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State Humanities Committees (1979-1982): Correspondence 01

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National Federation of State Humanities Councils

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Government and Public Affairs

TO: Chairpersons and Executive Directors of State Humanities Councils

FROM: Betsy McCreight, Chair, Government and Public Affairs Committee

DATE: September 21, 1982

At the May meeting of the Federation in Washington, members requested three brief reports: 1) on the ADP system at NEH, 2) on the issue of terms and rotation of state council members and officers, and 3) on redundancy among activities funded by state humanities councils and the Divisions of General and Education programs at NEH.

The report on ADP was distributed in August. The report on rotation is attached. (The report on redundancy will be completed before the 1982 annual meeting in November.)

The issues raised in the attached report will be on the agenda of the Federation meeting on Friday, November 12. We invite your comments now and your participation at the meeting.

file : STATE HUMANITIES
PROGRAMS .

March 31, 1983

Bill:

-- Linda's question: Moira had told her that there was a rumor that we would be "tightening up" discretionary funds in State Programs.

-- Don's response:

(1) Grants for Exemplary Projects. We will continue with the "Chairman's Awards for Excellence" under this new name. For the first time we will allow applications from a consortium of states (any number; we expect regional groupings). There will be no ceiling on the dollar amounts which could be requested, no pre-set number of awards which could be granted, and we don't know how much of the Division of State Programs money would go to this, but last year we used up about 2% of the total regrant budget for these and we would expect that we would use about 2%-5% of this year's regrant money, or no more than 15% of the discretionary funds for this.

(2) Population and Quality. Before, we used to grant all of the discretionary funds by population only; now, we will give more consideration to the quality of the state's overall program, while still basically operating on a population basis.

(3) Own Projects. We are allowing states, in their next round of 2-year applications to us, to propose to use up to \$25,000 of their grant money for a single project of their own, which they would initiate themselves. Such a request would be open both to states making their regular 2-year applications this year and those who are making their interium reports.

Not strictly discretionary funds issue; an additional point of interest.

History of State Humanities Committees

- 1965-1965: Pell advised by Barnaby Keeney and others that the humanities community was not ready for a state-based humanities program. It was too early to legislate such a program.
- 1968: Issue of state humanities organizations again raised in reauthorization hearing. Still no action taken.
- 1970: Pell again raised issue of state-based humanities organizations in reauthorization hearings. Then acting Chairman Wallace Edgerton agreed with Keeney that a mandated program was not feasible. But Edgerton did agree to set up a pilot project in 6 states.
- 1973: Program was expanded under Chairman Ronald Berman due to great success of pilot programs. 22 committees in operation. All states had either fully operating committees or committees in the planning stages.

Early NEH guidelines for operating state-based humanities programs:

- 1) programs must tap into the state's existing humanities resources - institutional and organizational
- 2) programs must respond to the real public concerns within the state
- 3) accessibility and quality of programs must be stressed

NEH Council urged the state committees to develop regrant criteria consistent with the following stipulations:

- 1) that program be a humanities program (consistent with the definition of "humanities" in the enabling legislation) and that it "enlarge public understanding and appreciation of the humanities.
- 2) that the program involve academic humanists both in planning and in implementing the programs
- 3) that the program focus on issues of genuine concern to the people of the state.
- 4) that the program be for the adult public. Funds available elsewhere for humanities programs addressed to students. This was the only significant money (public or private) available specifically to reach the adult public with such programs

5) that the program funds be regranted by the Committees to local organizations and institutions within the state. The Committee should act as an arm of the NEH to fund locally initiated programs throughout each state.

In addition, all funds are to be matched on a one-to-one basis.