December 16, 2014

Senator Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Members Shelby and Lowey:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities, an association of 60 leading U.S. public and private research universities, I write to thank you for your leadership in crafting the FY 2015 omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 83) under very challenging budget constraints. We appreciate your efforts to avoid cuts and provide modest increases to key scientific research and higher education programs.

Strong and sustained federal funding for scientific research and higher education is essential to closing our nation’s innovation deficit and remaining the world’s innovation leader. We recognize that difficult budget decisions must be made to reduce the federal deficit over the long term. However, to date, nearly all efforts at deficit reduction have been focused on discretionary spending cuts. The Budget Control Act’s spending caps and sequestration are significantly harming our nation’s ability to make sufficient federal investments in the very areas – scientific research and higher education – that underpin innovation, economic growth, and jobs.

The solution to our nation’s long-term budget deficit lies in entitlement and tax reform – not in further cutting discretionary spending programs. AAU and its member universities will continue to press Congress and the President for a larger budget deficit agreement that, at the least, eliminates sequestration in FY 2016 and beyond.

We thank you again for your efforts to protect federal investments in research and higher education in the FY 2015 omnibus bill. We stand ready to work with you to take steps toward closing the innovation deficit and to address the long-term budget challenges facing our country. Thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Hunter R. Rawlings III
President
AAU

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees
Members of the House and Senate Leadership