



ASSOCIATION OF  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC AND  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES



April 1, 2014

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Chairman  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Budget  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Van Hollen:

As you work to develop a House FY2015 Budget Resolution, we urge you to craft a measure that would help close the innovation deficit that is building in the United States and threatening our national and economic security.

It is imperative that any new budget plan for FY2015 and beyond help grow our economy, create American jobs, and ensure that the U.S. remains the global innovation leader. Federal spending for research and higher education has proven to be an extraordinarily fruitful investment for our country, yielding rich returns to the American people in the form of medical advances, stronger national security, technological breakthroughs that have transformed our nation and the world, a highly capable workforce, and long-term economic growth and the jobs that go with it. Therefore, we believe the Budget Resolution should specify the need for increased funding of these priorities that exceeds inflation.

Unfortunately, our nation has been neglecting investments in these areas, but other countries have taken note of our past successes and are emulating our approach. While we have essentially flat-lined these critical investments over the last decade, other countries have rapidly increased their spending on science and higher education. We are creating an innovation deficit – the widening gap between the actual level of federal funding for research and higher education and what our country’s investment needs to be if we are to remain the world’s innovation leader – that will impede our nation’s ability to fully recover from our economic downturn and build prosperity for future generations of Americans. It will result in fewer U.S. discoveries and breakthroughs, fewer highly skilled U.S. workers, fewer new U.S. industries, and fewer U.S. jobs.

Investment spending in research and education primarily occurs in the discretionary part of the federal budget. This continually shrinking portion of the budget limits the ability of appropriators to set adequate spending levels for these investments. In the long run, any real effort to improve the ability of the federal government to make sound and sufficient investments

in research and education must include a rebalancing of the discretionary budget with the other key components of the federal budget.

Therefore, as you look beyond FY2015 to map out a plan for future federal budgets, we reiterate the call we have made with the support of over 200 university presidents and chancellors for Congress and the president to: 1) end budget sequestration in FY16 and beyond, 2) outline a path for comprehensive tax reform, which will spur economic growth and produce new revenue, and 3) make meaningful entitlement reforms that do not harm those most vulnerable in society. Tackling these challenges will provide the resources needed to close the innovation deficit through adequate investments in research and higher education. The result will be a smarter, stronger, safer, more prosperous, and healthier United States for today and for future generations.

We are eager to work with you to help achieve these goals.

Sincerely,



Hunter R. Rawlings III  
President  
AAU



Peter McPherson  
President  
APLU

cc: Members of the House Budget Committee  
Speaker John Boehner  
Republican Leader Eric Cantor  
Republican Whip Kevin McCarthy  
Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer