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# AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

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## CONTENTS

### CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

### BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

House Approves FY09 Omnibus Appropriations Bill with Increased Funding for Research and Student Aid *UPDATED*

Obama FY10 Budget Outline Proposes New Investments in Science, Student Aid *UPDATED*

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Obama Speech References Research, Higher Education

### OTHER

Grand Challenges Summit at Duke *NEW*

## CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

The House did not meet today; the Senate met but cast no roll call votes.

Next week, the House will convene on Monday, March 2, when it will consider bills under suspension of the rules. No further schedule for the week has been announced, but CQToday reports that bills to address the mortgage crisis (H.R. 1106) and to add one House seat each for the District of Columbia and Utah (H.R. 157) are likely to be considered. The House could also consider an omnibus public lands bill (S. 22).

The Senate will also convene on Monday, March 2, and its week is expected to be dominated by the FY09 omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 1105), which was passed this week by the House (see article below).

On Wednesday, March 4, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown will address a joint session of Congress.

## BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

### HOUSE APPROVES FY09 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS BILL WITH INCREASED FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND STUDENT AID *UPDATED*

The House on February 25 approved the FY09 omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 1105) by a vote of 245 to 17. The Senate will take up the bill next week, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has said, according to CQToday, that he will move to limit debate and obtain cloture on Monday if the Senate cannot reach an agreement on the number of amendments to be permitted during floor consideration. The current continuing resolution (CR) expires on Friday, March 6,

and Congressional leaders are seeking to meet that deadline and avoid the need to enact another extension.

The package is needed to provide full-year funding for programs in the nine FY09 appropriations that were not finished last year. Agencies supported through those bills have been funded by the CR largely at their FY08 levels. The \$410-billion measure would provide \$30 billion, or eight percent, more for the programs in the nine bills than they received in FY08.

The [bill](#) provides significant funding increases for research and higher education programs. General summaries of the legislation, along with the bill language and reports, are available [here](#). AAU's chart showing funding for AAU priority agencies can be found [here](#). Following are highlights of the FY09 package.

## **Research**

National Institutes of Health (NIH). The measure would fund NIH at \$30.3 billion, a \$938-million or 3.2-percent, increase over the FY08 level. (Additional details are available [here](#), beginning on page 157 as measured by your browser, not the handwritten page numbers.)

Report language would make permanent PubMed Central. This is the NIH archive that provides free public access to accepted manuscripts reporting the results of research funded wholly or in part by NIH within 12 months after those results are published in a peer-reviewed journal. AAU strongly supports PubMed Central and has joined with the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges in [opposing](#) legislation that would end it.

National Science Foundation (NSF). The FY09 omnibus package would provide \$6.5 billion for NSF, an increase of \$425 million, or seven percent, over FY08. Included in the total is \$5.2 billion for Research and Related Agencies and \$845 million for Education and Human Resources. (Additional details are available [here](#), beginning on page 153 as measured by your browser.)

NASA. The space agency would receive \$17.8 billion overall, or \$473 million above the FY08 level. Included within the total are \$4.5 billion for Science, \$500 million for Aeronautics, \$3.5 billion for Exploration Systems, and \$169 million for Education. Additional information on NASA funding is available [here](#), beginning on page 132 as measured by your browser.)

Department of Energy Office of Science. The Office would receive \$4.77 billion, which is \$755 million, or nearly 19 percent, above the FY08 level. Within that total, \$1.57 billion would go to Basic Energy Sciences, which includes \$100 million, the amount contained in the budget request, for the new Energy Frontier Research Centers program. The bill also includes \$15 million for a new Advanced Research Projects Agency, or ARPA-E, at the Department of Energy. Funding levels for other research and development accounts can be viewed [here](#), beginning on page 79, with an accompanying chart on page 105, as measured by your browser.

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The measure would provide NEH with \$155 million, a 10.3-million, or seven percent, increase over FY08. Additional details are available [here](#), beginning on page 72 as measured by your browser.

## **Student Aid**

Pell Grants. Funding for the Pell Grant program would increase to \$17.3 billion, a \$3-billion, or nearly 22-percent, increase over FY08. When combined with the Recovery Act funds and mandatory funds, the total maximum grant for school year 2009-10 would rise to \$5,350.

Additional details about student aid funding are available [here](#), beginning on page 157 as measured by your browser.

International Education Programs. Funding for these programs would increase to \$119 million, an increase of \$10 million, or more than nine percent, above FY08 funding.

GAANN and Javits Fellowships. Funding for these two programs would increase to \$41 million, an increase of \$2 million, or four percent, over the FY08 level.

## **OBAMA FY10 BUDGET OUTLINE PROPOSES NEW INVESTMENTS IN SCIENCE, STUDENT AID *UPDATED***

President Obama on February 26 issued an outline of his FY10 budget. The Administration is expected to submit a complete budget to Congress in April. The [document](#) made public by the Administration contains, with some exceptions, mainly top-line budget information for agencies of concern to research universities.

The President's Budget Message notes that his priorities include science and research. Speaking of both the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and his FY10 budget, the President writes: "[W]e will invest in the science, research, and technology that will lead to new medical breakthroughs, new discoveries, and entire new industries." He also states: "To give our children a fair shot to thrive in a global, information-age economy, we will equip thousands of schools, community colleges, and universities with 21st Century classrooms, labs, and libraries... We will invest in innovation, and open the doors of college to millions of students... And in an era of skyrocketing college tuitions, we will make sure that the doors of college remain open to children from all walks of life."

The House and Senate Budget Committees and the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees have all scheduled hearings on the President's budget for next week.

Following is some of the information gleaned by AAU staff from the budget document.

### **National Institutes of Health**

The only information on the National Institutes of Health in the budget outline is the inclusion of \$6 billion to support cancer research. The document declares: "This funding is central to the President's sustained, multi-year plan to double cancer research. These resources will be committed strategically to have the greatest impact on developing innovative diagnostics, treatments, and cures for cancer."

### **National Science Foundation**

The FY10 budget includes \$7 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), compared to \$6.49 billion in the FY09 omnibus appropriations bill. This represents an increase of \$510 million, or 7.9 percent. While the budget offers no breakdown of proposed FY10 spending for NSF, the document does include the following among the President's priorities:

- Supporting researchers at the beginning of their careers

The document states: “Ensuring America’s economic competitiveness requires that we develop the future scientific and technical workforce for our universities, national labs, and companies. To help accomplish these goals, the Budget provides substantial increases for NSF’s prestigious Graduate Research Fellowship and Faculty Early Career Development programs.”

- Supporting promising, high-risk research

The document states: “The Budget increases support for promising, but exploratory and high-risk research proposals that could fundamentally alter our understanding of nature, revolutionize fields of science, and lead to radically new technologies.

## **Department of Energy**

No specific funding details are provided regarding investments in the Department of Energy Office of Science. The document does, however, emphasize the important role that basic science must play in developing alternative energy sources, stating: “As part of the President’s plan to double Federal investment in the basic sciences, the 2010 Budget, along with the \$1.6 billion provided in the recovery Act for the Department of Energy’s basic science programs, provides substantially increased support for the Office of Science.” The document also states that the budget “expands graduate fellowship programs that will train students in critical energy-related fields.”

## **NASA**

The FY10 budget proposes a \$918 million, or 5.2-percent, increase over the House-passed FY09 omnibus appropriations bill for NASA. Total spending would be \$18.7 billion, compared to \$17.782 billion in the omnibus. The document does not include any details for the various NASA programs.

## **Department of Education**

The budget includes the following proposals for student financial aid and to raise completion rates:

- Increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,550 in the 2010-2011 school year (a \$200 increase above the maximum grant funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the House-passed FY09 omnibus appropriations bill, and the mandatory funding approved by Congress in 2007);
- Index the maximum Pell Grant to the Consumer Price Index plus 1 percent in order to maintain its value in future years;
- Convert the Pell Grant to a mandatory program “to ensure a regular stream of funding and eliminate the practice of ‘backfilling’ billions of dollars in Pell shortfalls each year;”
- Originate all new loans through the direct lending program starting in July 2010;
- Create a “new modernized” Perkins Loan program that would do the following: offer an additional \$5 billion as a reward to schools that provide more need-based aid to students and that maintain reasonable student costs compared to other schools in their sector; shift responsibility for serving the loans from schools to the federal government; and eliminate the federal subsidy that allows borrowers to avoid accruing interest on their loans while enrolled in college (the exact distribution formula has yet to be determined);
- Simplify the student aid application process. and

- Provide \$2.5 billion (\$500 million a year for five years) for a five-year Access and Completion Incentive Fund to support innovative state efforts to help low-income students succeed and complete their college education, with a “rigorous evaluation component to ensure that we learn from what works.”

While the budget does not outline detailed spending levels for most student aid programs, Department of Education officials stated during a conference call with reporters on February 26 that there would be no cuts to student aid in the President’s complete FY10 budget.

## **Taxes**

The budget includes the following proposals:

- Make permanent the \$2,500 American Opportunity Tax Credit (formerly the Hope Tax Credit), which was created by the Recovery Act and combined and strengthened existing tax incentives for attending college; and
- Further limit the benefits of itemized deductions (including for charitable contributions) for upper-income taxpayers, a provision that could affect charitable giving to colleges and universities.

## **Department of Defense**

The budget document contains no information on funding of basic research at the Department of Defense.

## **Humanities**

The budget document contains no information on FY10 funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities

## **Non-defense Discretionary Spending**

The budget spells out overall non-discretionary spending totals for the next ten years. After rising to \$675 billion in FY10, non-defense discretionary spending declines each year until bottoming out at \$621 billion in 2013. While it begins to rise again, it does not reach the FY10 total until FY19. A portion of the post-FY10 decline may be attributable to the transfer of Pell Grant funding from discretionary to mandatory spending.

# **EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

## **OBAMA SPEECH REFERENCES RESEARCH, HIGHER EDUCATION**

In his [speech](#) to a joint session of Congress on February 24, President Obama referenced the importance of basic research—particularly energy research—to the future of the nation, and he made a commitment to raise the percentage of Americans who earn a college degree.

The President said that his FY10 budget would invest in three areas “absolutely critical to our economic future: energy, health care, and education.” On the latter issue, he discussed the importance of a college-educated workforce, saying “we will provide the support necessary for

you to complete college and meet a new goal: by 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.”

He linked that statement to national service, encouraging Congress to adopt the national service legislation sponsored by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Edward Kennedy (D-MA). “If you are willing to volunteer or give back to your community or serve your country,” he said, “we will make sure that you can afford a higher education.”

On research, the President noted that the just-enacted American Recovery and Reinvestment Act “made the largest investment in basic research funding in American history—an investment that will spur not only new discoveries in energy, but breakthroughs in medicine, science, and technology.” He went on to specify that his Administration would invest \$15 billion a year to develop new energy technologies and fuel-efficient vehicles. He added that the Recovery Act also would launch a new effort to seek a “cure for cancer in our time.”

## **OTHER**

### **GRAND CHALLENGES SUMMIT AT DUKE**

*NEW*

Duke University, in partnership with the University of Southern California and Olin College, will hold an event next week that follows up on the announcement last year by the National Academy of Engineering of its list of the top fourteen grand challenges facing the engineering field.

The Grand Challenges Summit will be a two-day event on March 2-3, 2009 in Durham, NC, drawing leading engineering, science, humanities and social science scholars from across the nation to articulate the challenges and opportunities of the science, technology, and policy related to each National Academy of Engineering (NAE) Grand Challenge and proposed solutions. Registration for the event is closed, but a live webcast will be available.

The challenges listed by the NAE fall into a broad array of categories that have major societal impacts, including energy and the environment, health, and security. The summit is intended to foster an open dialogue about the importance of engineering and science as a driving force in solving the issues facing the next generation.

More information about the Grand Challenges Summit can be found [here](#). The NAE’s Grand Challenges for Engineering website can be found [here](#).

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