

AAU AND THE VALUE OF RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

Key Message: AAU comprises 62 distinguished research universities and works to help shape policy for higher education, science and innovation. America's public and private research universities are indispensable to the economy, security, and well-being of their communities, their states, and the nation. The people, ideas, discoveries, and cultural works that they produce enhance our economy, improve our health and security, and enrich our society. AAU is the voice of its members in Washington and works to help shape policy for higher education, science, and innovation.

-) Founded in 1900, the Association of American Universities comprises 62 distinguished institutions and works to help shape policy for higher education, science and innovation.** AAU gathers best practices and data from our member institutions for the betterment of all higher education, convenes university, research, industry, government, local, and other leaders to discuss and address community and national issues, and leads coalitions to advocate for research and education.
-) America's research universities are essential public goods that strengthen our economy, our security, our democracy, and our quality of life.** Their value can be measured in ideas that yield new products or cures for disease; jobs and new businesses in their communities; new approaches to difficult social problems; new expressions or interpretations of culture; new and invigorating creative output in the arts; and the development in students and communities of the capacity and moral commitment to help others. Their value can be measured in graduates who contribute to the well-being and productivity of society and to the framework of freedom that we cherish.
-) Research universities are creating the future, today. They are where invention and innovation begin.** Research universities are incubators of scientific and technical innovation. With the demise of large industrial research laboratories, most of basic scientific research conducted in the U.S. is done in research universities or government laboratories closely affiliated with research universities. Today, AAU universities and other research universities are doing basic and applied research that may lead to an AIDS vaccine, a cure for Ebola, and continued advances against cancer; advanced computer-human interfaces and robotics; solutions to global problems such as hunger; and a better understanding of the causes of, and solutions to, conflicts around the globe.
-) Research universities make a difference in people's lives every day.** They contribute significantly to the economic strength of their communities and regions. In addition to the thousands of staff and faculty that universities employ, they often serve as primary economic engines of their communities and regions by providing well-educated employees and creating new businesses and opportunities. In 2015, the 60 AAU institutions in the United States received more than 4,200 U.S. patents and executed more than 3,700 licensing agreements. They also initiated 622 start-up companies, of which 73 percent operate in the same state as the licensing institution.
-) Research universities also enrich the civic lives of their home communities.** They foster civic engagement and public service by capturing the idealism of students, faculty, and staff to provide

services and outreach efforts that improve the quality of life in their communities. Universities partner with cities and schools, provide world-class health care through their medical centers and clinics, and open their museums, libraries, performing arts centers, and recreation centers and fields to their communities.

-) **The American research university successfully combines research with graduate education.** A great strength of the American research university is the joining of research with graduate education. Graduate students are educated as they work alongside their faculty mentors in laboratories, in libraries, in the classroom, and in the field. Graduate students and their mentors also co-author academic papers. The benefit of this educational model is reciprocal. Graduate education is enriched by the direct conduct of research, and the research is invigorated by the energy and creativity of students. Other nations increasingly recognize this is the best system for educating the next generation of scientists and scholars and are replicating our model.
-) **Research universities are educating tomorrow's leaders in STEM and other fields, preparing them to contribute to the well-being and productivity of society and to navigate in a rapidly changing world.** Along with offering their undergraduate students a wide variety of majors—from classical to cutting-edge—research universities enable their students to learn from top faculty, participate in extraordinary research with leaders in their fields, and interact with students from around the country and around the world. Increasingly, undergraduates at research universities are benefitting from research on teaching and learning. AAU's ambitious undergraduate STEM education initiative is helping reform how introductory STEM classes are taught, making them more interactive and student-centered.
-) **Research universities expand knowledge and enrich learning at all colleges and universities.** Research universities are unique in our nation's system of higher education. The faculties at these institutions are engaged in research and scholarship that inform and broaden the basis of knowledge taught at all institutions. Their work creates path-breaking scholarship that expands students' ability to grapple with the most current and pressing issues. Research universities also provide the advanced education for those who become faculty and educate students at all institutions.