About the AAU Centennial Celebration

The centennial celebration of the Association of American Universities (AAU) began in April 2000 and ended in April 2001. The commemoration was centered around three meetings of the AAU presidents and chancellors: the April 16-18, 2000, meeting in Washington, D.C.; the October 15-17, 2000, meeting hosted by the University of Chicago; and the April 22-24, 2001, international convocation in Washington, D.C., that included the leaders of major research universities around the world.

In keeping with the theme of the celebration, "America's Universities: Leadership for the Twenty-First Century," program symposia at the first two meetings focused on the future of research universities, the academic research enterprise, and the academic disciplines. Program symposia for the international convocation looked at the role of universities in helping peoples around the world deal with the economic and cultural issues associated with globalization. Proceedings from the first meeting, including a short history of AAU, were published in 2000; proceedings from the second and third meetings will be published in 2001.

The April 2000 Meeting

To help commemorate the anniversary, former presidents and chancellors of AAU institutions and their spouses were invited to the April 2000 meeting. In a first for the association, the Monday program was webcast live on the Internet to AAU-member campuses and elsewhere. Program sessions featured prize-winning economists, past and current university presidents, and leaders from government and industry examining the role of universities in America's prosperity and quality of life. United States Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York made a special address, and received an award from AAU for his longstanding service to the nation and higher education.

The Association also held joint festivities with the National Science Foundation, which was celebrating its 50th anniversary, and with the Library of Congress, which was celebrating its bicentennial. At a dinner honoring the National Science Foundation for its 50-year partnership with universities in research and education, the current NSF director and six former directors accepted an AAU award on behalf of the Foundation. The Association also held a gala at the Library of Congress Great Hall cosponsored by the Library. The event honored both organizations' anniversaries and highlighted a new fellowship program for international scholars that AAU and the Library of Congress were developing with the American Council of Learned Societies.

The October 2000 Meeting
The second centennial meeting was held at the University of Chicago, where AAU was founded in 1900. Focusing on the future of the academic disciplines, four distinguished scholars shared their perspectives on future directions in the biological sciences, the physical sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences.

Featured speakers included Sir Martin Rees, professor of astronomy at Cambridge University and Astronomer Royal of the United Kingdom, and Nobel Prize-winning biochemist, Thomas R. Cech, now head of the Howard Hughes Institute.

The program was videotaped and proceedings will be published in 2001.

**The April 2001 Meeting**

More than 45 leaders from major research universities on six continents joined the presidents and chancellors of AAU institutions to explore how universities are responding to the economic and cultural challenges of globalization.

This was the first international convocation initiated by AAU, and the third, and concluding meeting of the association's centennial celebration.

Program sessions examined the conflicts between globalization and cultural identity; competing demands on universities from their various constituencies; the impact of the information revolution on higher education; and the growing phenomena of university collaborations across nations and across the world.

Speakers at the meeting included His Highness the Aga Khan, hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims and president of the Aga Khan University in Pakistan. In addition, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell addressed participants during a special reception and dinner in the Jefferson and Franklin Rooms at the U.S. Department of State.

The program was videotaped and proceedings also will be published in 2001.