

Public Statements on Key Issues

The association in 2012 repeatedly urged U.S. congressional leaders and the White House to avoid sweeping budget cuts that would cripple key areas of American science and slow innovation. An automatic “sequestration” of resources would pose an unprecedented risk to the U.S. scientific enterprise, deeply slashing the country’s overall research and development investment, AAAS warned at events on Capitol Hill and in letters to policymakers as well as *The New York Times*. Through op-ed pieces and interviews, AAAS also called for action on climate change and K-12 science education while promoting science diplomacy.

WAMU-FM radio show host Kojo Nnamdi (second from left) moderated a program on science diplomacy that featured AAAS Senior Advisor Norman P. Neureiter (at right), Lehigh University President and U.S. Science Envoy Alice Gast, and Alex Dehgan, science and technology Advisor to the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

1 August. Too many people still refuse to accept the scientific facts about global climate change, a point reflected in the decision of North Carolina’s legislature to disregard scientific projections of sea-level rise, AAAS CEO Alan I. Leshner wrote in a (Raleigh) *News & Observer* op-ed. The piece, co-authored by climate scientist William L. Chameides of Duke University, emphasized that “climate change is real, it is underway now, and humans are contributing to it.”

INNOVATION AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION

10 February. Increasingly, innovation will hinge upon international research collaboration as modern science becomes an ever more global enterprise, transcending national boundaries, the AAAS CEO wrote in a *Vancouver Sun* op-ed co-authored by Stephen Toope, president and vice-chancellor of the University of British Columbia. The op-ed was published in advance of the 2012 AAAS Annual Meeting in Vancouver. “Globally, our support for basic science and international collaborations must not waver,” Toope and Leshner wrote.

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

25 June. Popular radio show host Kojo Nnamdi organized an on-air discussion about science diplomacy following a successful AAAS trip to Iran. Nnamdi’s guests were Norman Neureiter, senior advisor to the AAAS Center for Science Diplomacy; Lehigh University President and former AAAS Board member Alice Gast; and former AAAS S&T Policy Fellow Alex Dehgan, science and technology advisor to the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Listen at www.aaas.org/go/kojo/.

SCIENCE EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

13 December. With many U.S. school children



continuing to lag behind their international peers in mathematics and science, parents must demand that schools do better by their children, according to a nonpartisan committee organized by the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress. The committee's report, "A Letter on STEM Education to America's Parents," was released at AAAS. Shirley Malcom, head of AAAS Education and Human Resources, served on the study committee.

13 August. Diverse learning environments offer educational benefits to both minority and majority students, AAAS and seven other scientific societies wrote in a legal brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court as it prepared to hear a challenge to a university's diversity-recruitment efforts. The document, submitted by the American Educational Research Association, summarized peer-reviewed scientific evidence relevant to the case of *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*.

27 March. AAAS urged Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam to veto a controversial education bill that would call into question the well-established scientific facts behind evolution and global climate change by encouraging teachers to present the "scientific strengths and scientific weaknesses" of issues that "may cause debate and disputation."

21 March. The association also expressed concern over proposed Oklahoma legislation that would encourage the state's public school teachers to question the well-established science behind evolution and global climate change.

SCIENCE POLICY AND SOCIETY

20 October. Foods containing ingredients from genetically modified (GM) crops pose no greater risk than the same foods made from crops modified by conventional plant breeding techniques, the AAAS Board of Directors concluded. Legally mandating labels on GM foods could therefore "mislead and falsely alarm consumers," the Board's statement said. The association emphasized that it was not opposed to labeling intended to protect

public health, or optional labels such as the "kosher" or "USDA organic" labels that support consumer decision-making and reflect verifiable, certifiable standards. In contrast, legally mandated labels, under current U.S. Food and Drug Administration policy, must be relevant to health, safety and nutrition, AAAS explained. The Board concluded that there is no scientific evidence to support such a warning about GM foods.

THE SCIENTIFIC ENTERPRISE

2 December. U.S. scientific advances are being slowed by "excessive, redundant, ineffective reporting and assurance requirements imposed both by government agencies and the universities where research is being conducted," the AAAS CEO wrote in a 2 December commentary in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The essay, co-authored by Steven J. Fluharty, senior vice provost for research at the University of Pennsylvania, concluded that "such wastefulness is unacceptable" at a time of severely constrained budgets.

9 September. A *Washington Post* op-ed by the AAAS CEO and U.S. Representative Jim Cooper (D-Tennessee) said that it's time for Americans to get serious about basic science and stop mocking research projects with unusual titles.



The United States may risk falling behind in scientific discoveries as other countries increase their science funding, the authors wrote in a piece that celebrated the winners of the first-ever Golden Goose Awards. The op-ed was republished by multiple other media outlets.

8 June. AAAS issued a public statement in support of a proposed International Science and Technology Cooperation Act, which would establish an interagency committee, under the direction of the National Science and Technology Council, to coordinate and improve the efficiency of U.S. research efforts.

18 May. In letters to U.S. House and Senate leaders, AAAS and other scientific organizations expressed “deep concern” regarding amendments that would place severe restrictions on the ability of government employees to attend conferences. Such an amendment would “inadvertently impede the free flow of scientific information and the professional development of scientists and engineers,” the letter said.

9 May. AAAS responded to an amendment that would eliminate funding for National Science Foundation political science research by sending letters to key House and Senate contacts, urging them to protect the integrity of the scientific enterprise.

18 January. The association reaffirmed its support for the existing public access policy of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), and announced its opposition to the Research Works Act. That legislation would prevent the NIH from requiring its grantees to make biomedical research findings freely available via the National Library of Medicine’s Web site.

12 January. AAAS provided input to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on public access to peer-reviewed publications resulting from federally funded research. Developing public access policies should involve engagement by stakeholders with a range of perspectives, including non-profit publishers such as AAAS.

U.S. FEDERAL R&D FUNDING

17 December. AAAS sent letters to President Barack Obama and Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner (R-Ohio), urging them to “work together to achieve a bipartisan compromise that avoids the fiscal cliff and moves the country onto solid fiscal footing without sacrificing our nation’s crucial investments in science and technology.”

7 December. The association and 126 partner groups called on the White House and congressional leaders to strike a balanced compromise on the looming fiscal cliff and avoid harming research efforts.

7 December. AAAS rallied its members and others concerned about American innovation to share video and text messages on how sweeping budget cuts could negatively impact



scientific progress. The “Speak Up for Science” campaign helped to illustrate the potential effects of a budget sequestration.

19 November. In a letter to *The New York Times*, the AAAS CEO urged researchers and citizens to oppose sweeping budget cuts that threatened U.S. research and development as part of a budget sequestration. “Hope is not enough,” he wrote. “Every scientist, and anyone else who cares about future prosperity and quality of life, must speak up for science now.”

27 September. Governments must continue robust funding for basic research if they are to reap the economic benefits of science and technology innovation, the AAAS CEO wrote in the German newspaper *Die Zeit*. The piece was published in advance of his appearance at the Falling Walls Conference.

27 September. In an op-ed, AAAS warned that across-the-board budget cuts under a sequestration scenario could cripple key areas of science. The piece, co-authored by the AAAS

CEO and Kent Kresa, chairman emeritus of the Northrop Grumman Corporation and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the California Institute of Technology, was distributed by the McClatchy news wire and republished by a half-dozen other media outlets.

12 July. AAAS joined more than 3,000 national, state and local organizations in warning members of Congress and President Obama that automatic budget cuts would have devastating effects on research.



The New York

Letters

Science and Progress

To the Editor:
“Scientists Hope Obama Continues Support for Basic Research” (Nov. 13) correctly characterized the wait-and-see attitude of many scientists and engineers as sweeping budget cuts threaten research and development—the engine of economic progress. Broad cuts will cripple American science unless Congress and the president agree by January to a debt-reduction plan. Sequestration would slash science funding by 8.4 percent over five years. That would devastate agencies, states and efforts to address disease, energy independence and more. The National Institutes of Health could lose \$11.3 billion to \$26.1 billion over five years.

Countries such as China and South Korea are more rapidly increasing their science investments. Hope is not enough. Every scientist, and anyone else who cares about future prosperity and quality of life, must speak up for science now. Other fiscal interests have not been quiet.

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