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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

JUL 15 2014

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

**Re: Freedom of Information Act Request 14-40**

As the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) official responsible for inquiries under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), I am responding to your FOIA request received in this office on June 24, 2014. You have requested "a copy of each response to a Question for the Record (QFR) provided to Congress by the NEH" from January 2009 to the present. The information you have requested as maintained in our records is attached.

If you wish to appeal this determination, please write to the Acting Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, 400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Room 2046, Washington, DC 20506. Your appeal must be in writing and received by NEH within thirty (30) days of the date of this letter (weekend and Federal holidays excluded). Your appeal rights are set out in the Code of Federal Regulations, at 45 C.F.R. § 1171.10. There is no fee for providing this information.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Richardson  
Acting Chief FOIA Officer

House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies  
Questions for the Record  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Hearing Date: March 17, 2010

**Questions for the Record from the Chairman**

**Bridging Cultures**

**MoranQ1.** You have a \$2.5 million request for a new initiative: “Bridging Cultures.” What do you hope to accomplish with this initiative?

**Answer:** *Bridging Cultures* is designed to use the Endowment’s good offices to draw attention to the need for Americans to learn more about both their own rich heritage and the history and culture of other nations and regions of the world.

Numerous reports indicate that many Americans lack even cursory knowledge of other nations, not to mention their own history. According to surveys, fewer than 18 percent of Americans are able to locate Iraq and Afghanistan on a map, even as we are engaged in major wars there. When asked to name the president of Russia, only 36 percent could give the right answer, and when asked to name those who were not Shiites but adhere to the other major branch of Islam, just 32 percent volunteered Sunnis. According to a recent National Academy of Sciences report, less than 10 percent of all college students were enrolled in foreign language classes in 2002. The report also found that “students in the United States tend to understand less about the beliefs, cultures, and history of other nations than their foreign counterparts.” Similarly, Americans are inadequately aware of the complexity of our own heritage and the many strands that woven together make up the nation.

Such lack of knowledge has serious and ultimately dangerous ramifications: incivility and disharmony at home; misunderstandings detrimental to our national security abroad; an inability to compete effectively in the global economy; and an uninformed and limited view of the world in which we live.

The Endowment has always supported many fine projects on themes similar to those now encouraged by *Bridging Cultures*. Our new initiative, however, will bring increased focus on this area of the agency’s work as well as feature new and fresh approaches to promoting and supporting excellent humanities projects that bridge cultural divides.

**MoranQ2.** Will you have any reports, or other products that will summarize what you accomplish as a result of this initiative?

**Answer:** Yes, grantees that receive support under the *Bridging Cultures* rubric will be required to submit reports and other grant products that describe the results and outcomes of their projects. The Endowment also plans to make the results of supported projects widely available through our website so that the projects may be replicated by other groups and organizations.

**MoranQ3.** Are you developing evaluation criteria to evaluate the success of this initiative or other programs? If yes, can you provide examples of the criteria?

**Answer:** The initiative is still in the planning stages so no specific evaluation criteria have yet been developed. However, we do plan to employ a multi-pronged strategy to evaluate programs and projects funded under the *Bridging Cultures* umbrella:

- We will build into each new grant competition’s application instructions a series of reporting requirements that will require grantees to submit specific outcome data at the conclusion of their project.
- Individually and collectively, these outcome data will help the Endowment measure the success of individual projects, as well as grant categories as a whole.
- In selected cases we may also provide a small measure of additional funding to grantees to enable them to test the efficacy of their projects. These data will be fed back to NEH, augmenting the outcome data grantees will be separately reporting.

### Civility Tour

**MoranQ4.** Please explain what activities will be undertaken as part of the NEH “Civility Tour” and what you hope to accomplish with this initiative.

**Answer:** The Civility Tour uses the Endowment’s “bully pulpit,” as it were, to call attention to an important national issue. As NEH Chairman Jim Leach explains in his speeches, and as the agency stated in its FY 2011 Congressional budget request:

The concept of civility implies politeness, but civil discourse is about more than good etiquette. At its core, civility requires respectful engagement a willingness to consider other views and place them in the context of history and life experiences. This is clearly a humanistic concern.

The breakdown of civility in our national life is very much the concern of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Moreover, the agency’s authorizing legislation encourages the Endowment to, among other things, promote “understanding of the nation’s rich cultural heritage,” foster “a mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups,” and “relate the humanities to the current conditions of national life.” The exchange of ideas and the consideration of other viewpoints are

central to the humanities. As the Oxford English Dictionary reminds us, one of the original definitions of “civility” is “training in the humanities.”

Thus far, the Chairman has visited more than a dozen states, where he has spoken at venues ranging from university and museum lecture halls to hospitals for veterans. He has also been interviewed and appeared on local television and radio stations. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, which suggests that there is a hunger in America for thoughtful dialogue and balanced debate on the issues of the day.

**MoranQ5.** Are you working in conjunction with the state humanities councils as you arrange for and conduct each state visit?

**Answer:** We are working closely with the state councils in each state we visit. In many cases, the councils have helped to identify speaking venues and meetings with local civic leaders. The state humanities councils across the nation have much experience in making it possible for citizens to come together to address issues related to the economy, health care, demographics, energy, and our schools, through discussions informed by history and literature. Such in-depth explorations of critical and potentially divisive issues serve purposes beyond creating more thoughtful and better-informed citizens. They also increase citizen engagement in public life and bring citizens together to work toward common goals in shaping the future of their community and nation. The councils also sponsor local projects, lectures, and symposia that relate to the idea of civility. In a sense, the Endowment’s initiative builds on these local and state projects and makes a national case for the need for civility in our public discourse.

### **Digital Humanities**

**MoranQ6.** To what extent have you been working with other agencies, both domestic and foreign, to foster the growth of the digital humanities?

**Answer:** NEH launched a special, focused Digital Humanities effort in 2006 that was designed to foster the use of digital technology in research, education, preservation and access, and public programming in the humanities. Since 2006, the agency has created a number of innovative, cross-cutting grant programs and provided more than \$7.5 million to 144 projects that are helping to promote the use of digital technology in the humanities. Many of the innovative digital humanities programs NEH has put in place represent partnerships with other domestic and international funding agencies: U.S. partners include the National Science Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Department of Energy; international partners include the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Joint Information Systems Committee of the United Kingdom, the National Research Council of Italy, and the German Research Foundation.

**MoranQ7.** How is the Endowment’s partnership with the Library of Congress to digitize historic U.S. newspapers going and what are the program’s accomplishments to date?

**Answer:** With the advent of digital technology, there is now a means of providing full text searching of newspaper content. In pursuit of this objective, NEH and the Library of Congress signed a long-term memorandum of understanding in 2004 establishing a partnership to create the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP). Under the terms of this partnership, over a period of approximately 20 years, the Endowment will provide grants to an institution or organization in each state and territory to digitize titles published between 1836 and 1922 and to prepare fully searchable files that the Library of Congress would permanently maintain on the World Wide Web.

To date, the Endowment's National Digital Newspaper Program, which made its first grants in FY 2005, has reached critical mass in the number of pages posted and the number of visitors to the "Chronicling America." More than 1.73 million pages are now online. The program has been very successful in making this rich source of primary materials—the first rough draft of history—more widely available to scholars, teachers, students, and others.

**MoranQ8.** How many pages have been digitized and posted on the Library of Congress's website?

**Answer:** To date, more than 1.73 million pages have been digitized and posted on the "Chronicling America" website.

**MoranQ9.** What are the program's goals, and what can the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities expect to achieve?

**Answer:** Assuming adequate funding, over the next fifteen years, we expect to have all 50 states fully participating in the program and to have over 20 millions of pages posted on the "Chronicling America" website.

**MoranQ10.** How many state digitization projects are NEH currently supporting?

**Answer:** The NDNP is a complex undertaking that will be implemented in successive phases. To date, the NEH has provided support for twenty-two state projects, which have created so far a collection of digitized newspapers published between 1880 and 1910. The selected pages, along with title essays and a directory of papers published in the United States from 1690 to the present, are now publicly accessible online through the Library of Congress's "Chronicling America" resource, which the American Library Association recently identified as one of the "Best Free Reference Web Sites of 2009."

**MoranQ11.** Please give the Subcommittee some examples of work being done at the State level, which may not have been accomplished without NEH support.

**Answer:** In addition to providing funds to digitize thousands of pages of historic newspapers in individual states, the National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP) also

has enabled state grantees to extend the reach of their activities in support of the humanities. For example:

- Through their close collaboration with the Library of Congress in the NDNP, state partners have learned to use the most professional digital standards and best practices, which are skills that can be transferred to projects they conduct in their own states and which will help to ensure the preservation of their digitized collections.
- The NDNP encourages collaboration among educational and cultural institutions within a state. By participating in the program, state partners are building their capacity to collaborate with other state institutions and organizations. Several state projects, for example, have involved the state library, state archives, state historical society, and a major state university. In addition, partners are strengthening the technical expertise of their staff and enhancing their digital infrastructure, which is essential for large-scale digitization projects.
- With NDNP funding, the Kentucky, California, and Texas digital newspapers projects have been developing software tools to track various steps of the digitization process. They will share these tools with other state partners, who will be able to use them in similar digitization projects they conduct for the benefit of their own state.
- The Minnesota Historical Society, the NDNP partner for that state, is working with the American Swedish Institute, Uppsala University, and the National Library of Sweden on a proposal to digitize Swedish-language newspapers published in North America.

### **EDSITEment Website**

**MoranQ12.** For many years, NEH has hosted the EDSITEment website. How many websites and lesson plans are now included on the website and what are the future plans for EDSITEment?

**Answer:** NEH's EDSITEment, an innovative public-private partnership with the Verizon Foundation, was begun eleven years ago as a gateway for teachers and school librarians who were seeking excellent teaching materials on the Web in the fields of the humanities—history, literature, foreign languages, art, and culture. Its goal is to bring the "best of the humanities" on the Web into the K-12 classroom of America and the world.

EDSITEment has developed into a site that contains over 250 websites that have been vetted and approved by a Blue Ribbon panel of educators and scholars. The site houses a growing database of over 400 lesson plans and special features for teachers and over a thousand activities for students and reaches approximately 300,000 visitors a month during its high point, the school year. In conjunction with NEH's Picturing America project, EDSITEment also offers a variety of materials that feature individual great works

of art from the project's collection in lesson plans that can be integrated into a teacher's curriculum. Most plans are also accompanied by interactive materials in which students can learn to "read" a work of art for its style as well as its content. For example, *Midnight Ride of Paul Revere: Fact, Fiction, and Artistic License*, takes the student through Grant Wood's magical painting and asks pertinent questions about myth and history.

The Endowment is now redesigning the site to meet the challenges of the fast-changing Internet environment with more interactivities, and with podcasts, v-casts, and Web 2.0 features. NEH is also working to expand and deepen the store of world history and culture lessons on the site and to develop world language lessons in an effort to help teachers and the next generation to "bridge cultures."

### **Funding Grants for Post-Secondary Education Teachers**

**MoranQ13.** Recent studies indicate that individuals with a PhD in the humanities are facing a 25 percent shortfall in academic job openings. NEH has recently expanded eligibility for its summer seminars to include graduate students. What other programs does NEH have to support graduate students?

**Answer:** While NEH has not traditionally provided fellowships or other forms of direct support to graduate students, the agency does recognize the need to provide opportunities for graduate students to enhance their humanities education and scholarship. As noted in this question, the Endowment has recently revised the eligibility criteria for two of its important professional development programs—Summer Seminars and Institutes and Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops—to create opportunities for humanities graduate students. Beginning in the summer of 2010, graduate students will be able to participate in these summer enrichment programs for humanities teachers and faculty, which will extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the humanities.

Other NEH programs also provide opportunities for graduate students. One of the agency's new digital humanities grant programs—Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities—specifically encourages the inclusion of advanced graduate students as participants in funded projects. Graduate students also often participate in and benefit from the Endowment's support for long-term collaborative research projects, such as the collected editions of the papers of U.S. Presidents and other important figures in the nation's history and culture. These projects bring faculty and graduate students together to work on advanced research in the humanities.

**MoranQ14.** What type of resources would it take to create a competitive fellowship program to support graduate students beyond the summer seminar program?

**Answer:** We have not determined what type of resources would be needed to create a competitive fellowship program to support graduate students. Establishing such a program is currently not a high priority of the agency. Nonetheless, we are sympathetic



to the needs of graduate students in the humanities and have taken note of a recent proposal by the Association of American Universities to foster collaborative relationships between graduate students and humanities faculty. Such collaborations can help instill in the next generation of humanities practitioners the skills and the habits of mind that lead to successful careers in multiple fields of endeavor.

As the current graduate education system continues to struggle in placing newly minted Ph.D.s, we think it would be wise to focus greater attention on the wide variety of careers that advanced training in the humanities can make possible.

### **Grants to Two-Year Colleges:**

**Moran Q15.** Can you explain what you are doing with this new initiative and why is this special program needed? How many grant proposals do you anticipate receiving this year?

**Answer:** This initiative reflects President Obama's assessment that two-year colleges are a major national educational asset that has too often been overlooked. Our goals with this initiative are:

- to encourage two-year colleges to strengthen and enhance their programs in the humanities, including the study of world cultures;
- to support model humanities programs at two-year colleges that may be replicated at other institutions; and
- to enable two-year colleges to broaden the base of financial support for the humanities and to increase their fundraising capacity overall.

The humanities can play a vital role in community college curricula. The perspectives of history, philosophy, or literature can deepen and enrich the educational experience of two-year college students. The Endowment seeks to encourage institutions to plan imaginatively for models of excellence that strengthen and enhance the role of the humanities.

A targeted initiative is needed because two-year colleges have, in the past, been reluctant to apply for NEH challenge grants. While the program has always welcomed applications from these institutions, and a small number of excellent grants have resulted, community colleges have not taken advantage of the challenge-grant funding opportunity in anything like the numbers we would expect from a cohort of approximately 1,177 institutions nationwide, institutions that enroll over half of all students in post-secondary education. Because the humanities have not traditionally been given the highest priority, community colleges have been reluctant to commit limited fundraising resources to the humanities. The limited capacity for fundraising typical of community colleges makes the NEH "challenge" to raise three nonfederal dollars for every federal dollar awarded difficult for them to meet. To encourage applications, the Endowment will reduce the

matching requirement from three-to-one to two-to-one, and allow an extra year to raise the necessary nonfederal donations.

Experience with past special initiatives in the Challenge Grants program suggests that between 50 and 75 applications are likely to be submitted in each of the planned three years of this new initiative.

**Moran Q16.** Of the applications received, how many do you anticipate funding?

**Answer:** The number of awards will depend on the quality of applications and on the amounts requested, of course, but we anticipate making between 10 and 20 awards each year.

**Grants to Historically Black, High Hispanic Enrollment and Tribal Colleges and Universities**

**MoranQ17.** In 2003, NEH established the Humanities Initiatives program to extend grant opportunities to Historically Black Colleges, tribal colleges and institutions with high Hispanic enrollments. Can you please tell us how many grants NEH has awarded and how much funding NEH has provided these institutions since this program began?

**Answer:** Since FY 2003, the Humanities Initiatives for Faculty program in the Endowment's Division of Education Programs has awarded 64 grants totaling \$2.8 million to the three Presidentially-designated categories of minority-serving institutions.

We would also note that since FY 2003 NEH has awarded \$2.2 million to 58 recipients of Faculty Research Awards for Historically Black, Hispanic-Serving, and Tribal Colleges, a program that is administered in our Division of Research Programs. Faculty Research Awards support individuals at eligible institutions who are pursuing advanced research in the humanities that contributes to scholarly knowledge or to the general public's understanding of the humanities.

**Moran Q18.** What has been accomplished with this program?

**Answer:** The Humanities Initiatives for Faculty program helps these institutions enhance the humanities content of existing programs, develop new programs, or lay the foundation for more extensive programming in the future. Humanities Initiatives grants create opportunities for faculty members to study together while improving their capacity to teach the humanities, support collaborative work among faculty members to devise ways for strengthening humanities programs, and fund visiting scholars to help improve or redefine an institution's humanities programs. Also supported are projects to help faculty develop new humanities programs or take advantage of underused humanities resources, train staff and faculty members in the use of humanities materials and technologies, or build ties among faculty at several institutions. Notable recent grant awards include:

- \$29,862 to Kentucky State University for a program to enhance the comparative study of classic works of Western civilization along with non-Western and African American works. Ten faculty members engaged in revising the core curriculum read selected texts under the guidance of a visiting scholar.
- \$75,000 to the University of Texas, Pan American that supported collaborative faculty workshops directed by outside scholars on the contributions of humanities disciplines to Latin American philosophy.
- \$30,000 for a year-long project and a four-day symposium to explore current scholarship in migration studies for faculty from California State University, Los Angeles and neighboring Hispanic-Serving community colleges.
- \$100,000 to Montana's Fort Peck Community College for a two-year project to enhance the institution's humanities program in Assiniboine and Sioux languages, tribal histories, and literature.
- \$75,000 to College of Menominee Nation in Wisconsin to support a collaborative project with the Newberry Library to identify archival resources and produce public exhibits and curricular materials for humanities courses.

**MoranQ19.** How many applications do you anticipate awarding this year and how many will you be able to fund?

**Answer:** During the previous fiscal year, the Humanities Initiatives program received 53 grant applications and made nine awards. We expect about the same level of applications and awards again this year.

### **Endangered Languages Partnership with NSF**

**MoranQ20.** What is the status of NEH's partnership with the National Science Foundation to document endangered languages? What are the objectives of this initiative? Has NEH entered into similar partnerships with other federal agencies in support of the humanities?

**Answer:** The Documenting Endangered Languages initiative was launched by NEH and the National Science Foundations (NSF) in 2005 and was designed to support projects that create, enhance, and deepen our knowledge of the estimated 3,000 currently spoken languages that are threatened with extinction in the near future. NEH grants are being provided for projects to record, document, and archive information relating to these languages, including the preparation of dictionaries, lexicons, and databases.

NEH has awarded 60 Documenting Endangered Languages grants to date totaling \$5,449,124, including 43 fellowships and 17 institutional awards. Together, NEH and NSF have granted \$23 million for projects to document 156 languages in 38 countries,

including the United States. Although originally intended to last for three years, the initiative has been extended because of the high degree of interest from the field and the high quality of the projects that have received support from the two agencies.

In addition to the successful Documenting Endangered Languages partnership with NSF, the Endowment continues to explore opportunities for creative, and cost-saving, collaboration with other federal agencies and with foreign governments in support of the humanities. Recent NEH partnerships of this kind have included:

- a program of fellowships sponsored jointly by NEH and the Library of Congress;
- the National Digital Newspapers Program, a multi-year collaboration with the Library of Congress to digitize and make publicly available on the World Wide Web newspapers already preserved on microfilm through the United States Newspapers Program;
- the Advanced Research Fellowships on Japan Program jointly sponsored by NEH and the Japan-United States Friendship Commission;
- the interagency Save America's Treasures initiative administered by the National Park Service;
- a “Cultural Diplomacy” partnership of NEH and the U.S. Department of State that enables teachers from other nations to participate in “Landmarks of American History and Culture” workshops;
- an agreement with the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the State Department to make the NEH Picturing America image sets available for use by U.S. Overseas Missions and to translate the Picturing America Teachers Resource Book into four languages;
- cooperation with the German Research Foundation through two jointly funded grant programs coordinated by the Office of Digital Humanities;
- a jointly funded grant program with the Higher Education Funding Council for England acting through the Joint Information Systems Committee and coordinated by the Office of Digital Humanities; and
- a cooperative international grant competition involving NEH, the National Science Foundation, the Joint Information Systems Committee from the United Kingdom, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council from Canada.

## Questions for the Record from Mr. Simpson

### Bridging Cultures Initiative

Your budget request includes \$2.5 million for a new initiative called “Bridging Cultures.” My understanding is that this effort is geared toward providing Americans a better understanding of their own cultural heritage as well the cultures of other countries. Your budget request explains that an underlying premise for this effort is that political discourse in the United States has become “increasingly extremist and intolerant.” It also mentions that you have embarked upon a 50-state American Civility Tour to call attention to the need for civility in our public life.

**SimpsonQ1.** What are the specific goals of the “Bridging Cultures” initiative? Is it geared toward educating Americans about people of other cultures or teaching people of other cultures about American culture? How will you measure success?

**Answer:** The Endowment’s initiative seeks to bridge divides—both at home and abroad—by making use of the unique role of the humanities in inspiring reflection, analysis, and conversation on common human themes. By crafting a new and visible effort to advance understanding, NEH responds to a need that is fundamental to our domestic well-being and to our national interest abroad.

NEH will also use the *Bridging Cultures* initiative to make a concerted effort to address the pressing need to deepen our insight into the varied cultures around our increasingly interdependent globe. As the Congress stated in the Endowment’s founding legislation: “The world leadership which has come to the United States cannot rest solely on superior power, wealth and technology, but must be solidly founded upon worldwide respect for the Nation’s high qualities as a leader in the realm of the ideas and of the spirit.” The *Bridging Cultures* initiative responds to this call for leadership by articulating a new spirit of respectful engagement with others, using the humanities as building blocks for deepened cross-cultural understanding.

The success of the initiative will be determined by the significance of the grants we make and the impact they have. Our *Bridging Cultures* proposal has been embraced by the humanities community. Chairman Leach’s nationwide Civility Tour has received an enthusiastic response, but his tour is a small part of *Bridging Cultures*, which is all about programs to advance understanding of various aspects of our own as well as other cultures. Another way the Endowment will be able to gauge the success of *Bridging Cultures* will be by the quality of the humanities projects that are proposed by prospective grantees. We expect to make awards to many fine projects developed by the state humanities councils, colleges and universities, libraries, and museums, as well as by scholars, teachers, and other humanities practitioners. We also plan to evaluate the special programs or grant competitions we put in place and to assess the outcomes of the grants we make.

### **Bridging Cultures Issues Conferences**

Your budget justification explains that as part of the “Bridging Cultures” initiative, the NEH plans to convene a series of conferences across the country involving scholars and the public to discuss issues that divide us as Americans.

**SimpsonQ2.** Is holding conferences on issues that divide us a prudent use of taxpayer dollars? How else do you plan to spend any potential funding directed toward this initiative?

**Answer:** Yes, we think conferences involving scholars and the public will be a thoughtful use of public funds. The *Bridging Cultures* initiative and the series of proposals we outlined in our FY 2011 budget justification are very much the concern of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The agency’s enabling legislation encourages the Endowment to, among other things, promote “understanding of the nation’s rich cultural heritage,” foster “a mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups,” and “relate the humanities to the current conditions of national life.”

To this end, the Endowment will support a series of forums and workshops that will highlight important topics relevant to the *Bridging Cultures* initiative. The first of these forums are expected to address the topics of “Civility and Democracy” and “The Muslim World and the Humanities.” We plan to engage both scholars and humanities practitioners and to identify topics and approaches that translate advanced scholarship into language conducive to productive public discussion. The forums and workshops will take place in different locations around the country and will take advantage of web-based technologies to broaden participation to online audiences and to sustain ongoing public education through the involvement of state humanities councils, educators, and other civic groups. Each forum will lead to the development of a national or regional plan for public programming focused on the forum’s theme. This may include film, reading, and discussion programs in libraries; exhibitions at museums and historical sites; town hall-style meetings; or other formats.

For many years, the state humanities councils have been sponsoring similar local projects, lectures, and conferences that relate to the ideas of the *Bridging Cultures* initiative. In a sense, the Endowment’s initiative builds on these local and state projects.

The funding NEH has requested for *Bridging Cultures* for FY 2011 also would enable the agency to launch pilot projects that engage scholars, public audiences, the state councils, and educators in cultural bridging themes. In addition, projects relating to these themes will be encouraged through each of our grant programs, and the traditional work of the state humanities councils, utilizing where possible public and private sector partnerships.

### **Idaho Humanities Council (IHC)**

I am a longtime supporter of the Idaho Humanities Council (IHC), the non-profit, state-based affiliate of the NEH whose vision for more than 35 years has been “that the humanities inspire a more literate, tolerant, and intellectually inquisitive Idaho citizenry.” I am particularly proud of the partnerships involving the IHC, the Idaho Commission on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) that benefit rural Idaho the most. The IHC has a long history of supporting teachers, libraries, and community museums with a variety of educational and cultural programs throughout Idaho. Next month, for example, the IHC is bringing Elliott West, the author of award-winning books about the history of the American West, to Idaho Falls for a distinguished humanities lecture.

**SimpsonQ3:** What criteria do you use in distributing the \$38 million budget for the non-profit state humanities councils? How do you determine funding levels for each state council?

**Answer:** NEH follows the funding formula contained in its authorizing legislation when determining the amounts of general support it provides for the 56 state humanities councils from the Federal/State Partnership appropriation the Endowment receives each year from Congress. The funding formula includes the following main elements:

- Each council begins with \$200,000
- Of the remaining appropriation for the Federation/State Partnership:
  - 44% is allocated equally among councils that serve a population over 200,000
  - 22% is allocated to all councils according to population
  - 34% is allocated at the discretion of the NEH Chairman

The legislated funding formula, while somewhat complex, is based on the principles of equal distribution of some of the appropriated funds and distribution by population. The formula also allows for some funding to be distributed at the discretion of the NEH Chairman. In the past two fiscal years, the Chairman has used this discretionary authority to award increased funding to all of the councils in the same proportion as the increase in Federal/State Partnership's overall budget line.

### **Philanthropy and the Humanities**

Much of the success of the NEH results from partnerships where federal funding is leveraged with funding from non-federal sources. Philanthropy, for instance, has had a long history of investing in our nation’s arts and humanities. With continuing pressure on budgets, I suspect that we’ll see an even greater emphasis on partnerships in the future.

**SimpsonQ4.** What relations and/or partnerships does the National Endowment have with philanthropy? Do you have any initiatives that could be used to encourage such public-philanthropic partnerships in promoting the humanities?

**Answer:** In recent years, the Endowment has forged a number of collaborative relationships with the private sector to leverage new resources for the humanities. Some of the agency's private partners in support of the humanities have included the National Trust for the Humanities; the Carnegie Corporation of New York; Crayola, Inc.; the History Channel/A&E Television Networks; the McCormick Tribune Foundation; Scholastic, Inc.; Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Smith; and the Verizon Foundation. In addition, many of the state humanities councils receive modest private donations.

NEH's EDSITEment website, for example, is a nationally recognized gateway for teachers seeking rich humanities resources on the Internet. Through a partnership with the Verizon Foundation's Thinkfinity website, EDSITEment (<http://edsitement.neh.gov>) now contains over 250 sites selected by peer review panels for their excellent humanities content, interactive design, and usefulness in the classroom. The continually expanding EDSITEment website receives approximately 300,000 visitors per month.

Encouraging and stimulating private-sector support for the humanities is an important goal of the NEH. The agency's Treasury Matching Funds and Challenge Grants programs in particular have proven to be effective means of leveraging the contributions of the nation's businesses, foundations, and individuals on behalf of the humanities. From the establishment of the agency in 1965 through fiscal year 2009, the Endowment's matching grants for humanities projects and institutions have stimulated more than \$2.08 billion in third-party donations: \$1.66 billion in general institutional support leveraged by NEH Challenge Grants and \$415 million in non-federal contributions in support of specific humanities projects.

### **NEH Challenge Grants Program**

The Challenge Grants program is well-known for its success in encouraging private giving to the humanities. The grants require \$3 in giving for every NEH dollar awarded to a humanities institution. Your budget request indicates that next year the Challenge program will begin a special initiative geared toward encouraging two-year colleges to plan for ways to strengthen their activities and programs that support the humanities.

**SimpsonQ5.** Can you describe how this will work?

**Answer:** This initiative responds to President Obama's assessment that two-year colleges are a major national educational asset that has too often been overlooked.

Our goals for the initiative are:

- to encourage two-year colleges to strengthen and enhance programs in the humanities, including the study of world cultures;
- to support model programs at two-year colleges that may be replicated at other institutions; and
- to enable two-year colleges to broaden the base of financial support for the humanities and to increase their fundraising capacity overall.



The humanities can play a vital role in community college curricula. The perspectives of history, philosophy, or literature can deepen and enrich the educational experience of two-year college students. The Endowment seeks to encourage institutions to plan imaginatively for models of excellence that strengthen and enhance the role of the humanities.

A targeted initiative is needed because two-year colleges have, in the past, been reluctant to apply for NEH challenge grants. While the program has always welcomed applications from these institutions, and a small number of excellent grants have resulted, community colleges have not taken advantage of the challenge-grant funding opportunity in anything like the numbers we would expect from a cohort of approximately 1,177 institutions nationwide, institutions that enroll over half of all students in post-secondary education. Because the humanities have not traditionally been given the highest priority, community colleges have been reluctant to commit limited fundraising resources to the humanities. The limited capacity for fundraising typical of community colleges makes the NEH "challenge" to raise three nonfederal dollars for every federal dollar awarded difficult for them to meet. To encourage applications, the Endowment will reduce the matching requirement from three-to-one to two-to-one, and allow an extra year to raise the necessary nonfederal donations.

**SimpsonQ6.** How much of the Challenge Grant program budget do you anticipate devoting to the two-year colleges initiative?

**Answer:** The amount of funds needed for this initiative will depend on the number and quality of applications received. We estimate, however, that we will devote between \$1 million and \$2 million to the initiative in each of its planned three years.

**SimpsonQ7.** How will the NEH target resources to this effort? Will you set up a competitive process to distribute funds?

**Answer:** Applications for challenge grants to two-year colleges will be reviewed in a special competition, open only to two-year colleges; applicants will be competing with peer institutions.

### **Saving & Preserving Endangered Languages**

One of your core programs relates to preserving and increasing access to cultural and intellectual resources including books, periodicals, and other historically significant items. An interesting piece of this work relates to the recording, documenting, and archiving of an estimated 3,000 of the world's languages that are on the verge of extinction. The Smithsonian Institution is also undertaking this type of work.

**SimpsonQ8.** To what extent, if any, does the NEH partner with other organizations like the Smithsonian Institution on common cultural goals like preservation of the world's languages? Is one organization better suited for this type of work over the other?

**Answer:** In recent years, NEH efforts have benefited from the support of many partners within the federal government and throughout the private sector. Collaborations with its partners have contributed greatly to the success of many of NEH's programs—including Documenting Endangered Languages, the National Digital Newspaper Program, and Digital Humanities programs, as well as special initiatives and emphases such as Picturing America, *We the People*, and the EDSITEment website.

NEH enters into partnerships that can best utilize the particular resources and capacities of each partner to reach goals consistent with each partner's mission and interests. The Documenting Endangered Languages initiative, for example, was launched by NEH and the National Science Foundation in 2005, with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History participating as a research host, but providing no additional funding. NEH funds support fellowships and a limited number of collaborative projects that seek to enhance and deepen our knowledge of these languages. NSF awards larger institutional grants. Together, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation have granted \$23 million for projects to document 156 languages in 38 countries, including the United States.

In 2004, NEH and the Library of Congress signed a memorandum of understanding establishing a partnership to create the National Digital Newspaper Program. Under the terms of this partnership, over a period of approximately 20 years, the Endowment will provide grants to an institution or organization in each state and territory to digitize titles published between 1836 and 1922 and to prepare fully searchable files that the Library of Congress would then permanently maintain on the World Wide Web. Selected pages, along with title essays and a directory of papers published in the United States from 1690 to the present, are now publicly accessible on-line through the Library's "Chronicling America" resource.

NEH is also cooperating with the NSF, the Higher Education Funding Council for England acting through the Joint Information Systems Committee, and the Canadian Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council is supporting a joint grant program designed to promote the development and deployment of innovative research techniques in large-scale data analysis; to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among scholars in the humanities, social sciences, computer sciences, information sciences, and other fields, around questions of text and data analysis; to promote international collaboration; and to work with data repositories that hold large digital collections to ensure efficient access to these materials for research.

An interagency agreement with the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the State Department is making the NEH's Picturing America project accessible around the world through U.S. Overseas Missions. NEH has made available eight hundred sets of the Picturing America images, and translation of the Teachers Resource Book into four languages is now in progress. The translations will be posted on the NEH Picturing America Web site. Other recent NEH partners in the federal government include the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, the President's Committee on the Arts and

the Humanities, the National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Head Start, and the White House Preserve America Initiative.

NEH also recently awarded a grant to the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC), a national membership organization that supports professionals who preserve cultural heritage, to coordinate the salvage and recovery of art and cultural artifacts that were impacted by the recent natural disasters in Haiti. FAIC will be working with the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, and other federal agencies to send teams of preservation professionals trained in disaster response to Haiti to help recover damaged collections and carry out conservation treatments, as necessary.

### **Lifelong Learning in the Humanities**

Another important facet of your work relates to providing Americans with opportunities to engage in lifelong learning in the humanities. The NEH does this through a variety of humanities programs reaching diverse audiences both large and small. Your budget request mentioned one such effort relating to the development of projects for public audiences in anticipation of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War which will be observed between 2011 and 2015.

**SimpsonQ9.** Can you describe the type of activities or programs that you are developing to mark this critical moment in our country's history?

**Answer:** NEH has been a participant in the key networks of Civil War Sesquicentennial planners, staying abreast of plans in the various states. In recent years, we have also invited proposals for projects that promise to enrich the commemoration intellectually and as a nationwide experience. Notable funded projects include:

- planning initiatives for public programs in Maryland, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Vermont;
- professional development programs for teachers on the abolitionist movement and the sectional battles leading up to the Civil War;
- a comprehensive electronic edition of Walt Whitman's Civil War writings;
- a national touring panel exhibition on Lincoln, the Constitution, and the Civil War;
- a New York Historical Society exhibition on Lincoln in New York; and
- planning for a one-hour television film on "Remembering the Civil War."

Also, a special award of \$950,000 to the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission is supporting a traveling exhibition, a mobile gallery, a panel exhibition, a permanent online web exhibition, and educational and public programs related to the observance:

- “An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia” illuminates the central role played by Virginia in the military and social revolution that framed the way Americans today approach the issues of freedom, liberty, patriotism, and nation.
- Two smaller versions of this exhibit will circulate beyond the state’s boundaries and around the nation.

Since 1980, NEH has invested more than \$40 million in projects related to the Civil War. These funds have supported historical research; the preservation of documents and artifacts; programs to enhance the content knowledge of teachers; and a wide array of opportunities for lifelong learning in libraries, museums, historic sites, and on television. When *The Civil War* television series, created by documentary film maker Ken Burns, was first broadcast on PBS over five consecutive nights in 1990, nearly 40 million people tuned in, making it the most watched program ever to air on PBS. NEH invested more than \$1.3 million to produce the series, which stimulated sales of books about the Civil War and increased visitation to Civil War battlefields.

**SimpsonQ10.** Do you plan to collaborate with the National Park Service who oversee many of the historic Civil War battlefields and manage Ford’s Theatre where President Lincoln was shot and Petersen House across the street where he later died?

**Answer:** The Endowment has had productive discussions with the National Park Service regarding ways the two agencies can collaborate to ensure that the Civil War Sesquicentennial addresses issues that are pertinent to all regions of the country, regardless of whether or not they have battlefields. Areas of cooperation related to the Civil War include fostering partnerships between NPS and the state humanities councils, conducting a special National Parks Service session at the annual meeting of the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and increased cooperation between NPS and NEH in delivering online resources for teachers.

### **“We the People” Program**

The “We the People” program was established in 2004 and has been a cornerstone of the Endowment’s work for many years. This program is centered upon the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture. Much of this work is done through the state humanities councils, school teachers, and other educational outlets. Until now, the funding for this program has remained relatively stable. Based on your budget request for next year, however, it appears that much of the money saved by reducing the program by \$3 million (from \$14.5 million to \$11.5 million) would be used to establish the new “Bridging Cultures” initiative.

**SimpsonQ11.** Given the popularity of the “We the People” program and its success in educating citizens about our own history and culture, do you believe it wise or prudent to divert funding from it to establish the “Bridging Cultures” initiative?

**Answer:** *We the People* has been a very successful rubric for NEH, but it must be understood that it is a rubric. That is to say, in many regards, some of the humanities projects that have been supported under *We the People* also can be supported within the agency's new *Bridging Cultures* initiative. This is especially true of our interest in projects that will help Americans better understand their rich and varied heritage. So, to a certain extent, we see *Bridging Cultures* as a continuation and enhancement of the work NEH has supported under the *We the People* banner the last several years.

Having said that, we think it is necessary for the agency to establish priorities and to provide leadership. For FY 2011, therefore, we have proposed to allocate funds among our various grant programs and initiatives where we think they can do the most good. The Endowment remains committed to making a significant number of awards for projects that involve American history and culture.

We would also note that at the agency's FY 2011 request level, NEH will still provide viable support for the main components of *We the People*, including the *We the People* projects of the state humanities councils, the National Digital Newspapers Program, Landmarks of American History workshops for school teachers and community college teachers, and *We the People* Bookshelf awards to libraries.

### **Questions for the Record from Mr. Price**

National security, as well as globalization and our increasing cultural diversity in the U.S., require us to strengthen our cultural competency and knowledge of the humanities, including languages, histories, religions, and cultures of other peoples and traditions.

The lack of support of graduate education, which is now exacerbated by the economy, is threatening future generations of researchers and scholars, particularly in the humanities. However, while other federal agencies, including NIH, NSF, DOE are coming out with new programs to support students, NEH is currently the only federal agency supporting academic research and scholarship that does not also support graduate education. As the largest federal funder of the humanities, NEH is uniquely positioned to facilitate valuable research collaborations among graduate students and faculty in the humanities. Increased federal attention and support for humanities graduate education would help to attract and retain talented individuals who will contribute to a culturally competent workforce.

**PriceQ1:** I understand that the NEH recently decided to allow graduate students to be eligible for summer seminars, and I applaud that decision. What more can NEH do to support graduate education and research in the humanities?

**Answer:** While NEH has not traditionally provided fellowships or other forms of direct support to graduate students, the agency recognizes the need to encourage and provide opportunities for graduate students to enhance their humanities education. As noted in Congressman Price's question, the Endowment has recently revised the eligibility criteria for two of its important professional development programs—Summer Seminars and Institutes and Landmarks of American History and Culture—to create opportunities for

humanities graduate students. Beginning in the summer of 2010, graduate students will be able to participate in these summer enrichment programs for humanities teachers and faculty, which will extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the humanities.

We should also note that that one of NEH's new digital humanities grant programs—Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities—specifically encourages the inclusion of advanced graduate students as participants in funded projects. Graduate students also often participate in and benefit from the Endowment's support for long-term collaborative research projects, such as the collected editions of the papers of U.S. Presidents and other important figures in the nation's history and culture. These projects bring faculty and graduate students together to work on advanced research in the humanities.

**PriceQ2:** The Association of American Universities and other groups have proposed the creation of a new competitive program at NEH that would promote collaboration among graduate students and faculty in the humanities, similar to collaborations that already take place in the sciences. Does the NEH support this proposal? How much would it cost to have a program that could have a significant impact on the field?

**Answer:** We have not determined what type of resources would be needed to create a competitive fellowship program to support graduate students. Establishing such a program is currently not a high priority of the agency. Nonetheless, we are sympathetic to the needs of graduate students and have taken note of AAU's proposal to foster collaborative relationships between graduate students and humanities faculty. Such collaborations can help instill in the next generation of humanities practitioners the skills and the habits of mind that lead to successful careers in multiple fields of endeavor. And, as the current graduate education system continues to struggle in placing newly minted Ph.D.s, we need to focus greater attention on the wide variety of careers that advanced training in the humanities can make possible.