



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU LEADERS PLAN VISIT TO IRANIAN UNIVERSITIES

Six presidents of U.S. research universities will visit Iranian universities in November on a trip organized by the [Association of American Universities](#) (AAU). AAU President Robert M. Berdahl, who will accompany the delegation, said the trip is in response to an invitation by the president of Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, which will host the visit. The group will visit Tehran University and several other Iranian universities, as well.

The visit complements a series of exchange visits by U.S. scientists to Iran under the sponsorship of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering. Under the National Academies' program, Iranian scientists and engineers have also visited U.S. universities and participated in meetings structured around specific topics of mutual scientific interest.

The university presidents traveling to Iran are: Jared Cohon, Carnegie Mellon University; David Leebron, Rice University; J. Bernard Machen, University of Florida; C. D. Mote, Jr., University of Maryland, College Park; David Skorton, Cornell University; and Larry Vanderhoef, University of California, Davis.

A number of the presidents were asked to join the trip because they or their institutions have been involved in previous scientific and other exchanges with Iran.

The Lounsbery Foundation, which also has provided assistance for the National Academies' scientific exchanges, will pay most of the group's travel expenses.

In addition to meetings with academic leaders and with other higher education officials, the group will meet with faculty in engineering and science. At Sharif University, Iran's premier science and technology university, they will hold an open forum with students.

“Prior to the Iranian revolution in 1979, a very high percentage of the faculty at Iranian universities was educated in the United States; since that time, and especially since 9/11, that number has declined dramatically,” said Berdahl. “We believe it is important to maintain and renew academic ties between our two countries as a means of laying the groundwork for greater

understanding and rebuilding what was once a very healthy collaboration in science and higher education.”

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The [Association of American Universities](#) is an association of 62 leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada. AAU focuses on issues important to research-intensive universities, such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education. AAU universities award over one-half of all U.S. doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in the sciences and engineering. They are on the leading edge of innovation, scholarship, and solutions that contribute to our nation's economy, security, and well-being.