



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT'S FY17 BUDGET

The Association of American Universities today issued the following statement on President Obama's FY17 budget by the association's president, Hunter Rawlings:

While last year's budget agreement provided a welcome increase in the discretionary spending caps, the caps continue to damage the nation's ability to invest in its future. President Obama has been a strong supporter of the federal investment in scientific research. But even taking the caps into account, we believe this budget does not live up to the President's long-time commitment to funding research. The budget sets aspirational goals for research funding, which we commend, but, other than energy research, the proposed investments rely on mandatory funding streams that Congress will not seriously consider.

Moreover, the President's budget proposes deep cuts in basic research at the Department of Defense. This abandonment of the Administration's earlier commitment to basic Defense research suggests a lack of understanding that tomorrow's innovations to keep our armed forces the best in the world depend on today's basic research.

The budget does, however, provide significant support for student financial aid, which makes college accessible to millions of undergraduates. The President proposes important reforms to the Pell Grant program and maintains needed funding for other important financial aid programs, including the Perkins loan program. The budget also proposes to streamline and expand tax benefits to make college more accessible.

In the long run, our country needs to recognize that we face the threat of an innovation deficit caused by the combination of our own still-inadequate investment in research and higher education while other countries race to catch and bypass us. Only when Congress and the President are prepared to deal with the actual causes of the nation's long-term fiscal issues will there be adequate resources to fuel our nation's economy and its future.

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The [Association of American Universities \(AAU\)](#) is an association of [60 U.S. and two Canadian public and private research universities](#). It focuses on issues such as funding for research, research policy issues, and graduate and undergraduate education. AAU member universities are on the leading edge of innovation, scholarship, and solutions that contribute to the nation's economy, security, and wellbeing. AAU's 60 U.S. universities award nearly one-half of all U.S. doctoral degrees and 55 percent of those in STEM fields.

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