



October 3, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

We write to inform you about a change in the policy governing membership in the AAU. After much deliberation and consideration, the Membership Committee recommended, and the Board of Directors approved to limit membership in our association to the leading research universities in the United States.

This change was based on the imperative that we focus on the issues critical to U.S. research universities and to reflect the reality that AAU represents America's leading research universities. The decision was not informed by, and is not a reflection of, the quality of the graduate education and research programs of our Canadian colleague institutions. Due to the nature of this change, we delayed informing you until we could personally engage with our colleagues in Canada.

Since 1926, we have benefitted from the thoughtful participation of our two Canadian colleagues; however, it has become clear that the issues and opportunities in which U.S. and Canadian institutions engage have diverged significantly over the last few decades. U.S. research universities today face continuous challenges to the federal government-university partnership. Canadian research universities also face challenges that are uniquely theirs, and as such created in 1991 a group to represent their interests – the [U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities](#).

We want to make it clear that this amended policy is not a withdrawal from our international obligations or from our commitment to the open exchange of ideas across national boundaries. The AAU and its members are fully committed to working with our international partners, the U15 in particular, to continue fostering international cooperation and the free flow of knowledge. Over the years AAU has worked to build a cordial and important working relationship with the U15 and we intend to continue these collaborations.

Given the significance of this change, we plan to discuss the background for the decision and ask that you affirm this direction for AAU. This membership policy change marks an important and unique milestone in AAU's history. It reflects our identity as America's leading research universities, and it further focuses AAU on important issues facing U.S. research universities as well as strengthening the federal government-university partnership.

We look forward to our meeting in October.

Warmest regards,

Michael McRobbie
Chair, AAU

Mary Sue Coleman
President, AAU

Michael Drake
Chair, Membership
Committee, AAU