November 2, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Wolf, and Ranking Members Hutchison and Fattah:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), whose combined memberships include most of the major public and private research universities in the United States, we thank you for your strong support of the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). These federal research agencies are leaders in developing and supporting cutting-edge science and technology and training our next generation of scientists and engineers.

As you work to finalize the FY12 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill (H.R. 2112), we strongly encourage you to appropriate at least $6.86 billion for NSF; the same amount as the FY11 enacted level and the House bill. This level of funding would enable NSF to support important basic scientific research, education, and training programs vital to our nation’s innovation ecosystem. As the cornerstone of America’s research enterprise for the past 60 years, NSF-supported basic scientific research has paid dividends in the form of scientific and technological innovations that created new products, industries, and jobs.

For NASA to remain the world’s premier space agency requires sustained federal funding for NASA’s science, aeronautics, and space technology programs at a level that will allow the agency to continue to push the boundaries of our understanding and knowledge of these fields. To this end, we strongly encourage you to appropriate $5.1 billion for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate, $637 million for Space Technology, and $570 million for Aeronautics. Within the NASA Science portfolio, we appreciate your commitment to support the Tier I Earth Science missions recommended in the 2007 National Academies Earth Science Decadal Survey. We also appreciate your support of the NASA education programs, including the National Space Grant College and Fellowship program.

With respect to the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), we have confidence you and your staff will work through the differences to appropriate a level of funding allowing for the completion and launch of the
When determining an appropriate level of funding for JWST, we ask that a firewall be placed
between FY12 funding for JWST and NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.

Within the budget for NOAA, we urge you to provide the National Sea Grant College Program with $65 million,
as proposed by the Senate. Sea Grant plays a crucial role in working with coastal communities on research
and outreach to promote better understanding, conservation, and use of our coastal resources. Research
programs like those funded through the NOAA’s Oceanic and Atmospheric Research division provide the
foundation for understanding the Earth’s complex systems, leading to better forecasts and earlier warnings for
natural disasters.

In the Department of Commerce, we also encourage you to support research and innovations in advanced
manufacturing by funding NIST’s Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program at the same
level as FY11 and providing funding for the new Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Regional
Innovation Program to support states and regions in their economic development.

In these challenging budget times, there is a need to prioritize expenditures, and economic growth must be an
important consideration. Our nation’s past focus on education and research has paid extraordinary dividends,
with economists estimating more than half of U.S. economic growth since World War II is a result of
technological innovation. Simply put, we must continue to invest in the nation’s science and technology
enterprise if we want to meet and surpass our global competitors.

We thank you for your consideration of our views and recommendations. We stand ready to work with you
through the remainder of the appropriations process to create a final version of legislation that meets our
nation’s needs.

Sincerely,

Hunter R. Rawlings III    Peter McPherson
President                     President
Association of American Universities  Association of Public and Land-grant Universities

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye
    House Appropriations Committee Chairman Harold Rogers
    Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
    Agencies
    Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
    Agencies