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NOTE: The Weekly Wrap-up is being published today because the AAU office will be closed tomorrow for the observance of Veterans Day.

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

The House was in recess this week. The chamber will return to session on Monday, November 14, but the legislative program has not been announced.

The Senate will also return to session on November 14. Today, by a vote of 81 to 14, the Senate invoked cloture on the second FY12 appropriations “minibus,” allowing debate on the bill to begin Monday (see story below). The chamber also approved today, by a vote of 95 to 0, legislation (H.R. 674) to repeal the imposition of three-percent tax withholding on certain government payments to contractors in 2013. That measure included an amendment aimed at improving veterans’ employment and training.

Also today, the Senate failed to invoke cloture and proceed to consideration of two resolutions to disapprove federal regulations. Both votes fell short of the 60 votes needed to proceed. A resolution of disapproval on the Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed rule on cross-state air pollution standards (S.J. Res. 27) failed by a vote of 41 to 56; a resolution of disapproval on the Federal Communication Commission’s “net neutrality” rules (S.J. Res. 6) failed by a vote of 46 to 52.
The Senate this afternoon voted to begin consideration next week of the second FY12 appropriations “minibus,” which Senate leaders hope to approve by Thanksgiving. The chamber had been expected to take up the bill earlier this week, but other legislation was considered first. The second minibus combines the FY12 Energy-Water (H.R. 2354), Financial Services (S. 1573), and State-Foreign Operations (S. 1601) spending bills.

ASSOCIATIONS URGE STRONG FY12 FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE

A group of 33 organizations and associations, including AAU, has sent a letter to the House and Senate appropriators negotiating final FY12 funding for the Department of Agriculture (USDA) urging them to fund the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) at $266 million. This is the level approved by the Senate in its first “minibus” of three appropriations bills—Agriculture, Transportation-Housing, and Commerce-Justice-Science—and is $36.5 million above the House-approved level of $229.5 million. The organizations’ request is $1.5 million above the FY11 enacted level of $264.5 million.

AAU, APLU PRESIDENTS’ OP-ED URGES CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH, EDUCATION

Roll Call’s website today published an op-ed by AAU President Hunter Rawlings and Association of Public and Land-grant Universities President Peter McPherson which calls on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to focus not on fixing the past but on “safeguarding our country’s future.”

The op-ed urges the Committee to accomplish two major goals. The first is to reach a large and balanced deficit-reduction agreement; the second is to provide the conditions for long-term economic growth not only through deficit reduction and tax reform but also “by making or encouraging investments in such areas as education and research.”
A video produced by a group of MIT graduate students urges science and engineering graduate students around the country to sign on to a letter to the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction explaining the importance of protecting the nation’s investment in scientific and engineering research.

The video, which is available on the website, “Stand with Science,” features a number of students explaining the budget situation in Washington, describing previous scientific advances that have benefitted the nation, providing thumbnail descriptions of their own research, and urging their peers to sign on to the letter. The video is also available here on YouTube.

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**OSTP REQUESTS INFORMATION ON PUBLIC ACCESS TO RESEARCH DATA AND RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS**

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) on November 4 issued two requests for information (RFIs): the first on public access to scientific research data that results from federally funded research, the second on public access to peer-reviewed publications that result from federally funded research. AAU will submit comments for both RFIs.

With respect to the RFI on public access to peer-reviewed publications, AAU submitted comments on an earlier OSTP call for recommendations on this topic, which the association based on recommendations from the Scholarly Publishing Roundtable. AAU likely will provide similar comments in response to this RFI.

The first RFI asks for “recommendations on approaches for ensuring long-term stewardship and encouraging broad public access to unclassified digital data that result from federally funded scientific research.” Information provided by the public will help inform the work of the National Science and Technology Council’s (NSTC) Interagency Working Group on Digital Data. The response deadline is January 12, 2011.

The second RFI requests “recommendations on approaches for ensuring long-term stewardship and broad public access to the peer-reviewed scholarly publications that result from federally funded scientific research.” Information provided to OSTP will help inform the work of the NSTC Task Force on Public Access to Scholarly Publications. The response deadline is January 2, 2012.

**OTHER**

**CGS SURVEY SHOWS EIGHT PERCENT INCREASE IN INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENTS**

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) on November 8 released the results of a survey showing that first-time enrollment of international graduate students at U.S. graduate schools rose by eight percent between 2010 and 2011. This is the largest increase since 2006.

According to the report, growth was driven largely by a 21-percent increase in enrollment of students from China, the sixth year in a row of double-digit gains. The number of new graduate students from the Middle East and Turkey rose by 14 percent and from India by two percent.
Enrollments of new students from South Korea remained flat after a three-percent decline in 2010 and a 13-percent drop in 2009.

ASSOCIATIONS OFFER FREE WEBINAR SERIES ON UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMERCIALIZATION  NEW

AAU is partnering with the National Council of Entrepreneurial Tech Transfer (NCET2) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) to offer a free webinar series featuring campus senior research officers describing innovative ways in which their campuses are improving their research commercialization activities.

These efforts follow up on a letter sent to the Obama Administration last April, signed by more than 135 university presidents and chancellors and endorsed by AAU and APLU, which pledged to work with industry, investors, and the federal government to bolster entrepreneurship, encourage university-industry collaboration, and otherwise advance regional and national economic growth.

The webinar series, “President Obama’s Initiative on University Research Commercialization: How Universities Plan to Respond,” was initiated on November 8 with presentations by senior research officers at the University of Kansas and the University of Akron.

This series is also connected to the Presidents-Investors Summit, an event that will be held in Washington, D.C. on January 18, 2012, in advance of the annual NCET2 University Startups Conference. The Summit, which AAU is supporting, will bring together university presidents, chancellors, provosts, vice-presidents, deans, and the nation's leading investors in technology startups to continue the discussion on the importance of universities in generating startups and creating jobs.

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