RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES PRAISE HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE ON INTRODUCTION OF COMPETITIVENESS LEGISLATION

Following is a statement by John Vaughn, Interim President of the Association of American Universities, on the introduction of competitiveness legislation by members of the House Science Committee.

The Association of American Universities (AAU) applauds Chairman Boehlert, Representatives Schwarz and McCaul, and other members of the House Science Committee for introducing legislation aimed at strengthening the nation’s ability to compete globally in the 21st century.

The bills introduced today—to improve science and math education and encourage careers in science-related fields—represent an important step toward fulfilling the agendas of the National Academies report “Rising Above the Gathering Storm” and of other recent reports on competitiveness, such as AAU’s National Defense Education and Innovation Initiative.

Like comparable legislation introduced in the Senate, these bills and those proposed earlier by Science Committee Ranking Member Bart Gordon advance the process of enacting authorization legislation to improve science, math and engineering education, strengthen U.S. innovation, and ensure the nation’s long-term economic competitiveness. This legislation complements President Bush’s American Competitiveness Initiative, which calls for enhanced federal investments in basic research at the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, and the National Institutes of Standards and Technology.

In the Senate, support for competitiveness legislation has been commendably bipartisan. It is our hope that the measures introduced today will pave the way for a similarly bipartisan effort in the House. Such bipartisanship is essential to enacting legislation that advances innovation and ensures a U.S. workforce prepared to meet the challenges of change in the 21st century.

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The Association of American Universities (www.aau.edu) is an association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian research universities organized to develop and implement effective national and institutional policies supporting research and scholarship, graduate and professional education, undergraduate education, and public service in research universities.