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CONTACT: Barry Toiv
202-898-7847, barry.toiv@aau.edu

AAU ELECTS BILL POWERS, PRESIDENT OF UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN, AS NEW CHAIR

The Association of American Universities today elected University of Texas at Austin President Bill Powers as its chair. His one-year term begins today, the final day of the association’s semiannual meeting in Washington, D.C.

AAU is a nonprofit association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian leading public and private research universities. Founded in 1900, AAU focuses on national and institutional issues that are important to research-intensive universities, including funding for research, research and education policy, and graduate and undergraduate education. UT Austin has been a member of AAU since 1929.

“It’s a great honor and opportunity to lead the AAU at a time when higher education is confronting tremendous transformation in everything from funding to technology,” Powers said. “AAU schools are working to embrace changes while always remaining true to their core values of providing a world-class education and cultivating world-class research.”

Powers succeeds Scott Cowen, president of Tulane University. Powers served during the past year as vice chair of AAU. Amy Gutmann, president of the University of Pennsylvania, was elected today as vice chair for the 2013-2014 term.

As AAU chair, Powers will serve as a spokesperson for the association, particularly on issues of special concern to research universities. He will represent AAU in meetings with national policymakers and help to develop national policy positions on issues that relate to university research and graduate, professional, and undergraduate education. As chair of AAU’s Executive Committee, he also will play a significant role in determining the association’s direction during the coming year.

“Bill Powers is already a national spokesman for our great research universities, particularly our public flagship universities,” said AAU President Hunter Rawlings. “He has been explaining to his state and the country the vital role these extraordinary institutions play in solving the nation’s most serious problems. As AAU Chair, he will be a leading advocate for the nation’s investments in research and higher education, and in explaining the value of America’s research universities.”
Powers, 67, has served as president of UT Austin since 2006. A native of Los Angeles, he earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley, and a law degree from Harvard University. He joined the UT Austin faculty in 1977 and served as law school dean from 2000 to 2006.

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The Association of American Universities is an association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian research universities organized to develop and implement effective national and institutional policies supporting research and scholarship, graduate and professional education, undergraduate education, and public service in research universities. Follow AAU on Twitter: @AAUniversities.