AAU and NASULGC Urge Swift Passage of The America COMPETES Act

AAU President Robert M. Berdahl and NASULGC President Peter McPherson today urged swift passage of H.R. 2272, The America COMPETES Act.

The two associations, along with several other higher education, scientific, and research groups, have worked with Members of Congress and their staffs to help draft this legislation and strongly support its enactment. NASULGC and AAU particularly appreciate that the final measure authorizes significant and sustained funding increases for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and creates and expands programs to improve science and mathematics education at all levels. The bill also includes valuable provisions to expand research support for outstanding young researchers, and replaces the Advanced Technology Program at the Department of Commerce with the Technology Innovation Program, which will allow universities, for the first time, to participate with small- and medium-sized businesses in this technology development program.

“This bill is a significant step in implementing recommendations from the National Academies’ 2005 report, Rising Above the Gathering Storm,” said President Berdahl. “The programs and funding levels authorized in this measure are vital to improving America’s science, mathematics and engineering education, strengthening U.S. innovation, and ensuring the nation’s long-term economic competitiveness.”

President McPherson added, “This legislation will have a positive impact on our nation’s future direction by boosting the research budgets at NSF and DOE’s Office of Science, as well as improving science and mathematics education. Strong education efforts in science and mathematics are a necessary step along the road to America’s competitiveness and security. We must train our teachers better, to train our future leaders better.”

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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.

Founded in 1887, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC, A Public University Association), is an association of public research universities, land-grant institutions, and many state public university systems. Its 215 members enroll more than 3.6 million students, award approximately a half-million degrees annually, and have an estimated 20 million alumni. As the nation’s oldest higher education association, NASULGC is dedicated to excellence in learning, discovery and engagement. For more information visit www.nasulgc.org.