CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
Organizations Urge Highest Possible Appropriations for Labor-HHS-Education

Associations Submit Comments to House Tax Committee Working Groups

OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES
Academic, Business, Association Leaders Send Congressional Leaders Principles for COMPETES Act Reauthorization  NEW

Group of Eight Senators Introduces Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill

EXECUTIVE BRANCH
AAU, APLU, ARL Encourage Campuses to Comment on Federal Public Access Plans

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

The House met in pro forma session today; the Senate did not meet. The Senate will return to session on Monday, April 22, when the chamber will begin consideration of the Marketplace Fairness Act (S. 743), to allow states to collect sales taxes on most online purchases. The House returns to session on Tuesday, April 23.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

ORGANIZATIONS URGE HIGHEST POSSIBLE APPROPRIATIONS FOR LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION

A group of 922 organizations, including AAU, sent a letter to congressional appropriators on April 16 urging them to provide the highest possible allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill in FY14. The group includes local, state, and national organizations.

The letter said, “We urge you to recognize the value of health, education, job training, and social services in improving the lives of American families and strengthening our global position.”

ASSOCIATIONS SUBMIT COMMENTS TO HOUSE TAX COMMITTEE WORKING GROUPS
A group of higher education associations, including AAU, has submitted comments to working groups of the House Ways and Means Committee on several tax provisions that are important to higher education. The three comment letters address incentives for charitable giving, tax benefits for students and their families, and tax-exempt bond financing. The letters can be viewed here.

The Ways and Means Committee designated 11 working groups to assist in its preparation for comprehensive tax reform. The working groups were tasked with reviewing current law and taking public comments on different areas of the tax code. The deadline for public comments was Monday, April 15. The working group reports will be forwarded to the Joint Committee on Taxation, which will prepare a summary report for the full Committee by Monday, May 6.

OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES

ACADEMIC, BUSINESS, ASSOCIATION LEADERS SEND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS PRINCIPLES FOR COMPETES ACT REAUTHORIZATION

A group of academic, business, and scientific society leaders, including AAU President Hunter Rawlings, today sent key Members of Congress a set of principles for guiding the upcoming reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act. The goal is to help ensure that reauthorizing the law is once again a national priority that can be supported by the research, education, and business communities.

Institutions and organizations have been encouraged to endorse the principles. The list of endorsing organizations will be updated on a continuing basis and is available here.

The original America COMPETES Act was enacted in response to the National Academies’ Report, “Rising above the Gathering Storm” (RAGS), which highlighted the importance of the U.S. science and technology enterprise to a prosperous future and international competitiveness. The legislation focused on the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the Department of Energy Office of Science.

The principles focus on:

- Funding for basic science and engineering research across all disciplines and major research agencies,
- Maintaining and promoting scientific literacy and strengthening the pipeline of scientists and engineers, and
- Preserving research excellence and opportunity by sustaining the research funding system.

GROUP OF EIGHT SENATORS INTRODUCES COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM BILL

A bipartisan group of eight Senators has introduced its long-awaited comprehensive immigration reform bill.

The “Border Security, Economic Opportunity & Immigration Modernization Act of 2013” (S. 744), is sponsored by Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY), John McCain (R-AZ), Richard Durbin
(D-IL), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Jeff Flake (R-AZ).

Senator Rubio has provided a one-page summary of the 844-page bill, along with a frequently asked questions document.

President Obama issued a statement supportive of the bill, saying: “I urge the Senate to quickly move this bill forward and, as I told Senators Schumer and McCain, I stand willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that comprehensive immigration reform becomes a reality as soon as possible.”

CompeteAmerica, a coalition in which AAU participates that is focused on the high-skill workforce, also issued a supportive statement. It said: “While this bill needs additional improvements to ensure that innovation leaders in America have full access to skilled workers—domestic and foreign—we are optimistic overall about the road ahead for reform. We look forward to continuing our work with leaders in both parties in both the Senate and House, as we take the next steps toward a 21st century immigration system.”

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

AAU, APLU, ARL ENCOURAGE CAMPUSES TO COMMENT ON FEDERAL PUBLIC ACCESS PLANS

AAU, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) released a statement on April 17 that encourages campuses to provide comments to the federal government on plans for increasing public access to the results of federally funded research. Federal agencies were directed to solicit advice from the research community and develop policies for increasing public access in a memorandum issued February 22, 2013 by White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Director John Holdren.

The OSTP policy has been praised by virtually all stakeholders for establishing a strong set of public access goals and effectively engaging university leaders, librarians, publishers, and members of the public in their development and implementation.

AAU, APLU, and ARL are assembling a group of university officials to discuss the OSTP directive. The focus will be on compliance and ways that public access objectives can be most effectively achieved with minimum administrative burden.

As reported previously, the National Academy of Sciences will hold two public meetings to take comments on how the federal research agencies might best implement the policy. The two sessions will take place May 14-15 for publications and May 16-17 for data. They will be held in the National Academy of Sciences auditorium in Washington, D.C. Additional information about the sessions and about how to register to attend is available here.

End of document
Please visit us at www.aau.edu and follow us on Twitter at @AAUniversities.