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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 November 3, 2003

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**STATEMENT BY NILS HASSELMO
 PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES
 ON THREATS TO NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH
 RESEARCH**

The nation's research universities are deeply concerned by recent efforts to inject political and ideological considerations into the scientific merit review system that determines which research proposals are funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

One of the primary reasons for the enormous success of biomedical research in the U.S. is the requirement by Congress that decisions about what research the government supports must be made on the basis of science--not politics or ideology. That is why research proposals go through two levels of review by panels of top biomedical researchers with expertise in the areas of the proposed research to ensure scientific quality, technical merit, and relevance to national priorities. NIH only funds research that has gone through these rigorous reviews.

Millions of Americans are living longer and healthier lives as a result of the research funded by NIH. Politicizing the process by which research is funded threatens the nation's capacity to advance scientific knowledge and improve public health. It is imperative that Congress and the Administration resist efforts to undermine the integrity of the NIH merit review process.

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The Association of American Universities is an association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian research universities organized to develop and implement effective national and institutional policies supporting research and scholarship, graduate and professional education, undergraduate education, and public service in research universities.