



Council of Colleges of Arts & Sciences
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October 23, 2012

The Executive Board of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS), the professional organization for Deans of Colleges of Arts and Sciences, representing over 700 schools or colleges and 1700 deans across the United States, applauds the Association of American Universities' (AAU) September 2012 report, *Partnering for a Prosperous and Secure Future: The Federal Government and Research Universities*, as a blueprint for how best to advance higher education in the United States, which in turn will secure our nation's future in the global knowledge economy.

In particular, we endorse the following seven recommendations by the AAU and urge the next Administration to move with all deliberate speed in adopting them.

- (1) "We support a balanced approach to deficit reduction that seriously and thoughtfully addresses entitlement programs... and incorporates substantial tax reform that is designed both to encourage economic growth and to raise revenues needed to reduce the deficit." At the same time, "we must sustain the nation's investments in the future. ...The bipartisan Bowles-Simpson commission stated that 'we must invest in education, infrastructure, and high-value research and development to help our economy grow keep us globally competitive, and make it easier for businesses to create jobs.'
- (2) "The federal government must continue to invest in critical student financial aid funding, the most important being the Pell Grant program, the primary means by which more than nine million low-income students attend college. ...Investments in other federal student aid programs that provide grants and work-study to low- and middle-income students are also vitally important, as most students rely on a combination of financial aid programs to fund their college educations."
- (3) "The federal government has a role to play in strengthening loan consolidation, repayment, and forgiveness options, as well as deferments and forbearances, to prevent students and their families from over-borrowing and to help them better manage their debt and avoid default."
- (4) "With documented shortages of language-proficient workers hindering the work of national security agencies, it is time for a fundamental national examination of, and funding strategy for, foreign language training and international education."

- (5) “The President and his Administration should support and encourage the development of efforts like AAU’s STEM Undergraduate Education Initiative and APLU’s [the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities] Science and Math Teacher Imperative, which are working to cultivate talent in the STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] fields, including broadening participation among women and under-represented minorities.”
- (6) “We hope that the traditional bipartisan support for basic scientific research in all disciplines, from biomedical to physical, from space science to social science, will continue into the future and that the specific goals asserted by the National Research Council [of raising total national R&D funded by all sources to 3% of the GDP] can be attained.” We further hope “that the President should take a strong stand against basic research funds allocated by means other than merit review.” We encourage “the Administration to reinvest in competitive grants at the National Endowment for the Humanities, which have been disproportionately cut over the past decade, and to provide new opportunities for collaboration among students and faculty in the humanities, similar to those in the sciences.”
- (7) “We hope that the Administration will seriously consider initiatives to encourage state to live up to their obligations to support” higher education, through financial aid for students, research support, and subsidy of public institutions. “Such initiatives could include federal-state matches that require maintenance of effort by the states.”

As the United States prepares to meet the challenges to our global competitiveness that lie ahead, the next Administration should turn to our country’s colleges and universities as an important source of ideas, talent, and innovation. Our system of higher education is our strongest asset in securing our nation’s future. It exists because of wise decisions made by previous generations of policy-makers to support and invest in higher education even while our country was engaged in a brutal civil war. It is now up to the policy-makers of our own generation to maintain and strengthen this system, and so maintain our nation’s prosperity into the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Gray Hardcastle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Valerie Gray Hardcastle
CCAS President, 2011-2012