AAU Resolution on Teacher Education

June 1999

It is time for America-and America's universities-to make a new, sustained commitment to teachers and, hence, to the millions of students whose lives they shape. The universities we represent, in which research is one central function, have a special responsibility to make such a commitment. We are committed to inquiry and to learning, and so we must more fully understand how people learn and must more effectively assist those who teach. AAU institutions—which have long been partners in serving the needs of the nation-must use their resources of our institutions to support and nurture our teachers and the educational systems in which they work.

The challenges faced by the nation's elementary and secondary schools are enormous. Helping these schools and their teachers prepare young people for lives of meaning in 21st-century America will require many and more creative actions on the part of individuals and institutions. The research universities we represent intend to work with and, in many cases, already are working with the schools to strengthen the preparation of new teachers in our universities and to contribute more substantially to the continuing professional development of in-service teachers.

For the last year, the AAU, through its Committee on Undergraduate Education, has been carefully considering ways in which research universities can renew their commitment to teacher education. Today, the Association endorses the following agenda and encourages continued implementation of this agenda within its member institutions:

- more fully integrate teacher education and professional development programs into the rest of the university;
- make possible and encourage the certification of appropriate disciplinary majors as teachers, and explore the development of sound alternative certification routes;
- recognize and strengthen the role of our graduate programs in providing leaders for K-12 schools and in preparing future college and university faculty who will teach the next generation of teachers;
- make more research experiences available to current and future elementary and
secondary school teachers, especially in the areas of math and science;

- better utilize institutional research capabilities to improve teaching and learning in teacher education programs;

- recognize and act on the knowledge that teacher preparation is inherently a partnership, and create and sustain stronger ties with schools, state departments of education, intermediate service providers, and employers in preparation of teachers;

- create and sustain stronger programs of continuing education for teachers and integrate such programs with initial preparation programs; and

- provide the kind of educational experience to all students that would attract more of them, including those who have not been advantaged by present systems, to teaching as a career option.

The Association hopes and expects that these actions will engage its institutions more fully in joint efforts to ensure that the benefits of a powerful, content-rich education will be available to all of America's young people.