AAU supports robust and sustained funding for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. We urge the 112th Congress to appropriate $5 billion for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate (SMD). This is the same level of funding that NASA SMD received in FY12, and $161 million above the Administration’s FY13 request. A $161 million increase for SMD would prove critical to the support of NASA’s planetary science missions.

AAU urges Congress to appropriate $551 million for Aeronautics and $699 million for Space Technology, as recommended in the Administration’s FY13 budget request. AAU supports sustaining funding for the Space Grant Program at its FY12 level of $39 million.

NASA’s Science, Space Technology, and Aeronautics Programs play a vital role in the Nation’s space enterprise.

Science: AAU urges Congress to appropriate $5 billion in FY13 for NASA Science in order to accomplish important science missions, such as the flagship Earth Science missions (Ice-Sat II and SMAP), Astrophysics, and Heliophysics missions. It is essential to provide a level of funding that keeps the James Webb Space Telescope on track for launch in 2018. AAU also encourages additional funding for the Planetary Science Division in order to support the Mars Exploration program.

Space Technology: AAU urges Congress to appropriate $699 million for Space Technology in FY13. While Space Technology has always been embedded in NASA’s science, aeronautics, and exploration missions, a separate budget line in last year’s request affirms the importance of investing in technology development for the nation’s space enterprise. The Space Technology budget funds partnerships between government, industry, and universities to stimulate the development of innovative and transformative technologies. The FY13 request includes support for the Space Technology Research Grants Program, which provides grants and graduate fellowships for student research in space technology.

Education and Training Programs: AAU urges Congress to appropriate $100 million for these programs, including $39 million for the Space Grant Program. In FY11, more than 23,000 Space Grant-supported undergraduate and graduate students received hands-on research and engineering experience.

NASA’s university-based programs help educate America’s future scientific workforce.

An important component of NASA’s mission is the education of young scientists and engineers. These individuals will support future NASA activities and provide the expertise the U.S. needs to maintain its technological and economic competitiveness. University-based NASA activities have a double pay-off: the development of instruments and software for missions and the education of students who will one day be part of the nation’s technological and scientific workforce.

Research and Analysis: AAU urges Congress to appropriate $324.3 million for Earth Science, $125.3 million for Planetary Science, $64.2 million for Astrophysics, and $32.7 million for Heliophysics. Research and Analysis grants in each of these areas are essential to mission analysis and hands-on training for young researchers.