democrats will hold an issues retreat on Thursday that is expected to focus on the economy and jobs. The House will reconvene on Tuesday, January 19.

The Senate will return to pro forma session on Tuesday, January 19, with the first roll call votes held the next day.

Most attention will be directed at activities off the floor of the House and Senate, as Democratic leaders continue working to reach a compromise on healthcare legislation.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

AAU PRESIDENT URGES PCAST TO FOCUS ON CHALLENGES FACING RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES  NEW

AAU President Robert M. Berdahl spoke to the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) on January 7 about the major challenges facing U.S. research universities. Dr. Berdahl urged the Council to engage with the National Research Council (NRC) study on the future of research universities and said he welcomed the opportunity to work with PCAST to address the issues faced by this group of institutions. His statement and a separate paper on the NRC study are available on the AAU website.
Speaking during the public discussion portion of the PCAST meeting, President Berdahl noted the financial threats to U.S. research universities—including the disinvestment of states in public higher education and the sharp drop in university endowments—and the strategic investments in research universities being made by other nations. He noted that Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and other members of Congress have asked the NRC to undertake the study, which will assess public and private American research universities in the context of research universities internationally.

PCAST was established by executive order in 2001 as an advisory group of leading scientists and engineers who directly advise the President of the United States on issues of science, technology, and innovation. The current panel is co-chaired by Presidential science advisor John Holdren, Memorial Sloane-Kettering Cancer Center President Harold Varmus, and Broad Institute Director Eric Lander.

**ARPA-E TO HOST ENERGY INNOVATION SUMMIT MARCH 1-3  NEW**

The Department of Energy’s Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy (ARPA-E) will host its first-ever energy innovation summit in March to “serve as a forum for the nation’s energy leaders to share ideas, collaborate, and begin building the next Industrial Revolution in clean energy technologies.”

The meeting, which will be held March 1-3, 2010, at the Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center in Washington D.C., is expected to draw policymakers and government officials, as well as members of the scientific and research communities, venture capitalists, technology entrepreneurs, and representatives of corporations interested in clean energy technologies.

The summit will showcase projects of the award winners and finalists from ARPA-E’s first $150 million solicitation, as well as other “transformational technologies.”

Those interested in attending are encouraged to register early because space is limited.

**DOD ANNOUNCES NEW MEMBERS OF DEFENSE SCIENCE BOARD**

The Department of Defense on January 5 announced the appointment of 39 new members to the Defense Science Board from academia, industry, government, and the private sector.

Ashton B. Carter, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, notes in the Department’s press release, “Secretary of Defense Gates believes the DSB needs to be a professional board representing the best scientific and expert advice available to the Department of Defense.”

The Defense Science Board advises the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics on scientific, technical, manufacturing, acquisition process, and other matters of special interest to the Department. The Board is led by Chairman Paul G. Kaminski. The vice chairman is Retired Air Force Gen. Lester L. Lyles.
COMMITTEE EXAMINING STUDENT AID REGULATIONS REQUESTS
ASSISTANCE FROM CAMPUSES  NEW

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), enacted last year, authorized the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance to set up a process to review burdensome, unnecessary, or duplicative higher education regulations.

Last May, the Advisory Committee launched its effort by identifying such regulations in student financial aid programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act (HEA). The second phase of the review is now examining problematic HEA regulations more broadly. AAU has encouraged institutions to participate.

Staff of the Advisory Committee say they have appreciated receiving information from campuses about student aid regulations. They now are seeking to identify several campuses where they can conduct brief site visits to measure the overall HEA regulatory burden at individual colleges and universities. Committee staff will conduct the site reviews and provide support to campuses both before and after the visits. Institutions interested in participating are asked to contact Advisory Committee staff.

The law requires the Advisory Committee to provide Congress with a comprehensive report on problematic HEA regulations no later than two years after completion of the negotiated rulemaking process for HEOA. The Secretary of Education’s office has deemed November 2, 2009, the end of negotiated rulemaking, since most of the rules were published on that date. Thus, the Advisory Committee expects to release a final report in November 2011, with the expectation of sharing a draft with the higher education community in advance.

Additional information about the Advisory Committee’s request for assistance is available from Megan McClean of the Advisory Committee staff at Megan.McClean@ed.gov or 202-219-2220.

OTHER

CNSR, CONGRESSIONAL R&D CAUCUS PLAN JANUARY 19 BRIEFING ON DEFENSE BASIC RESEARCH

The Coalition for National Security Research (CNSR) and the Congressional R&D Caucus will host a briefing entitled, “Defense Basic Research: Critical to National Security and Economic Security,” on Tuesday, January 19, noon-1:30 p.m. in Room B338 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC.

The event is free of charge, but those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by sending an email to Phil Rudd at PRudd@umich.edu.

Representatives Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Judy Biggert (R-IL), co-chairs of the R&D Caucus, are scheduled to participate. Presenters include: Douglas Schmidt, Professor of Computer Science and Associate Chair of Computer Science and Engineering at Vanderbilt University; W. Lewis Johnson, Co-founder, President, and Chief Scientist of Alelo, Inc.; and Lisa McCauley, Vice President and Manager, Chemical Environmental and Materials Operations, National Security Global Business at Battelle.

End of document