



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU STATEMENT ON APPOINTMENT OF FRANCIS COLLINS AS DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

Following is a statement by Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities (AAU), on President Obama's appointment of Dr. Francis Collins as Director of the National Institutes of Health.

On behalf of the Association of American Universities, I commend President Obama's selection of Francis Collins as Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Collins is the right person at the right time to lead the NIH when we have such extraordinary opportunities in biomedical research.

Dr. Collins is uniquely qualified to lead NIH. As a scientist he developed the key laboratory technique that enabled him to identify the gene for cystic fibrosis. As an administrator at NIH, Dr. Collins led the first complete sequencing of the human genome, ahead of schedule and under budget.

But equally important, Dr. Collins understands the need for public understanding of science and research and is acutely aware of the public policy and ethical implications of medical science. His passionate advocacy for genetic privacy and protection of individuals led to enactment of the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act, which protects the privacy and assures the equal access to health care of those at risk of developing genetically caused disease.

Dr. Collins will fire the enthusiasm of the American people and our national leadership for a renewed and sustained commitment to biomedical research. We in the research university community look forward to working with him. I congratulate President Obama on this excellent appointment.

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