CONTENTS
CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE   NEW
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
Work on FY06 Supplemental Funding Bill Continues in Senate   NEW
DOE Science Letters Signed by 70 Senators and 139 Representatives
DOD Research Letter Signed by 24 Senators
OTHER CONGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS
House Republicans Strike Deal on Ethics Reform Package   NEW
House Could Take Up Telecommunications Bill Next Week   NEW
EXECUTIVE BRANCH
Department of Education Issues Letter on Student Aid Changes   UPDATED
OTHER
AAU Presidents & Chancellors Endorse Research Investments Proposed in President’s American Competitiveness Initiative
Innovation Task Force Applauds Congressional Letters Urging Increased DOE Science Funding
Research Organizations Plan May 4 Briefing on Using Climate Change Predictions
College Board and NSF to Host May 2 Session on Math & Science Preparation and High School Curricula

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE   NEW

Neither the House nor the Senate is in session today.

The Senate spent this past week debating the FY06 supplemental funding bill. A final vote is expected next Tuesday. Senate leaders also will focus next week on various health care issues, including legislation to foster small business health plans and limit medical malpractice awards.

The House this week has been considering a lobbying and ethics reform package, on which a final vote is expected on Wednesday, May 3. The chamber may also consider telecommunications legislation (see item below) and the defense authorization bill.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

WORK ON FY06 SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING BILL CONTINUES IN SENATE   NEW

After spending the week debating the $106.5 billion FY06 supplemental funding bill (H.R. 4939), the Senate is scheduled to vote on Tuesday, May 2, to cut off further debate and move to a
vote. The President has threatened to veto the final bill unless it is closer to his requested level of $94.5 billion, which includes his initial request plus $2.3 billion to deal with a potential avian flu pandemic.

**DOE SCIENCE LETTERS SIGNED BY 70 SENATORS AND 139 REPRESENTATIVES**

Seventy Senators and 139 Representatives have signed letters to Senate and House appropriators urging them to provide the 14-percent budget increase for the Department of Energy’s Office of Science that was included in the President’s FY07 budget request as part of his American Competitiveness Initiative.

Members of the CFR are encouraged to thank their Senators and Representatives who signed the letters.

In the Senate, the effort was led by Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM). This year’s 70 signers represented an increase from the 68 Senators who signed a similar letter last year.


A copy of the Senate letter is available on the AAU Web site at: [http://www.aau.edu/budget/Ltr_FY07_Office_of_Science_4-26-06.pdf](http://www.aau.edu/budget/Ltr_FY07_Office_of_Science_4-26-06.pdf).

In the House the effort was led by Reps. Judy Biggert (R-IL), Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Ellen Tauscher (D-CA). This year’s 139 signatures compared to 118 Members who signed last year’s letter.

A printed list of signers is available at the bottom of the House letter, which is available on the AAU Web site at: [http://www.aau.edu/budget/Ltr_FY07_H_Office_of_Science_4-21-06.pdf](http://www.aau.edu/budget/Ltr_FY07_H_Office_of_Science_4-21-06.pdf).

**DOD RESEARCH LETTER SIGNED BY 24 SENATORS**

Twenty-four Senators have sent a letter to Senate authorizers and appropriators urging a 10-percent increase for Defense basic research funding (budget category 6.1) in FY07. The letter, which was spearheaded by Senators Jeff Bingman (D-NM), Rick Santorum (R-PA), Pete Domenici (R-NM), and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), was sent to the leaders of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The 24 Senators who signed the letter are: Bingaman, Boxer, Cantwell, Chambliss, Clinton, DeWine, Dole, Domenici, Feinstein, Harkin, Jeffords, Johnson, Kennedy, Kerry, Lautenberg, Lieberman, Mikulski, Murray, Santorum, Smith, Stabenow, Thune, Voinovich, and Wyden.

Members of the CFR are encouraged to thank their Senators who signed the letter.
OTHER CONGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

HOUSE REPUBLICANS STRIKE DEAL ON ETHICS REFORM PACKAGE  NEW

Controversy over congressional earmarks came close to scuttling the House lobbying and ethics reform package (H.R. 4975) during the bill’s consideration on Thursday. Following a contentious day of negotiations and a two-hour meeting of the Republican Conference, House Republican leaders were able to convince enough of their own Members to support the rule for the bill’s consideration on a 216 to 207 vote. The vote on the bill is expected Wednesday, May 3.

A major sticking point was that House appropriators, led by committee chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA), refused to support the ethics package unless disclosure provisions regarding earmarks in conference reports were extended beyond appropriations bills to authorizing and tax measures. CQToday reports that an agreement was reached after House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) gave his “personal, iron-clad commitment” that a conference report on the ethics package would not emerge from a House-Senate conference without comprehensive earmark provisions.

However, most Democrats and 12 Republicans, including House Judiciary Committee Chairman James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and former Ethics Committee Chairman Joel Hefley (R-CO), voted against the rule on the basis that the bill did not go far enough in addressing lobbying and ethics concerns.

The package, which was developed in response to the lobbying scandals surrounding lobbyist Jack Abramoff and former Rep. Randy Cunningham (R-CA), would require lobbyists to file quarterly rather than semiannual reports, which would include their donations to federal candidates and political action committees, as well as the value of gifts to legislators and their staffs. In addition, appropriations bills would have to list any earmarks they contain, along with their sponsors. Congressional staff would be required to take ethics training.

HOUSE COULD TAKE UP TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL NEXT WEEK  NEW

CongressDaily reports that the House next week may consider telecommunications legislation approved by the House Energy and Commerce Committee on April 26. Still pending, however, is a request for sequential referral of the bill by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), which, if granted, likely would delay the vote.

As reported from committee, the “Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement Act of 2006” (no bill number yet) would make it easier for the Bell companies to compete with cable television providers for pay-television services. A major issue is the question of “net neutrality,” the concept of requiring telephone and cable companies to operate their high-speed networks in a non-discriminatory manner and give equal treatment to similar types of Internet traffic. The committee rejected by a vote of 22-34 an amendment offered by Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), ranking member of the Telecommunications and the Internet Subcommittee, that would have strengthened net neutrality provisions in the bill.
The committee-approved bill codifies four net neutrality principles approved last year by the Federal Communications Commission. But a number of organizations, including AAU and other higher education associations, believe those principles do not go far enough to ensure the robust net neutrality mechanism that is necessary to sustain continued innovation.

In a March 29 letter, higher education associations reiterated the importance of net neutrality for universities in delivering multimedia instructional materials and in developing next-generation technologies that will drive the Internet economy. They expressed concern that the FCC-supported provisions would not require operators of broadband networks to maintain an open platform and, thus, would not prohibit them from discriminating against competitors by giving preferential treatment to their own Internet services over the services provided by universities and others.

The letter, sent by then-AAU President Nils Hasselmo on behalf of the American Council on Education, the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, EDUCAUSE, and Internet2, is available on the AAU Web site at: http://www.aau.edu/intellect/Ltr_Barton_Dingell_3-29-06.pdf.

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

#### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ISSUES LETTER ON STUDENT AID CHANGES

The Department of Education has issued a Dear Colleague letter that explains the changes to the terms and conditions of federal Stafford loans, PLUS loans, and consolidation loans that were made by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005. The letter includes information on the change in student loan interest rates as well as on the ability of graduate and professional students to participate in the PLUS loan program beginning July 1, 2006. Members of the CFR are encouraged to share this information with their campus student financial aid officers.

The Department’s explanatory letter is available at: http://www.ifap.ed.gov/dpcletters/FP0605.html.

A background piece with talking points on the various federal student aid programs for FY07 is now available on the AAU Web site at: http://www.aau.edu/budget/Student_Aid_FY07_TPs.pdf.

### OTHER

#### AAU PRESIDENTS & CHANCELLORS ENDORSE PROPOSED RESEARCH INVESTMENTS IN PRESIDENT’S AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS INITIATIVE

At their meeting in Washington, D.C. earlier this week, the AAU presidents and chancellors approved a statement expressing support for the investments in federal research proposed by President Bush in his American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) and his FY07 budget, as well as for broader competitiveness legislation.

A copy of the statement is available on the AAU Web site at: http://www.aau.edu/research/AAU_Presidents_Endorse_President's_ACI_4-26-06.pdf.
INNOVATION TASK FORCE APPLAUDS CONGRESSIONAL LETTERS URGING INCREASED DOE SCIENCE FUNDING

The Task Force on the Future of American Innovation, a coalition of business, research-university, and scientific groups in which AAU participates actively, today thanked the Senators and Representatives who signed the letters urging increased funding for the DOE Office of Science.

The statement said in part:

“These bipartisan coalitions, which comprise more than two-thirds of the Senate and one-fourth of the House, recognize that America’s long-term competitiveness and future energy security depend on our continuing leadership in science and technology…We urge Congress to take up the President’s challenge and provide his recommended funding levels not only for the Office of Science but also for the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. These letters indicate that there is strong bipartisan Congressional support for such action.”

The full statement is available on the AAU Web site at:  

RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS PLAN MAY 4 BRIEFING ON USING CLIMATE CHANGE PREDICTIONS

A group of research universities and institutions will host a Capitol Hill briefing next week to highlight the scientific challenges and practical issues involved in building a better system for coping with extremes in weather and climate. The session is scheduled for Thursday, May 4, 12:00-1:30 p.m. in 2325 Rayburn House Office Building. Lunch will be served. Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to Nick Moustakas at Columbia University at 212-854-1116 or nm14@columbia.edu.

The briefing is sponsored by nine universities and three research institutes: Columbia and Princeton Universities; the Universities of Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Miami, Oklahoma, and Washington; Scripps Institution for Oceanography; University Corporation for Atmospheric Research; and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

COLLEGE BOARD AND NSF TO HOST MAY 2 SESSION ON MATH & SCIENCE PREPARATION AND HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA

The College Board and the National Science Foundation (NSF) will host a Capitol Hill session on Tuesday, May 2, to discuss how high school science course content and classroom practice must change to prepare students for successful college careers in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, while also addressing persistent performance gaps among racial and ethnic groups.

The session will be held on May 2, from 12:30-1:30 p.m., in 2325 Rayburn House Office Building. Lunch will be served. Participants will be:
Moderator: Jay Mathews, Education Columnist, The Washington Post

Panelists: David Ely, Advanced Placement Biology Teacher, Champlain Valley Union High School
Shirley Malcom, Head, Education and Human Resources, American Association for the Advancement of Science
James Pellegrino, Distinguished Professor, Cognitive Psychology and Education, University of Illinois at Chicago
Judy Wurtzel, Senior Fellow, Education & Society Program, The Aspen Institute

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to Lydia Pelliccia at 202-667-0901 or Lydia.pelliccia@widmeyer.com.

End of document