



August 8, 2018

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

As you prepare the administration's FY2020 budget, we write on behalf of our associations' more than 200 research university members, to urge you to uphold the fruitful U.S. government-university partnership by making federal investments in higher education and scientific research a high priority.

The AAU and APLU memberships include the leading public and private research-intensive universities in the United States. Our member research universities share the administration's commitment to expand educational and economic opportunities for all Americans, strengthen our nation's innovation capacity and economy, and ensure national security. Our shared commitment is inherent to the historic and successful partnership that the federal government forged with U.S. universities to perform innovative research to advance our economy, improve public health, strengthen national security, and simultaneously train the next generation of scientists, engineers, scholars, and leaders for our nation.

Essential to this partnership is federal investment in competitively awarded grants to support the people, tools, and infrastructure necessary to conduct high-quality research on behalf of the American people. Also important are federal investments in student financial aid and other higher education programs that advance our nation's interests by ensuring access to higher education.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences stated in its 2014 report, [Restoring the Foundation: The Vital Role of Research in Preserving the American Dream](#), "There is a deficit between what America is investing and what it should be investing to remain competitive, not only in research but in innovation and job creation." To avoid an innovation deficit and maintain our global competitive edge, the U.S. must make robust, sustainable, and predictable increases in scientific research investments and continue to expand access to high-quality, affordable higher education.

For FY2018, Congress approved, and the President signed into law a much-needed funding boost for research and student aid programs. Looking toward FY2020, we are deeply concerned about the return of the Budget Control Act (BCA) discretionary spending caps that threaten to significantly undercut the investments made in FY2018 for these key programs, as well as those that are currently under consideration in FY2019. As competitor countries like China continue to escalate their spending in these critical areas, we risk falling behind due to the onerous BCA caps that will stifle funding for investments in research and higher education that generate economic growth. The recently released National Science Board resource page, "[The Rise of China in Science and Engineering](#)," provides startling data about

China's R&D investments and the fact that they are poised to surpass the U.S. in R&D expenditures by the end of this year.

To help ensure that the U.S. remains the global innovation leader, we strongly urge that the administration's FY2020 budget align with the call to action, [*Innovation: An American Imperative*](#) – endorsed by over 500 companies, chambers of commerce, universities, scientific societies, and other organizations – to provide annual real funding growth of at least four percent for basic research at key federal research agencies, including:

- National Institutes of Health
- National Science Foundation
- Department of Energy's Office of Science and Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E)
- Department of Defense's Science and Technology programs and DARPA
- National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- National Endowment for the Humanities
- Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture – particularly the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) and other agriculture research and extension programs
- Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
- Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences
- Agency for International Development – particularly Feed the Future Innovation Labs and university-to-university partnerships.

Additionally, as you craft the FY2020 budget proposal, we respectfully request that the administration include strong funding for the Pell Grant and other Department of Education (ED) student aid and higher education programs that prepare the next-generation workforce. These programs provide access for students interested in pursuing higher education and facilitate the pathways of success and completion for students who are needed to fill high-skilled positions with American manufacturers and businesses, as well as in classrooms, laboratories, and hospitals. We also ask that the administration's budget include strong funding levels for graduate education across federal agencies, including the ED Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) program, which assists talented students studying in areas such as the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Further, we ask that the administration's FY2020 budget include increased funding for the ED Title VI and Fulbright-Hays international education programs, which support foreign language and cultural education programs critical to building the global capacities of all students. These programs are essential to maintaining a pipeline of people with language and international expertise necessary for global collaboration and competition and who can contribute to our nation's security.

In closing, we urge the administration to work toward a long-term budget agreement that allows for robust support for higher education and research programs vital to our nation's economic competitiveness and national security.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Mary Sue Coleman
President
Association of American Universities



Peter McPherson
President
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities