



ASSOCIATION OF  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

ASSOCIATION OF  
PUBLIC AND  
LAND-GRANT  
UNIVERSITIES



August 2, 2013

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Burwell:

On behalf of our associations' more than 200 member research universities, we urge you to uphold the President's commitment to higher education and research as you craft the Administration's FY 2015 budget. We are deeply concerned that the nation is already facing an *innovation deficit* that threatens to grow over time and cause our nation great harm.

A broken federal budget process and the mindless sequester have prevented much of the President's proposed investment in higher education and research from becoming reality, despite his commitment and bipartisan Congressional backing for these priorities. Thus, federal R&D funding has stagnated, essentially leaving us at 2002 levels after factoring in inflation. Not only is the U.S. not keeping pace with our own historic levels of science funding, but over the past few years other nations have significantly increased their investments in science and research. Countries such as China, South Korea, India, and Singapore are far outpacing the U.S. in their annual percentage growth of research and development funding. Other nations, such as Germany and Japan, have continued to accelerate their research investments despite experiencing difficult economic times. The U.S. is taking the opposite approach, and is falling further behind others in educating and training its people to compete and succeed in the workforce. As nations around the world aggressively seek to prepare their citizens to take on the workforce challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the U.S. must continue to lead the way, offering opportunity for a higher education to all who seek it.

We believe this combination of factors is creating an *innovation deficit* which, if not reversed, will harm our economy, national security, and overall quality of life. We fully agree with President Obama that substantial investments in education and research must be a top priority because they are "key to a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy." Such investments will effectively address our *innovation deficit* and keep the U.S. in its preeminent global position.

We respectfully request that you consider the following to help achieve the President's vision for U.S. science and education in FY2015. In order to educate and prepare the next-generation workforce, we

must keep open the doors to higher education for as many Americans as possible through investments in the Pell Grant and other federal student financial aid programs. These programs provide students access to college and help open the pathways of success and completion for students who are needed to fill high-skilled positions in U.S. businesses, classrooms, hospitals, laboratories, and offices.

In addition to robust support for student aid programs in the FY2015 budget, we ask that the Administration's budget include strong funding levels for graduate education and Title VI international programs. These programs are important to our nation's competitiveness as they help prepare graduate students studying in areas of national need and increase the global capacity of all our students. We hope the budget request will also expand access to study abroad opportunities, particularly for underserved student populations, and support a significant increase in the number of U.S. students studying abroad. Such opportunities will ensure that more students graduate from college with the international understanding and foreign language skills necessary to be successful in today's global economy.

U.S. investment in science and research has produced innovations that have led to countless new technologies, medical advancements, improved business practices, new companies, and, most importantly, jobs. We appreciate the Administration's "vision for creating jobs and building a thriving middle class by investing in research and development." This is why we urge that the FY2015 budget request continue in that vein with robust investment levels for federal science and research agencies, including: the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy's Office of Science and ARPA-E, the Department of Defense and DARPA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Agriculture -- particularly AFRI and the other agriculture research and extension programs, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Each of these federal agencies supports research, researchers, and students vital to our nation's innovation capacity.

We urge the Administration to work to achieve a long-term budget deficit reduction agreement that eliminates sequestration. The pall of the sequester hanging over the budget process dramatically limits what can be accomplished through annual budgets and appropriations. Terminating sequestration will allow for reasonable budget negotiations to resume and offer a more promising course for setting funding priorities.

The combination of strong federal support and prioritization of higher education and research is the formula needed to reverse our *innovation deficit* and ensure U.S. economic growth and prosperity for years to come. Thank you for considering our views on the FY2015 budget and please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Peter McPherson  
President  
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities



Hunter R. Rawlings III  
President  
Association of American Universities

cc: John Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy  
Charles Bolden, Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Ernest Moniz, Secretary, Department of Energy  
Francis Collins, Director, National Institutes of Health  
Arne Duncan, Secretary, Department of Education  
Patrick Gallagher, Director, National Institutes of Standards and Technology  
Kathryn Sullivan, Acting Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Chuck Hagel, Secretary, Department of Defense  
James Leach, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities  
Cora Marrett, Acting Director, National Science Foundation  
Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture