AAU STATEMENT ON REAUTHORIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

Following is a statement by Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), regarding H.R. 4137, reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The Association of American Universities commends members and staff of the House and Senate education committees for their diligent efforts to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and for including a number of provisions that will benefit students such as the year-round Pell Grant and streamlining of the federal financial aid application process.

We appreciate the inclusion of provisions that preserve accreditation as a rigorous, non-governmental peer-review process and that preclude the federal government from regulating, thereby setting, accreditation standards. And we thank members and staff for working to address a number of the issues we have raised, even though the conference agreement still contains many troubling provisions.

We are deeply concerned that this complex bill includes dozens of new reporting and regulatory requirements that will create costly new administrative and personnel burdens on colleges and universities. These will inevitably increase operating costs, imposing burdens on institutions and students alike.

We look forward to working with Congress and others in the higher education community to seek improvements in the measure through technical amendments and the regulatory process. We appreciate the provision that authorizes a study of all federal regulations with which colleges and universities must comply. We hope the study moves forward this year, because we believe that the results of this study will be valuable in informing policy decisions in the future.

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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.