AAU STATEMENT ON FY15 COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS BILL APPROVED BY SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Following is a statement by Hunter Rawlings, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), on the FY15 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on June 5.

AAU supports the overall funding level provided for NASA in the FY2015 Commerce-Justice-Science Appropriations bill endorsed by the Senate Appropriations Committee. We hope it will be sustained by the full Senate.

We also thank the Committee for continuing to place a priority on the federal investment in basic research supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). AAU continues to support the investment level approved by the House. We recognize that the appropriators face harmful constraints on discretionary spending that prevent them from funding all needed investments. However, investments in key federal science agencies are essential if we are going to close the nation’s innovation deficit. We will continue to work with Congress to help ensure that the final appropriation for NSF is at the House level.

NSF and NASA have both been vital parts of the nation’s research, innovation, and technology enterprise for some fifty years. We face a sustained economic and technological challenge from our overseas competitors, and we can maintain our lead only if we make key investments in scientific research and education.

This year’s appropriations process and the threat of sequestration next year should make clear how important it is that Congress and the President achieve a long-term budget agreement. Such an agreement should eliminate sequestration and substantially revise the discretionary spending caps. It also should address long-term deficits by reforming the entitlement programs that contribute most to the problem – in ways that do not harm the most vulnerable – and by reforming taxes to spur economic growth and raise additional revenues.

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The Association of American Universities is a nonprofit association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian preeminent 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. Follow us on Twitter at @AAUniversities.