AAU CRITICIZES SIGNIFICANT CUT IN FY15 DEFENSE BASIC RESEARCH INCLUDED IN HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE BILL

Following is a statement by Hunter Rawlings, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), on the FY15 Defense appropriations bill approved today by the House Appropriations Committee.

We are dismayed by the House Appropriations Committee’s Defense bill for FY15, which cuts the Department of Defense’s investment in basic research by 6.4 percent. We criticized the President’s budget for its 6.9-percent cut; this bill provides only a modest improvement.

The basic research DOD has conducted since World War II has consistently made our nation’s military the world’s best equipped, most technologically advanced force. DOD basic research has led to technologies ranging from radar to GPS, from the laser to stealth technology. Congress should approve this kind of cut only if it wishes to erode our armed forces’ future technological advantages.

We recognize that the damaging spending caps and sequestration imposed by the Budget Control Act have put pressure on every area of discretionary spending. But the fact is that basic research is a very small, but vital, part of the Defense budget. Sustaining spending for this critical research priority would have very little impact on the rest of the Defense budget. We urge the full House and the Senate to reverse this unfortunate action.

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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.