



February 3, 2020

Senator Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Lowey and Ranking Members Leahy and Granger:

On behalf of the Association of American Universities (AAU), an association of America's leading research universities, we urge you to make investments in fundamental scientific research and student aid a top priority as you consider the FY 2021 302(b) allocations.

The federal government has fostered a unique partnership with America's research universities over the past 70 years. This extraordinary government-university partnership has resulted in astounding leaps in technological innovation, sustained a dynamic American economy, improved public health and well-being, and helped make our military the most effective in the world.

Federal investment in fundamental scientific research and student aid are proven drivers of economic growth. This vital investment fosters discoveries that lead to the development of new technologies, processes, and a workforce that advances our national interests. Moreover, federal investment in these areas is essential to addressing challenges to our nation's leadership in science and innovation. As the [Task Force on American Innovation's 2019 Benchmarks report](#) warns: "... the diminishing presence of the U.S. within the global share of research and development (R&D) is a threat to the nation's scientific enterprise, indicating a lack of federal commitment to scientific research programs. . . ."

We are grateful Congress took affirmative steps in the final FY20 appropriations measures to boost federal investments in some research agencies and student aid programs. You have an opportunity now to take another step in FY21 to renew the government-university partnership and its ability to serve critical national interests.

We urge you to make research and student aid programs a top priority as you consider the FY21 302(b) allocations. We specifically recommend that you ensure that the 302(b) allocations for the Commerce-Justice-Science, Energy and Water Development, and Labor-HHS-Education subcommittees will support significant investments in research and student aid programs, including: the National Science Foundation; NASA's science, aeronautics, and space technology programs; the Department of Energy's Office of Science and ARPA-E; the National Institutes of Health; Pell Grants and other student aid programs; the Institute for Education Sciences;

and the Department of Education's graduate and international education programs. We also urge you to reinforce the need to strengthen our nation's innovation system through robust research investments for the Department of Defense's 6.1 basic research program, DARPA, and other science and technology programs; the Department of Agriculture's AFRI program; and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to working with you to ensure the United States remains the global innovation leader.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Sue Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. To the right of the signature is a vertical line, likely a placeholder for a stamp or a separator.

Mary Sue Coleman
President

cc: Members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees