



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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AAU STATEMENT ON PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS ON EARMARKING

Following is a statement by Robert M. Berdahl, President of the Association of American Universities, on comments made by President Bush tonight in his State of Union address on earmarking:

The Association of American Universities strongly supports the principle that merit-reviewed competition is the best method of ensuring the quality and cost-effectiveness of federally sponsored research. AAU has always expressed concern that congressional or administration earmarking of federal research funds may reduce the capacity of federal agencies to support the most promising research and thereby impair the quality of our national research program.

While AAU respects the authority of Congress to set spending priorities and most earmarks are not directed to colleges and universities, we applaud steps that have the effect of reducing academic earmarking that diverts funding from peer-reviewed research. While there is a long way to go, Congress took steps in the right direction last year, and now the President proposes to go even further. To the extent that these actions free up needed resources for peer-reviewed science, we applaud them.

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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.