Dear Chairman Gregg and Ranking Member Kennedy:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an organization of 62 leading public and private research universities, I am pleased to respond to your request for ideas and suggestions regarding the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA).

We believe that the HEA serves students, universities, and our nation well and that it does not require significant modifications. However, there are several areas that we believe merit the your attention and action to make improvements.

AAU endorses the higher education community’s reauthorization recommendations submitted by the American Council on Education on behalf of over 30 higher education associations and organizations. As a reflection of the interests and priorities of the research universities that comprise AAU’s membership, we especially support the recommendations that aim to:

- increase access to higher education for low-income students by strengthening support for grants and early intervention programs, particularly the Pell Grant program;
- increase financial support for graduate education through the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN), Jacob K. Javits Fellowships, and Foreign Language and Areas Studies (FLAS) programs;
- increase access to undergraduate and graduate education by raising student loan borrowing limits and improving student loan terms and conditions; and
- reduce the regulatory burden on universities.
AAU also strongly endorses the statement included in the higher education community recommendations on ensuring accountability of institutions through the accreditation system and by providing high-quality information for students. We urge you to preserve the current decentralized system of higher education accreditation. This system has successfully facilitated self-review and peer-review to ensure and improve academic quality and public accountability of universities for over a half century.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and we look forward to working with you during the reauthorization process.

Cordially,

Nils Hasselmo
President