AAU EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR FY08 NSF AND NASA FUNDING

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies yesterday approved a Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations bill that substantially increases funding for the National Science Foundation and also provides additional funds for basic research at NASA. The full Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the bill next week.

At this writing, the subcommittee had not made public the details of its legislation, but the bill reportedly provides a higher level of funding for NSF than that proposed by the Administration, which itself proposed a substantial increase above the Fiscal Year 2007 level. In addition, the subcommittee apparently approved an increase over the President’s recommendation for basic research at NASA.

Following is a statement by Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), on the subcommittee action.

AAU is very pleased with the substantial increase proposed by the subcommittee for the National Science Foundation as well as the improved funding recommended for NASA research.

NSF plays a vital role in funding discoveries that drive the nation’s economy, improve our quality of life, and enhance national security. In fields ranging from climate research and aircraft design to pioneering medical tools and robotics, NSF helps keep our nation on the cutting edge of science. Our scientific leadership is an essential element of our global competitiveness, and these additional funds for NSF will help us to maintain that leadership.

With respect to NASA, as that agency carries out its missions, it is important that its crucial role in earth and space science, as well as aeronautical research, be sustained. We appreciate that the subcommittee is working to strengthen NASA research.

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The Association of American Universities (www.aau.edu) is an association of 62 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada organized to develop and implement effective national and institutional policies supporting research and scholarship, graduate, professional, and undergraduate education, and public service in research universities. AAU universities award over one-half of all U.S. doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in the sciences and engineering.