Dear President Obama and Members of the 114th Congress:

As leaders of U.S. research universities, we urge you to reach a budget agreement for FY2016 and FY2017 that equally lifts non-defense and defense discretionary caps. Such an agreement, which could be modeled after the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, is needed to provide the strategic investments in scientific research and higher education our nation requires to remain the world’s innovation leader.

The absence of such an agreement would likely lead to flat funding in a year-long continuing resolution (CR), which would hamper our nation’s ability to make higher education more accessible and limit support of the innovation that grows our economy, accelerates the discovery of cures, strengthens national security, and improves our quality of life. The FY2016 appropriations process has included increased investments in some of these areas, but they would be lost if a CR were enacted.

Americans want our nation to continue leading the world in science, technology, and innovation. This is only possible through sustained and increased investments in higher education and scientific research. While the U.S. has been holding federal research funding flat for the past decade, other nations such as China and South Korea and a number of European countries have been boosting their investments. If we continue on this path, we risk creating an innovation deficit, as other countries work to create an innovation dividend.

Federal student aid programs must remain a national priority, as they make it possible for millions of students, regardless of their economic status, to attend college and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for the highly skilled workforce of tomorrow. Federal investments in scientific research must also remain a national priority as they help ensure we meet the varied and evolving challenges to our nation’s health, national security, and economic well-being. More than ever, addressing these challenges, including cyberattacks, drug resistant bacteria, water shortages, ISIS, and viral outbreaks such as Ebola, requires a highly-educated workforce and cutting-edge science and technology.

Lastly, as you seek to resolve the current budget situation, we urge you also to keep in mind the need to reach an even broader agreement that does not place the burden of deficit reduction on discretionary spending, where programs that invest in our future are funded.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. We stand ready to assist you with this important undertaking.

Sincerely,

Peter McPherson, President, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Hunter R. Rawlings III, President, Association of American Universities

[INSERT NAME, TITLE, INSTITUTION]