AAU STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT OBAMA’S R&D COMMITMENT

Following is a statement by Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), on the commitment made by President Obama on R&D in his speech at the National Academies.

On behalf of the nation’s leading research universities, I commend President Obama for setting the goal of investing more than three percent of the nation’s economic output in scientific innovation. This commitment will help restore science, engineering, and mathematics to their rightful place among the nation’s priorities for investment in our future.

As the President said, we have not experienced a “Sputnik moment” that jolts the nation into an awareness of the need to invest in science. Rather, we have seen slow erosion of our nation’s scientific preeminence. We cannot expect this country to maintain its greatness – economically, educationally, militarily, and diplomatically – without the kind of renewed commitment the President is calling for.

President Obama is not the only recent President to take important steps to support science. But it has been decades since a President has made science central to his agenda in the way that President Obama has. Our nation’s research universities, which play a fundamental role in the country’s innovation infrastructure, are grateful for this recognition, and, more importantly, are prepared to help make his commitment pay enormous dividends for this and future generations of Americans.

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.