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## State Humanities Committees (1979-1982): Correspondence 01

William B. Brennan

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A State Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities

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November 5, 1980



Senator Claiborne Pell  
U. S. Senate  
Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

Your staff was most helpful in providing materials necessary for the enclosed research paper. I am providing you a copy with my gratitude in the hope that you may have a chance to look at it.

I suspect that you will find some of the conclusions interesting and others quite outrageous; at least I hope so.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

William B. Brennan  
Executive Director

WB/gm

Enclosure

*Special thanks to Sandy Cray.*

**SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT FIRST PRINCIPLES**

**THE FEDERAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM**

by William Breman

This report is dedicated to the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities in recognition of its crucial role in promoting progress and scholarship in the humanities throughout the United States

Tampa, Florida  
October, 1980.

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## SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT FIRST PRINCIPLES

### THE FEDERAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM

by William Brennan<sup>1</sup>

In their origins there is nothing esoteric in the humanities. They express a distinctive disposition of the human animal—the disposition to think a second thought even while thinking a first thought, the impulse to live internally and not only externally. They speak for human reflexivity, for the double and triple lives human beings live, acting on one level, commenting on these actions at another level, commenting on the commentary at a third. The humanities, in brief, are a civilization's organized tradition of self-consciousness.

Charles Frankel<sup>2</sup>

#### I. CHALLENGING DIFFICULTIES IN THE FEDERAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM

##### A. DIFFICULTIES OF NATIONAL/STATE COLLABORATION

At the 1979 annual meeting of state-based humanities endowments<sup>3</sup> the following resolution was passed without dissent by the House of Delegates of the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities:

In recognition of the special character of state programs and their partnership with NEH in bringing the humanities to the public of the several states,

and in appreciation of the openness of NEH to collaborate with the states toward that end,

be it resolved that the Federation NEH-Relations Committee undertake, as a major agenda item for the coming year, a comprehensive review designed

(1) to clarify and reaffirm the special status of state programs as distinct from all other NEH grant-making activity,

(2) to completely examine the NEH state program review process, towards the end of providing for full participation by the states in designing and conducting reliable review and reporting processes in the least burdensome manner, and

(3) to clarify the meaning of the term 'program development,' and describe its role as a component element of each state program.

The Federation resolution revealed concern among state-based endowments. There appeared to be confusion and misunderstanding on three important questions:

(1) Special Status. What is the nature of the state endowment in itself, and in relation to the National Endowment? This presupposes clear understanding and agreement about the nature of the National Endowment. Most basically, is the state endowment an independent agency serving the unique needs of its individual state? Or, is the state endowment a collaborator; even a "partner," with NEH, pursuing national goals within its state boundaries? In removing state endowments from NEH control, was it the intent of Congress to also isolate them from the federal humanities program? Or was Congressional intent merely to liberate the states from an excessively constricted role so as to free them to make a major contribution to the federal program? NEH policy on this point is confused and confusing, and appears to be in conflict with Congressional intent. The affirmation of special status is an affirmation of partnership for the only two kinds of organizations charged in the legislation with the accomplishment of federal purposes. As long as it is mistakenly construed simply as a request for "special privilege," the collaborative possibilities of partnership will be unrealized.

(2) Program Development. What are the goals of a state endowment, and, more specifically, what is a state endowment expected to do? Are state endowments passive, grant-making agencies; or should they also be characterized by the kind of dynamic, goal-oriented, activity that we gather under the umbrella term "program development"? How does what state endowments do relate to what the National Endowment does? Is NEH intended to be merely a passive, grant-making agency, or should it also be characterized by dynamic, goal-oriented activity? Is it possible that state endowments should be active while the National Endowment remains passive? If so, what are the implications for collaboration, the characteristic behavior of partners? Finally, what do we mean when we use the term "program-development"? At present, our meanings are as obscure as our policies, providing rich soil for misunderstanding, and a limited

field for collaboration. If the federal program has goals, and if it intends to succeed, if it is meant to make a difference and not merely to reinforce the status quo, then program development activity will be its major concern.

(3) Program Review. Confusion about what we are, and about what we are intended to do and to accomplish, reaches its natural term in the process of program review. How can we know whether we have been successful unless we know what we were supposed to have accomplished? The absence of a comprehensive federal policy to guide our programs and set criteria for their success means that the federal program is quite literally "unmanageable": it can neither be managed efficiently to accomplish objectives, nor can its achievement or failure be documented in a verifiable manner. In the absence of true goals, the means we take become goals in themselves, and the demonstration of "success" becomes merely a description of the effort being made. But, neither good intentions nor noble efforts make good goals. It is quite possible to do many good things without addressing your own raison d'être. On both the national and the state levels, we submit endless reports describing what we are doing, and (barring some peripheral attention to affirmative action targets) never establish in a verifiable manner what we have accomplished specifically with respect to the federal goals of our program. We exhaust ourselves with endless, self-congratulatory rhetoric, and accumulate testimonials from those who have benefited from our efforts, but never address the bottom line: are we accomplishing what we are supposed to be accomplishing? (Do we even know what we are supposed to be accomplishing?) These problems are compounded on the level of state endowments by an NEH review process that is based upon the assumption that state endowments are not permanent components of the federal humanities program, collaborating partners with NEH in the pursuit of federal goals at the state level, but merely one other new applicant with a novel idea for a possible program. For this mindset, proposal ideas rather than program accomplishments are the focus of review, and "proposals" rather than program reports are the vehicle. It is striking that, in its

"Seven General Questions for State Proposal Review," NEH does not even pose the question: is this program accomplishing the purpose for which it was established in the federal legislation?<sup>4</sup>

Everyone is busy, and that explains, in part, why no one yet has had the time to give "second thoughts" in any systematic way to the way we are doing what we do. Such reflection, so characteristic of the humanities, is largely absent from the federal humanities program. Also often absent has been the passion for clear terms and thoughts, and the preference for reasoning over rhetoric. This essay will try to provide some measure of all of these things, beginning with an examination of the most important stumbling blocks that over and over again pose serious difficulties for the federal program as a whole.

## B. OTHER DIFFICULTIES OF THE FEDERAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM

### 1. Interpreting the Legislative Intent.

The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 begins:

AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities to promote progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts in the United States, and for other purposes.<sup>5</sup> (underlining added)

The underlined phrase both communicates the core of Congressional purpose and gives rise to our first confusion. What a strange dichotomy, "progress and scholarship," implying, as it seems to do, that scholarship is to be promoted in isolation from progress, and that progress is to be promoted in isolation from scholarship. The phrase "and scholarship" has the quality of something tacked on after the fact, that does not quite make sense in the context (much like the later additions to the "definition" of the term "humanities"). Had the phrase read: "to promote progress in the humanities and the arts" its meaning would have been much more clear. Certainly, scholarship is implicit in the term "humanities," and progress in the humanities cannot be accomplished without progress in scholarship. Why, then, is it broken out, and tacked on? The reason seems to be that Congress intended to exempt scholarship, in some sense,



from the focus upon progress characteristic of all other aspects of the humanities. With respect to scholarship, alone, it would be enough to provide support, without specifying progress. This seems to be confirmed by a careful analysis of Section 7(c) of the legislation, in which Congress spells out the tasks that it expects NEH to undertake (all of the terms in the chart immediately below, except the headings, are taken verbatim from the legislation):

<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>ACTION REQUESTED</u>	<u>OBJECT OF ACTION REQUESTED</u>		<u>MEANS TO USE</u>
		<u>PROGRESS</u>	<u>SCHOLARSHIP</u>	
Sec. 7(c)	(2) to initiate	programs to strengthen research and teaching (1970)		
	<u>to support</u>		research	contracts grants loans etc.
	(3) to award	training workshops	(study, research)?	<u>fellowships</u> grants
	(4) to foster	information interchange		
	(5) to foster	education (1970) public understanding & appreciation.		grants other arrangement with groups
	(6) <u>to support</u>		scholarly publications	
	(7) to insure (1976)	programs available to citizens: geographic economic		

Of all of the questions raised in Congressional hearings, none is more fundamental than this one: is the federal humanities program merely a passive, supportive program, responsive to the initiatives of a special constituency according to standards of quality and access? Or, is the federal humanities program also an active, promotional program, itself initiating actions directed towards achieving progress in terms of specific measurable objectives? Noting that the infinitive "to support" is used

only in connection with scholarly research and publication in the table above, we may surmise, for the moment, that Congress intended a passive, supportive role, with respect to scholarly research, and an active, promotional role, with respect to all other aspects of the humanities in the United States. Thus, the concern expressed by the 1964 Commission on the Humanities lest government involvement lead to government thought-control,<sup>6</sup> is addressed in the legislation without, at the same time, excusing the federal program from the obligation of an active, goal-oriented program "aggressively to seek imaginative new means of service"<sup>7</sup> to the citizens of the nation by "promoting progress" in the humanities. Charles Frankel once commented that the humanities disciplines "have usually been at their best when they have had a sense of engagement with issues of public concern," and also that "scholarship cannot and should not be shackled to problem solving. It must be free to follow crooked paths to unexpected conclusions."<sup>8</sup> Ronald Gottesman has asserted, without prejudice to the quality of traditional humanities studies, that, "if everyone in higher education is concerned with advancing particular aspects of knowledge, who will take care for where it is going as a whole?"<sup>9</sup> According to NEH Chairman Duffey, NEH is "the only Federal agency with specific and statutory responsibility for the state of the humanities in the Nation."<sup>10</sup> We may conclude, for the moment at least, that the mandate entrusted by Congress to its federal humanities program encompasses support for scholarship as well as promotion of progress for the humanities as a whole.

## 2. Defining the term "humanities."

From those readers who may be exhausted by previous fruitless attempts to deal with this question, so frustrating, and so perennial, I ask a measure of patient indulgence. Something intelligent must be said about this thorny problem; and I think something helpful can be concluded. In his 1980 reauthorization hearings Senator Pell was still repeating his request for a simple and intelligible definition of the term.<sup>11</sup> Congressman/Governor Albert R. Quie advised us some time ago that unless we can explain more intelligibly what the humanities are, and what they do, we cannot reasonably expect continued federal support:

What is a definition of the humanities which most people can understand? . . . there is a problem. I would welcome any of you who would be willing to send me a one-page letter attempting to describe the humanities. . . . You do not face in Congress a negative mood toward the humanities nor do you compete with any lobby who feels we should terminate our programs of federal support. Rather, you face a situation where leaders in government do not for the most part understand or appreciate the humanities.<sup>12</sup>

Robert Hardesty, vice president of the University of Texas system, expressed both our perplexity and our frustration when he said: "What is the humanities? Or what are the humanities? We don't even know if it is singular or plural."<sup>13</sup> Richard Lyman also stumbled over the singular/plural question, and with good reason. It will help us to realize that the humanities are both singular and plural, and something else besides. Let me try briefly to describe each of the three kinds of humanities that I think we ought to distinguish clearly in the future. I will also give them each a name that I will try to use consistently throughout the remainder of this essay.

(1) Academic Humanities. (plural)

The tradition of regarding the humanities as a set of academic disciplines was perpetuated in the first definition of the humanities provided in the federal legislation. The advantage of this definition is that it is intelligible within the academic world. The disadvantage is that it is not intelligible outside of the academic world. A supplementary advantage is that it grounds the disciplinary specialization of academic humanists, providing justification and legitimating what they do. A supplementary disadvantage is that it provides no coherent rationale for what academic humanists do, leaving them open to the charge that their academic specialization is deracinated and fruitless, detached from the essential nourishment of basic human concerns and making no useful contribution to society's deliberations about such concerns. Persons using this definition tend to regard NEH as analogous to the National Science Foundation. But, science brought us antibiotics, the transistor, and the moon landing. What have the humanities disciplines brought us? A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education attributes the following opinion to Bernard Bailyn, Winthrop professor of history at Harvard University and president-elect of the American Historical Association: "Recent

historical scholarship has failed to produce a coherent overview of the past."<sup>14</sup> Now, incoherence is a weighty charge for the humanities to bear, but it is not the only charge. Jennifer Lee provides a handy summary of charges in an essay published by Federation Reports:

The specific charges leveled against the humanities and higher education from within and without the discipline are not unfamiliar or unexpected: trivialization of scholarship, specialization, petty boundary disputes, elitism, the encompassing and stinging charge of irrelevance, and even of being deficient in a sense of humor.<sup>15</sup>

(2) Applied Humanities. (singular)

The importance of relating the humanities to broad, general concerns was expressed by Congress in its amendments to the definition of the humanities in 1968, and again in 1970. Albert Quie explained this as follows:

The Congress noted that scholars are willing and able to receive federal funds to do what might be called basic research, working with primary sources finding personal satisfaction in scholarly work, but there appeared to be a shortage of capable individuals who can translate and apply that basic scholarship to contemporary problems . . . That is why a few years ago we added the words in the definition of the humanities 'with particular attention to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.'<sup>16</sup>

It is vital that the humanities, for which so much is claimed, begin to demonstrate in some tangible way the kind of benefit they provide. Quie elaborates:

If you and I could explain to another person how we have benefited from a new insight gained through someone's efforts in the humanities, and then demonstrate it in our daily behavior how that insight has brought a new dimension of quality to our life and those about us, we would never have to be defensive about the humanities.<sup>17</sup>

But, by and large, humanists are not responsive to this need. According to Walter Capps, an associate with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions,

Humanists, the acknowledged custodians of a tradition of wisdom and value that reaches back through the centuries, lending the society the fiber and continuity on which it depends, are being looked to for help. But the humanists, in the main, remain silent. They offer no perceptible response . . . (there is) a pervasive lack, a vacuum that needs to be filled. It calls for a translation, the fitting of humanistic resources to issues of public human concern.<sup>18</sup>

The advantage of applied humanities is relevance, and manifest usefulness. The disadvantage is a certain incompatibility with the academic

disciplinary specialization of humanities professionals, generating frustration, on the one hand, dilution of substance, on the other. In many cases, well-intentioned humanists are frustrated because the kind of work they do does not lend itself to ready application in public discourse. Why should they be asked to speak, as it were, the language of the street, when their academic endeavors demand a precision that requires its own language? Such requests are not made of scholars in other fields. No one asks the National Science Foundation to support public discussions of the mathematical implications of the theory of relativity. On the other hand, when humanists do try to engage in public dialogue, they often find that their professional knowledge is either irrelevant, or must be so diluted that nothing of substance remains. There is no doubt that humanists have sometimes performed with distinction in the setting of public discourse. But, one may suspect, this is often accomplished in spite of, or, at least, without recourse to their specialized professional occupations. More frequently, humanists simply bore those whom they are being asked to inspire.

It is both the glory and the cross of state humanities endowments, with their spunky committees and gritty staffs, that they have not wilted in the heat of the challenge posed by applied humanities. Instead, bolstered by a certain naive enthusiasm, and reinforced by an inordinate capacity for pain, they have somehow managed to begin a process of change whose consequences may be very profound, indeed. Applied humanities is the centerpiece of the state humanities program. It is not a business for the passive or faint-hearted. It requires aggressive, intelligent, persevering program development activity.

### (3) Comprehensive Humanities. (singular)

Here we are discussing something that doesn't really exist, but that might begin to do so by virtue of determined, collaborative action by NEH and the state endowments. The concept was first revealed to me in the writings of Buckminster Fuller. I first heard it applied to the humanities in a brilliant address delivered by legal philosopher Richard Wasserstrom to a somnolent audience following lunch at one of the annual meetings of public programs in the humanities. Later, I found the same

vision expressed in the writings of Charles Frankel:

Nothing has happened of greater importance in the history of American humanistic scholarship than the invitation of the government to scholars to think in a more public fashion, and to think and teach with the presence of their fellow citizens in mind.<sup>19</sup>

If we ask, "is progress possible for humanistic scholarship?", the answer, in terms of comprehensive humanities, must be a resounding "Yes!". What Fuller calls a "comprehensivist," is one who can speak without distortion or oversimplification about subtle, scholarly matters, in a way that can be understood by all. In the humanities, such an accomplishment would require rethinking and restructuring the way in which we do our scholarly work—precisely what Wasserstrom was encouraging. For Wasserstrom, humanities scholars have done themselves a scholarly (as well as a human) disservice, by cutting themselves off from the broad, human concerns that led them towards the humanities in the first place. For their full perfection, scholarly humanities require a kind of recurrent cycle by virtue of which they nurture themselves at the oasis of broad concerns, engage in their refined and disciplined mode of inquiry in their desert retreat, returning to the oasis to plant the seeds of their newly developed insights (this metaphor, for better or worse, is mine, not Wasserstrom's). It is strange how frequently one encounters in the NEH testimony before Congress references to the decline of support for the humanities without any corresponding interest being shown in either finding out what is wrong or finding ways to remedy the situation.<sup>20</sup> Trapped in its own passive self-concept, and fearful that leadership will be mistaken for domination, the federal humanities program may be missing a golden opportunity to catalyze fundamental changes in the role and accomplishment of the humanities in the United States.

### 3. Defining Other Key Terms of the Legislation.

#### a. A Distinctive Federal Role.

In the legislative "Declaration of Purpose" we read:

It is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and add to programs for the advancement of the humanities and the arts by local, State, regional, and private agencies and their organizations.

We also read in the same place that

the encouragement and support of national progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts, while primarily a matter for private and local initiative, is also an appropriate matter of concern to the Federal Government.

The reason the federal government is concerned is that it has two national responsibilities: the quality of our civilization ("a high civilization"), and the health of our democracy ("democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens"). It is noteworthy that, in both of the quotes above, the law specifically identifies a focus on "programs for the advancement" and "national progress"; that is, even when the word "support" is used (with the exception, as we have noted above, of scholarship), it is support, not for the humanities, but for advancement and progress.

Having said this much, let us proceed with an apparent contradiction in Section 4(b) of the legislation:

The purpose of the (National Foundation for the Arts and the Humanities) shall be to develop and promote a broadly conceived national policy of support for the humanities and the arts. . . .  
(underlining added)

NEH has often used this phrase, "a policy of support," to justify its predilection for a passive role, and, at first glance, there appears to be some justification. After all, the quote specifically says "support for the humanities," not support for progress or advancement. Let us look at some comments by Chairman Duffey:

The Endowment is a sustaining activity. It is not, therefore, the shaper of new ideas. . . . that would be an inappropriate role for a government agency. . . . the Endowment's job is to sustain humanities study at a time of difficulty with a margin of support. . . .<sup>21</sup>  
The agency is to provide a network having to do with support. . . .<sup>22</sup>  
The ideas come from our applicants and not from us. . . .<sup>23</sup> (The NEH mandate is) "to support the study and nurture of the humanities by as many people as possible. . . ."<sup>24</sup> (NEH is beginning to do needs assessment so that it may design) "a policy for support."<sup>25</sup>

During the reauthorization hearings for 1980, Chairman Duffey and NEH were commended by Senator Randolph of West Virginia, as follows:

It is my firm belief that the National Endowment has successfully pursued a policy of support for the humanities in all its disciplines.<sup>26</sup>

Permit me now to introduce a discrimination that only a humanist could love, and to do so in the form of a question: what do you think is the

difference in meaning between the two phrases below?

policy of support for the humanities

policy for support of the humanities

The grammarians among you will know immediately; the rest of us will just have to guess. The legislation uses the former, as does Senator Randolph. In the quotes above, Chairman Duffey uses both. I would argue that they are quite different in their meaning. The word "of" refers to source, almost like "from." The word "for" refers to end or goal. A "policy of support" implies resources in search of a goal; a "policy for support" implies a goal, but not necessarily any resources. If this analysis is sound, the "policy of support" sought by Congress was asking to what specific ends, and within what limits, its resources should be applied. That is, Congress was asking for a definition of the distinctive purposes and limits of federal support, not for a definition of the means by which support might be provided to the humanities.

We may approach the definition of a distinctive federal role from another, and perhaps less mind-taxing, direction. If one considers what must be a rough annual cost for all of the humanities institutions in the country that are not directly supported by the federal government, an annual figure of \$50 billion is not unreasonable.<sup>26a</sup> At \$150 million, the federal humanities program represents 3/1000th of this sum, or, \$300 in federal funds for every \$100,000 from other sources. Now, with these kinds of proportions, federal domination of the humanities enterprise would not seem to be a major risk (by way of contrast, the National Endowment for the Arts estimates its \$150 million budget is close to 10% of the total funding for the arts nationwide, and that this could go to 25% without serious risk of undue influence).<sup>27</sup> The challenge for the federal humanities program is not how to avoid domination, but how to make a difference. With so little money, the federal program can make numerous trifling contributions of a margin of support, without making any significant difference with respect to our nation's standing as a "high civilization" or to our citizen's capacity to govern themselves with "wisdom and vision."

We may conclude that Congress was neither careless nor unenlightened when it called for a federal humanities program whose distinctive role



would be to "promote progress and scholarship." We may also conclude that there was both serious intent, and serious purpose, in Congress' request that NEH "develop and encourage the pursuit of a national policy for the promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities." Without such a policy, it is virtually impossible that the federal program will have a significant impact: the random forces for dispersion of effort are too great, and the resources are too limited.

b. A National Policy.

The legislation calls for the development and promotion of two national policies: a policy of support, and a policy for promotion. The former is requested of the National Foundation; the latter is requested of the National Endowment.<sup>28</sup> The legislation does not say what it means by the term "national policy." "Policy" is the kind of word that everyone understands until they try to define it (interestingly, it comes from the same root as "police"). At least part of the reason why neither of the national policies requested has yet been developed may be that no one quite understands what is being asked. NEH, in any event, seems to feel that it is developing a national policy when it decides its funding categories, guidelines, and emphases. But, certainly, a national policy involves more than that.

A national policy, it seems to me, should spell out in coherent detail:

- (1) the originating force behind establishment of the program;
- (2) the scope, limits, and special focus of the program;
- (3) the difference that the program intends to make, in terms of objectives accomplished (include priorities and urgencies);
- (4) the measures that the program will use to verify the accomplishment of its objectives.

A national policy is the systematic, comprehensive elaboration of the distinctive federal role. Without it one finds a proliferation of activities without organic coherence, accompanied by the scatteration of policy statements that are difficult to reconcile or to rank, and that often appear to be in conflict.

In defining a national policy, it is crucial to distinguish clearly

between goals and efforts, objectives and activities, ends and means. This is not as easy as it may seem, and, if one examines recent congressional testimony it becomes clear that confusion on this score is rampant. One of the problems is that what is a means on one level may be a goal on another. For example, take the phrase "to promote progress." Here the goal is progress, and the means is promotional activity. A policy for progress would ask;

- (1) why do we care about progress (needs assessment)?
- (2) what do we mean by progress?
- (3) what constitutes the accomplishment of progress?
- (4) how will we know when we get there?

It appears to be this kind of policy that has been asked of the National Foundation. This is a policy for progress (the goal) by means of promotion. Suppose, on the other hand, that we use a very similar phrase: "a policy for the promotion of progress." Here the goal is promotion, and the means are to be chosen. To develop a policy for promotion one might ask:

- (1) why do we care about promotion (needs assessment)?
- (2) what do we mean by promotion?
- (3) what constitutes the accomplishment of promotion?
- (4) how will we know when we get there?

It appears to be this kind of policy that has been asked of the National Endowment.

#### 4. Defining the Constituency for the Federal Humanities Program:

This may be the hardest task of all because it is not merely a question of quality vs. access, of elitism vs. populism; it is also a question of final goals vs. formal goals, of change vs. status quo. Let us try to sort out the variables.

##### a. Final goals vs. formal goals.

Final goals always involve the accomplishment of a difficult objective, and they normally produce a change in the way things are. Formal goals do not so much involve accomplishment as they involve style ("good form"), the way in which you go about things (although this, too, is subtle, since achieving "good form" may be a difficult accomplishment). An

example may help. The final goal of a business is probably to make a good return on investment; a formal goal might be to have an effective affirmative action program. The more urgent the challenge of final goals, the less compelling are questions of formal concern. For example, if my business is going bankrupt, I am probably not going to give my greatest attention to improving the affirmative action program. Now, let us apply this example to the federal humanities program. Suppose, for example, that our "policy of support" analysis disclosed that the greatest and most urgent problem in the humanities in the United States today was the ineffectuality of academic humanities.<sup>29</sup> We might discover, for example, that the \$50 billion invested every year by other agencies was having the opposite effect to what was intended: it was driving people away from the humanities, convinced that they were irrelevant. It is at least conceivable that the federal humanities program might invest its entire \$150 million in a single activity: to find out what was wrong, and to correct it. The reasoning would be that, if the federal program were to invest its funds as a catalyst for change, and if it were successful, then the force of the full \$50 billion would be enlisted in the objectives of "high civilization" and self-government of "wisdom and vision." In the context of urgent final goals, formal questions must take second place. Accomplishing great things is of a different order of importance than sharing resources equally. When there are plenty of bullets, let everyone take turns shooting the hunter's rifle; but when everyone is hungry, and there is but one bullet left, you are well advised to let the best marksman take the shot. The federal humanities program faces a bit of a dilemma: does it have a final goal of great importance? If so, we had best husband our resources carefully, and apply them as fruitfully as possible in the pursuit of that goal. If not, perhaps we should simply distribute our resources equitably among the general population, and go on our way.

b. Elitism vs. Populism.

NEH has suffered more pain on this issue than could possibly be warranted. On the one hand, within academic humanities, the charge has been favoritism toward the elitist colleges and universities as opposed to "affirmative action" to insure that the funds are more evenly spread around. The even spread of money is a formal goal. On the other hand,

NEH has been charged with favoring academic humanities as opposed to public applications of the humanities in non-traditional settings. But, unless there is a final goal here that I have not perceived, this is also a formal consideration, i.e., one of spreading the benefits around. This formal goal was canonized in the 1976 legislation when a seventh task was added to the six that had sufficed since 1965:

to insure that the benefit of its programs will also be available to our citizens where such programs would otherwise be unavailable due to geographic or economic reasons.

Let me confess here an abiding respect for Senator Claiborne Pell. His insistence that the humanities be made meaningful to the people has broken the monopoly of academic humanities, encouraged the development of applied humanities, and set the stage for the possibility of comprehensive humanities. But, the humanities are not the arts, and different standards must apply in the matter of populist access. The arts readily combine high quality with broad popularity; the humanities do not. In the popular mind, with good reason, the arts are pleasurable; the humanities are difficult, requiring sustained attention and disciplined and subtle inquiry. One may relax in enjoyment of the arts; one must exert oneself to engage in the humanities. The thrill of intellectual insight can be as moving as an artistic experience, but reaching it is a far more arduous task. I will return to this question below.

The real dilemma for the federal humanities program in the question of elitism lies with the fact that the "Declaration of Purpose" in the legislation is, in some sense at least, profoundly elitist. It seeks to support and promote scholarship, certainly an elitist occupation. It seeks to be instrumental in producing "worldwide respect and admiration for the Nation's high qualities as a leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit," certainly an elitist objective. Can leadership ever be less than elitist? It aims to produce a "high civilization," to value and support the "great branches" of scholarly and cultural activity, and to provide conditions that "can call a great artist or scholar into existence." Now it would be difficult to find anything more elitist than "greatness." And these are final goals, which, if Aristotle is correct, take precedence over all others. Shall we pursue greatness? Or shall we pursue equality?

Let us decide, once and for all, and not go on blaming ourselves for not accomplishing both simultaneously.

c. Quality vs. Access.

Were we to bring the humanities to everyone, there is some question whether everyone would want them. Do we respect their preference, and confine our "affirmative action" efforts, as Chairman Duffey suggests, to those who are "willing and able"?<sup>30</sup> I once had a British roommate who stocked seven grades of tea. He always gave the lowest grade to me, because he knew I would like it best. My sensitivity to quality in tea, you see, was somewhat undeveloped. Aristotle maintains that, while all men by nature desire to know, there are certain conditions and limitations. A crucial condition is, in the broadest sense, leisure (including time, and peace of mind). A limitation, for moral philosophy at least, is sufficient maturity of mind. Reflecting in the same vein, Milton Stern, an English professor and one-time Chairman of the Connecticut Humanities Council, argued persuasively that persons on the other side of "the grim margin of subsistence" could not possibly respond to the humanities: when your children are starving, and you are sick, you do not readily discuss "social justice." But, economic deprivation is not, as we all know, the only destroyer of leisure. The commitment to doing things, so characteristic of our culture, whether induced by guilt, ambition, or simply by custom, can do a pretty good job as well. The busy and successful may be as difficult to reach with undiluted humanities as the impoverished and the deprived, especially if college exposure has demonstrated the irrelevance of the humanities to their lives. Once again, what is our task: to make the humanities available to those who are "willing and able"? Or is it to make them useful to everyone, a quite different task?

There is another, related question, that I have yet to see discussed. Society is organic, structured, not atomistic; even a society as fragmented as ours. People turn to other people to perform opinion-formation functions, and for other reasons. With our oversimplified view of both the humanities and the public, we have yet to think deeply

about the implications of social structure for public humanities programs. If we think of society hierarchically, it may be that there is a modality in which "quality" humanities material can be made attractive at each level of the hierarchy. If we think of society as a network, it may be that there are ways of designing public programs so that they enter the network at one point, and then spread throughout the system.

## II. POLICY FOR THE FEDERAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM: TO BE, OR NOT TO BE

### A. THE NATIONAL PROGRAM: NO POLICY YET

#### 1. Congressional Expectations.

In the 1965 legislation, the controlling vision guiding efforts to promote progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts was twofold:

- (1) that the United States might become a "high civilization."
- (2) that its self-government might become characterized by "wisdom and vision."

Congress hoped that, through the efforts of the National Foundation for the Arts and for the Humanities, the United States would earn the respect of the world for its qualities as a "leader in the realm of ideas and of the spirit."

Since the United States was already making a substantial investment in pursuit of these same goals through its schools, colleges, universities, and other cultural institutions, Congress requested the National Foundation to provide a "policy of support," defining the distinctive role that the federal program should play:

The purpose of the Foundation shall be to develop and promote a broadly conceived national policy of support for the humanities and the arts in the United States, pursuant to this Act. Sec. 4(b)

Congress asked the National Endowment to provide a "policy for promotion" that would define the character, objectives and priorities of federal promotional activities under the law. NEH was "authorized" to

develop and encourage the pursuit of a national policy for the promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities. Sec. 7(c)(1)

These two policies were related as goals are related to means, with the Foundation to delineate the objectives, and the Endowment to determine the means. (Cf. page 13, "A National Policy".)

## 2. Congressional Disappointment, and Concern.

Neither the National Foundation nor NEH has yet provided Congress with the national policy requested of each 15 years ago. The Foundation, long inactive, has recently been activated, but in a coordinating rather than in a policy-making role.<sup>31</sup> The National Endowment appears to have simply ignored the request. In the early years NEH was so small (initially \$2.5 million) in a multibillion dollar Interior budget that Congressional oversight was minimal. Now that NEH has grown to a \$150 million a year operation, Congress is looking more closely. A 1979 House Staff Investigative Report called Congress' attention to the failure of both agencies to develop their respective policies. The Investigative Staff was quite critical of this failure, because it left the federal humanities program without objectives, priorities, or criteria in pursuing its mandate. Instead of leading, the National Endowment was passive, reactive. Instead of national policy being carefully and thoughtfully developed in advance, it was being made incidentally, and after the fact, by the relatively uncontrolled pattern of individual funding decisions:

The legislation specifically identifies the development and pursuit of a national policy for the humanities within the authority of the Chairman of the Humanities Endowment. In the opinion of the Investigative Staff, neither the NEH nor the Federal Council (of the National Foundation) has made any significant progress in achieving this purpose, development of a national policy. The Investigative Staff believes the Endowment has abrogated its leadership role and allowed the various project applications submitted from the field to become a surrogate national policy, shaping the program direction and emphasis of the Endowment.<sup>32</sup>

## 3. NEH Response: National Policy was not requested; is not desirable.

In its formal response to this criticism,<sup>33</sup> NEH gave six pages of argument to the effect that the Investigative Staff misread the legislation, that no "national policy for the humanities" was requested by the legislation, that no such policy should ever be set by the federal government (for fear of unwarranted federal domination and lack of proper restraint), that the absence of such a policy is no impediment to the accomplishment of federal objectives, and that NEH was, in fact, making policy suitably

when it established funding lines, budgetary levels, guidelines and conditions, and special efforts with respect to its grant making. In arguing that the Investigative Staff misread the legislation, NEH does not provide a corrected reading to explain what precisely the policy was that Congress did in fact request, nor whether NEH was prepared to fulfill the request as NEH understood it.

4. Analysis of the Disagreement: A policy was requested; is needed.

It seems clear that the Investigative Staff was lacking in precision in describing the nature of the policy Congress had requested (NEH is certainly correct in asserting that Congress did not intend NEH to function as a "ministry of culture," setting norms and standards for the humanities throughout the nation). It seems equally clear that NEH was lacking in the same precision, first, by confusing the request made of the National Foundation (a national policy of support) with that made of the National Endowment (a policy for promotion); second, by evading acknowledgement of the fact that a request for some kind of policy had been made; and, finally, by failing to distinguish between a "policy for promotion," clearly requested of NEH, and a "policy for the humanities," clearly not requested of NEH.

While the terminology of the Investigative Staff appears to have been imprecise, their main conclusion (i.e., that NEH had failed to articulate a coherent policy and was operating consequently in a policy vacuum with respect to its objectives and priorities, passively responding rather than aggressively leading) seems to be entirely correct. It is not adequate for NEH to respond that it makes policy decisions with respect to funding lines, budgets, guidelines and special initiatives. The question is: in the framework of what coherent overall policy for promotion of progress and scholarship are such decisions being made? One essential element of such a policy would be the establishment of the objectives by the achievement of which success or failure can be measured. Because such a policy, and such standards, have not been developed, it is literally impossible for anyone to say whether, in its first 15 years, NEH has been a success or a failure. One simply does not know what it was supposed to have accomplished.

By way of extenuation, what appears to be a very unusual situation,



an organization staffed by intelligent and industrious people working away diligently, when no one has a clear idea of where they are going or how they will know when they get there, is, I understand, not only common among federal organizations: it is characteristic of them!<sup>34</sup> This is no grounds for applause, however. It is natural to resist specifying objectives; first, because it is very hard to do this well, and, second, because one may easily fail to accomplish them. Still, failure to specify objectives, especially for a comparatively tiny, necessarily catalytic, organization such as NEH, almost guarantees that no really significant accomplishments will be achieved.

##### 5. Explanation: Why No Policy Was Developed and Promoted.

No policy was developed and promoted because those responsible did not realize the need for one. The program was administered by academics who took it to be self-evident that the objective was to provide academic humanities with "a margin of support." Providing support is an activity, not a goal; it is an activity supporting the goals of others. Consequently, no need was felt to develop a comprehensive national policy of distinctive federal goals, priorities, or criteria. Formal, but not final, "goals" were involved, i.e., to provide support fairly, and with quality considerations in mind. Furthermore, a constituency "willing and able" to receive all of the support that was available was immediately accessible (the colleges and universities, and their teachers and scholars), so there was no need, initially, for a plan to accomplish "constituency development" goals and objectives.

Quickly these assumptions began to break down, and the long history of clash between Congress and NEH may be looked upon as an attempt by Congress to convince a reluctant NEH that Congress had something else in mind other than simply a passive role in support of academic humanities on the basis of quality and fairness. Intensive Congressional pressure was exerted, to the point of repeated legislative amendments, to convince NEH that it was expected to reach beyond the academic constituency towards the general public, that it was expected to go beyond academic humanities towards applied humanities, and that it was to go beyond fairness in the direction of affirmative action. The academic humanities, with their \$50 billion, were not accomplishing the objectives of the legislation, and

were, possibly, impeding their accomplishment. To simply provide them an additional stipend of insignificant amount could hardly be expected to accomplish anything. And Congress expected some results. (The development of this clash, from the 1968 legislative amendments to the report of the House Investigative Staff in 1979, will be traced in the next major section of this essay.)

#### 6. Assessment: Consequences of Having No Policy.

##### a. Lack of Leadership.

In the absence of policy, leadership was impossible, and NEH was unable to fulfill what Chairman Duffey has called "one of the most important responsibilities of the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities . . . . the task of expressing the national interest in these fields of knowledge."<sup>35</sup>

##### b. Dissipation of Resources.

In the absence of policy, a program lacks focus and coherence. Whatever coherence and focus pertained to the original, purely academic program, has been substantially confused by Congressional intrusions and NEH responses since that time. An important statement of concern was made during appropriation hearings by W. McNeil Lowry, for many years the Ford Foundation's key executive for humanities and arts programs, and, according to Congressman Yates, a major influence in the creation of the arts and humanities endowments. In a statement directed specifically to the NEA, but also intended to be instructive to NEH, Mr. Lowry said:

I think that most of us fourteen years ago would have expected that by 1979 we would have a clearer idea of federal policies in these areas . . . . In a longer statement I have filed with the Committee which deals with the humanities as well as with the arts, I have concentrated on the need for policy and planning, particularly as it concerns the National Endowment for the Arts, and a clear statement of priorities and choices that could be defended or at least argued about. At present, there is not merely the absence of clear priorities but the scatteration of funds, the diversion of many artistic enterprises from their chosen objectives and functions, the attenuation rather than the discrimination of standards, and the creation—together with State and community agencies—of a delivery system that is expensive, cumbersome and parasitical . . . . If I belabor the importance of policy, strategy, planning and evaluation, Mr. Chairman, it is because I think the longer the federal government goes without priorities and choices, the more difficult it will be to make them. It is already very late. <sup>36</sup>

c. The absence of, or confusion of goals.

Chairman Duffey has remarked that it was not until 1978 that NEH specified any goals in its appropriation requests to Congress.<sup>37</sup> NEH, since then, has provided "goal" statements that reveal a serious confusion of "goals" with "means." Currently there are four major "goals":

- (1) To promote the public understanding of the humanities, and of their value in thinking about the current conditions of national life;
- (2) To improve the quality of teaching in the humanities and its responsiveness to new intellectual currents and changing social concerns;
- (3) To strengthen the scholarly foundation for humanistic study, and to support research activity which enriches the life of the mind in America; and
- (4) To nurture the future well-being of those essential institutional and human resources which make possible the study of the humanities.<sup>38</sup>

The first three of these "goals" are restatements and amplifications of three of the seven tasks assigned to NEH in Section 7(c) of the legislation. As such, they are activities, not goals. They also stimulate a question: where are the other four? The other four were (in summary):

- (1) to develop a national policy for promotion;
- (2) to foster the interchange of information;
- (3) to support the publication of scholarly works; and
- (4) to insure benefits to all citizens.

What we have here is a choice of emphasis among means, not the specification of goals. What we do not have is a comprehensive rationale explaining this emphasis in terms of the goals to be accomplished, nor any means to verify whether these activities prove to be successful in accomplishing their goals. The fourth "goal" is especially interesting, because NEH is here adding a task not "authorized" in the legislation. Although this task may well be implicit in the other tasks, it does represent a significant departure, worthy of close scrutiny.

An argument could be made that it is better to express no goals than to confuse ends and means, goals and activities. Confusion is compounded, in the absence of a synthetic, coherent policy, when countless other "goal" statements appear without a clear rationale or apparent connection to the four major "goals." Reviewing the reports and testimony of the past few years, one finds "missions," "mandates," "priorities,"

"objectives," "roles," "responsibilities," and "purposes" for the federal program without any definition of the meaning of these terms in relation to one another, nor any attempt to relate the content of the various statements to each other or to the four major goals. Sometimes it seems that NEH really has a single goal, rather than four, as in these statements by Chairman Duffey:

The Endowment's task, as I understand it from the legislation, is to try to connect the interests and concerns of our citizens for greater understanding of the complexity of our culture, with the institutions and individuals who can serve those interests, who are in a sense our cultural resources for learning the humanities.<sup>39</sup>

We have a mandate from the Congress to support the study and nurture of the humanities by as many of our people as possible.<sup>40</sup>

The real story of the National Endowment for the Humanities is that its grants make it possible for individual American citizens to exercise their curiosity, to ponder age-old dilemmas and modern perplexities, to keep their minds alive to all the great issues about the human condition.<sup>41</sup>

It is this role, to enoble the ideal of democratic citizenship, that is the highest public purpose of the Humanities Endowment.<sup>42</sup>

NEH is the only Federal agency with specific and statutory responsibility for the state of the humanities in the Nation.<sup>43</sup>

The course to be adopted by NEH is to keep alive the possibilities for intellectual diversity and for substantive access.<sup>44</sup>

Sometimes NEH appears to have not one, or four, but two goals:

NEH (has) two fundamental and complementary missions:

- (1) to assist scholars and teachers in the humanities and the institutions which nourish their work . . . and
- (2) to foster, in the public at large, an awareness of the crucial issues in the humanities and of their importance for contemporary life in America.<sup>45</sup>

(Note: the underlinings above are all added to suggest that these, too, are actions, not goals, and to suggest their diversity)

Although these citations are, of necessity, taken out of their original context, the varying contexts in the full texts did nothing to clarify the relationships between these statements in a systematic and coherent way.

### 7. Reluctance to Consider a Policy for Promotion.

What is far more perplexing than the failure to develop a policy for promotion is the reluctance to acknowledge that such a policy is called for, or to consider what such a policy would be. There is even what appears to be avoidance of the phrase "policy for promotion"; in hundreds of pages of testimony and reports I only found it used by NEH once, and that was an incidental, passing reference. Far more frequently, NEH connects with itself the National Foundation responsibility for a "policy of support," usually translating its meaning into "a policy for support."<sup>46</sup> NEH has never, to my knowledge, acknowledged responsibility for a policy for promotion, in spite of the most insistent Congressional questioning on this point. One can only marvel as one observes Congressman Yates try with great perseverance to get NEH to acknowledge this responsibility, and ultimately fail. Congressman Yates:

Again, there may be a failure of communication here as to what is meant by 'national policy.' The legislation does use the phrase 'national policy for promotion.' Whoever was the senior humanities endowment official is quoted as saying, 'We do not have a national policy, nor should we.' Obviously, you have to have a policy for promotion.<sup>47</sup>

When NEH declined to answer yes, or no, Congressman Yates finally gave up the attempt, consoling himself that, perhaps, NEH really did have such a policy in operation but just did not want to tell anyone what it was. Strictly speaking, the legislative mandate to NEH was to develop such a policy, not necessarily to write it down. Still, it is not easy to see how NEH could fulfill the second half of the request of Congress, to "encourage the pursuit of a national policy" without at least telling people what the policy was.

Something more than an understandable reluctance to acknowledge a fault seems to be at work here. Such an acknowledgement would, literally, turn the NEH program inside out, transforming the agency from a passive, responsive, supportive one into an active, initiating, catalytic one.

## B. THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT: PASSIVE SUPPORT? OR ACTIVE PROMOTION?

### 1. The Argument for A Passive Role.

Although an important evolution is taking place, the leadership of NEH continues to see the federal humanities program as essentially passive and supportive. NEH, in this view, is a grant-making foundation whose task is to make its grants according to standards of quality with some attention to questions of access. It is not a federal agency, with the responsibility to accomplish certain objectives. Its mission is, essentially, supportive.<sup>48</sup>

While there is no reason why a foundation should not actively pursue goals, and, indeed, most foundations certainly do pursue goals through their grant-making process, there are reasons, both in the legislation and in the political situation, that give some credence to the passive stance. In the first place, the original budget was \$2.5 million. It is difficult to imagine the accomplishment of goals with such a sum. Secondly, in the legislative "Declaration of Purpose" one finds some justification for a passive, supportive role:

It is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and add to programs for the advancement of the humanities and the arts by local, State, regional and private agencies and their organizations-

But, even here, the support is not for the humanities, but for the "advancement of the humanities."

The original definition of the humanities in the 1965 legislation was limited to a list of academic disciplines, encouraging NEH to think of itself as a support group for the academic establishment. This was encouraged further by the name itself, "National Endowment for the Humanities," which seems to suggest that the goal of the program is merely the nourishment of the humanities disciplines, and not their application to important national objectives.

The passive role was also politically sensible, at least in the early years. NEH was an academically-oriented institution, run by academics, in service to academics. Its scope was defined as a number of academic disciplines, at least in the definitions section of the legislation. The political power behind the 1965 act came from the colleges and universities. Senator Pell had joined his interest in the arts with the humanities

primarily to secure this political base, and he acknowledges that, without the political clout of the colleges and universities federal support for the arts could not have been accomplished. While Pell personally wished from the beginning that the federal humanities program would have the same public focus as the arts program, he did not at that time have the power to insist on that stipulation. Consequently, the early federal humanities program provided a "margin of support" for quality academic projects.<sup>49</sup>

A final factor in favor of passivity is that it is comparatively easy. A passive foundation relates to existing constituencies, and serves felt needs. Responsiveness is all that is required; it is not necessary to create a new constituency, or to define and address needs that have yet to be widely perceived. The academic constituency was large, accessible, and willing and able to apply for funds to pursue tasks of its own choosing. It was easy to obtain an impressive array of applications. The main challenge was a formal one: to develop and implement procedures for proposal review that would be sound, and defensible.

## 2. The Argument for An Active Role.

In fact, maintaining a purely passive stance proved to be impossible, and NEH is even beginning now to acknowledge an active orientation:

The Endowment has sought to stimulate as well as to respond to broad and important areas of need in the humanities. Until the Endowment instituted a program of grants for media projects, for example, the translation of humanistic knowledge into television and radio programs has (sic) been, at best, limited in both quantity and quality.<sup>50</sup>

An active stance becomes imperative in one of two cases: either an important goal will not be pursued unless the agency acts, or a necessary constituency will not respond without active encouragement. Although not immediately perceived by NEH, Congress intended that NEH reach beyond the goals of academic humanities, to achieve goals for the country as a whole. It also intended that NEH reach beyond the ready-made academic constituency, to reach new (and often hard-to-reach) constituencies in the public at large. To make this intent unmistakably clear, Congress amended the law significantly in 1968, 1970, and 1976. In 1968, the so-called "definition" of the "humanities" was supplemented to add both the notion of applied

humanities and the notion of public focus. The words added were: "and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment." In 1970, the definition was further supplemented, this time stressing the notion of relevance to the present day. The words added were: "with particular attention to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

By 1970, NEH was beginning to experiment with "public programming," in response to the Congressional encouragement. Some of these experiments reached traditional cultural institutions in what was essentially still a passive mode; e.g., sustaining grants to the New York City Public Library. But the one that shattered the tranquil passivity in Washington for good, it would seem, was the creation of the state-based federal program. In terms of NEH's history, this development can only be seen as a shocking aberration, a strange marriage of the National Endowment for the Arts model with the National Science Foundation model, no doubt forced upon a reluctant NEH by intensified pressure from Congress. Senator Pell had wanted state humanities agencies from the very beginning,<sup>51</sup> although it is not clear that he realized that they would find no constituency there with an appetite for what they would be allowed to offer. The state arts agencies were winning applause for NEA in the halls of Congress, for reasons that were probably both political and idealistic, while NEH was seen as merely reinforcing the popular stereotype to the effect that the humanities were elitist, esoteric, and irrelevant. With the utmost reluctance, I would suspect, but with no other choice, NEH created these state-based programs. This reluctance found expression in their remarkably circumscribed programming scope. Rather than being invited to collaborate in promoting the federal program in the states, the state-based endowments were prohibited from addressing any of the funding programs engaged in by NEH. They were allowed only to fund policy issue discussions relating to a single theme, a program focus that required them to create a new kind of humanities (applied humanities), and a new public constituency. In short, the state-based endowments were to pursue goals that were largely unrecognized, and to develop constituencies that did not yet exist. This was a very active and promotional responsibility.



Not only were state-based endowments surprisingly active, but they also constituted a new kind of activity for NEH. No existing agency applied to be a state-based humanities endowment; the agencies were created "by invitation only." In other words, although the grant-making process was used to fund these state endowments, they were not the result of the normal process of grant-making. No guidelines were written and promulgated; no open competition for funding was held; no judgments on the basis of quality were rendered. Instead, what amounted to a contract was made (through the proposal process, to be sure), with the terms of the offer and the acceptance being set by NEH, but fleshed out by the hand-picked applicants. In summary, NEH was creating a new program for the purpose of doing program development and promotional activity in each state so that the federal humanities program could begin to reach the general public. This was a very active role on the national level for an organization that, to this day, regards itself as passive.

Congress applauded NEH for this move, while expressing concern that the narrow scope allowed the state-based endowments by NEH was an unwarranted circumscribing of their role. In 1976, the state-based endowments were written into the federal legislation (occupying a large part of the total text). For the first time they were specifically authorized by Congress to pursue all of the programming options open to NEH; they were required to formalize their accountability to the people and the government of each state; and they were assured a minimum level of guaranteed funding. NEH was to review, and to assess the "adequacy" of each program, but no longer to circumscribe its programming range beyond the limits set in the legislation.<sup>52</sup> NEH was to devote at least 20% of its total programming budget to the state-based endowments.

The appointment of Chairman Duffey to replace Ronald Berman was another sign of the need for a more active posture at NEH. More and more, NEH found itself criticized by Congress for failing to be aggressive enough in reaching beyond the small group of elite academic institutions most highly qualified, on the one hand, and in exploring possibilities for non-academic programming (with special attention to hard-to-reach constituencies) on the other. If quality had reigned supreme in 1965, the dominant thrust of the new, Carter administration was going to be

access (and access requires action, affirmative action).<sup>53</sup> In an early statement of the new policy, in November, 1977, Chairman Duffey did not even mention the word "quality," something, I suspect, that would have been impossible in earlier days:

What is this Administration's emphasis and policy with respect to the Humanities? . . . . Our goals are access for all Americans; diversity of activity; respect for taste and judgment in every region and section of the country; confidence in the shared concern and goodwill of people who care about these matters everywhere; enthusiasm for a national response to needs in this area.<sup>54</sup>

While the official rhetoric of NEH is still overwhelmingly passive, a conceptual transition towards a more active orientation is beginning to become apparent. The attempt to specify goals, for the first time, is one sign. The tendency to move from multiple, formal goals, towards one or two more final goals, is another. During the 1981 appropriations hearings Chairman Duffey expressed, in a striking manner, a goal-orientation that goes far beyond notions of support, suggesting a dynamic and catalytic role for NEH:

The task of the Humanities Endowment is one of connection and interaction. Its task is to encourage study and reflection over the deepest and broadest of human concerns. To do that it has had, first and foremost, to stimulate and nurture the interaction between our people and their questions, on the one hand, and our cultural institutions and their potential, on the other.<sup>55</sup>

Another development is very striking. This one pertains to NEH's Division of State Programs. Four years ago, when the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities was established, it was established on the premise that NEH's legislative mandate prohibited support services to the state-based endowments. A little more than a year ago, in response to charges of the House Investigative Staff that the Federation had come into existence because of a failure on NEH's part to provide leadership and support to the state endowments, Chairman Duffey stated:

Since the Endowment's essential mission as defined by Congress is to function as a grant-making organization, the Endowment staff recognized at the outset of funding state programs that the Endowment could not undertake extensive service functions.<sup>56</sup>

This year, in a 1 1/2 page document entitled "Program Initiatives, 1981," (would that state endowment reports to NEH could be so brief!)

the Division of State Programs outlined its plans for the coming year. What do we find? Both a rather comprehensive list of support services to be provided state-based endowments, and a consciousness of trespassing on the Federation's territory. "What is needed (from the Division of State Programs, the document asserts) is sustained leadership on more substantive matters." This includes:

Further refinement and expansion of the Division's information sharing function. The automatic data processing system inaugurated in FY 1981 will be used extensively. Articles will be prepared for NEH publications which describe distinctive projects funded by state councils. Thematic essays will be prepared by Division staff on such subjects as local history programs and methods of evaluation, and will be circulated to all the states. An orientation handbook for new members of state councils will be published. The Division will invite state representatives to Washington for symposia on selected subjects, such as rural programming, reaching Hispanic audiences, and involvement of scholars from under-represented humanities disciplines such as anthropology and jurisprudence. Division staff will work with groups of states to explore possibilities for multi-state funding of regionally important projects, and bi- or tri-state sharing of staff with special skills (e.g., media, Native Americans).

The Division anticipates that there will need to be "further clarification of the relationship between the Division, the Federation, and the state councils. There is potential for duplication between the Division and the Federation." Quite so. A remarkably active program for a passive agency. We might conclude that this sleeping beauty is about to awake. What a stimulating possibility! Of course, it is a large step from support services to promotional activity, but the thought of a true national/state partnership for promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities is an exciting prospect to consider.

C. THE STATE-BASED ENDOWMENTS: SPECIAL STATUS? OR STATE AGENCY?

1. Historical Background.

a. Pre-1976: NEH Program Development Activities.

Prior to 1976, the state-based endowments were program development activities of NEH. Although organizationally distinct (independent, ad hoc committees, in almost every case), they were created by NEH solicitation, directed towards NEH program development objectives (development of a grass roots humanities constituency), controlled by NEH regulations, and programmatically circumscribed by NEH-developed guidelines. The document that eventually formalized the role of the state-based endowments was entitled "State-Based Program Principles and Standards." The document is a very strange mix of "official" NEH formal requirements without any specific indication of purpose, and "unofficial" goal-statements derived, somehow, from the formal requirements by a panel of state endowment chairpersons working with NEH staff. The formal requirements, or "principles," follow:

- (1) The humanities should be central to all aspects of the committee's program.
- (2) Scholars in the humanities should be involved centrally in each project funded.
- (3) All grants . . . should support projects dealing with public policy issues (defined as "factually the subject of address" by a government agency).
- (4) The committee should have a carefully chosen state theme, and the theme should be central to each project.
- (5) Projects should involve the adult, out-of-school public.
- (6) Committee objectives should be achieved by making grants.
- (7) The first six principles of the state-based program can best be achieved by a representative and volunteer state committee made up of scholars in the humanities, institutional administrators, and members of the public.

Because the state-based program involved a focus that was equally foreign to the public and to the academic humanist, it implied three major program development goals:

- (1) The development of a new public constituency for applied humanities discussions and the extension of this constituency beyond "those segments of the adult public traditionally comfortable with and involved in conventional adult education."
- (2) The development of a new constituency for applied humanities involving a large number of humanities scholars.
- (3) The development of an expanding number of institutional sponsors especially those "not traditionally involved in humanities programming."

Thus, the programs were designed to discharge Congress' instruction to NEH "to foster public understanding and appreciation of the humanities." Otherwise, programmatically, the state-based endowments were totally distinct from the national program: by and large, NEH retained its passive, academic focus, while the state-based endowments undertook strenuous program development activities on behalf of the federal humanities program. Although NEH provided technical advice through a staff of program officers, it did not provide support services, nor was there any programmatic collaboration between state-based and national staff.

This status for the state-based program was not just "special"; it was unique. If NEH had opened a branch office in each state advised by an ad hoc committee, the purpose served would have been the same. One could look upon the state-based endowments as a means by which NEH could accomplish program development objectives without greatly increasing its need for administrative funds. The one drawback was a certain break in the "chain of command," and more than once NEH found itself pushing on a rope, so to speak, trying to get the ad hoc committees to respond to its expectations.

b. The 1976 Legislation: State-based Programs become State Programs on Their Way to Becoming State Agencies.

During the 1976 reauthorization process, the state-based program was written into the Congressional legislation for the first time as a component element of the federal program. The new law gave more attention to the federal program in the states than it did to the program of the National Endowment. While still required to submit a plan and periodic reports for review by NEH, states were now authorized by Congress to become full collaborators with NEH, pursuing on the state level the same range of program tasks that had been authorized for NEH originally in Section 7 (c) of the law, including purely academic programming. In effect, the state-based program became directly accountable to Congress, with NEH functioning as a broker in the accountability process. The main advantage of this development, from the perspective of the state endowments, was that it allowed them to do at least some programming of a less strenuous, more traditional, sort, serving the cultural as well as the citizenship needs of their people.

The main disadvantage was the introduction of a new note of confusion. For one thing, two agencies, NEH and Congress, would now each be imposing their distinctive sets of expectations. And these two agencies had not always been noted for seeing eye to eye. For another, it was not clear whether the new situation would be but a half-way point on the passage to state agency status. Now, the most important point about state agency status was not the one most often mentioned, that is, the question of possible political interference with the funding choices. The most important question was whether state agency status would mean that the state endowments would become instruments, no longer of a federal program in the state, but of a state program whose goals and objectives would be set entirely on the basis of the distinctive character of the state. Such programs might truly be called "state programs," rather than "state-based" federal programs. Since 1976, confusion over whether the state endowments are intended to serve federal goals, state goals, or some combination of the two, has been a major attribute of the program.

Soon after the legislation was enacted, the NEH National Council issued its first instructions to the state endowments, in the form of two "comments" on the legislation. The first, Comments of the National Council on the Humanities Regarding the "Plan" Required of State-Based Committees by the New Legislation (11/19/76) was a straight-forward review of the new statutory requirements for administration of the state endowments, with special reference to accountability to the citizens and to the government of each state. The second, Comments of the National Council on the Humanities (February, 1977): The Endowment's Reauthorizing Legislation and the Programs of State Committees for the Humanities, was not an interpretation of the legislation so much as an expression of NEH's concern lest state endowments be precipitous and rash in broadening the scope of their programming focus along the lines authorized by Congress. The second instruction affirmed NEH's continuing role of supervision of the state endowments, no longer by means of establishing common guidelines for all, but rather, after the fact, through the program review and reauthorization process. While acknowledging that "the legislative history makes it clear that each committee must now make its own determination how best to serve the humanities interests of the citizens of the state," and that "the National Council

may only advise committees of its own perceptions on opportunities for humanities endeavors throughout the nation as a possible aid to their planning," the instruction reminds state endowments that the National Council must "perform its usual function of recommending to the Chairman action upon the state committees' applications." In other words, this "advice" is an offer the state endowments would do well not to refuse.<sup>57</sup>

The "advice" was, in essence, to broaden programming focus cautiously, and only after the most painstaking forethought and consultation, and, above all, to avoid the kind of academic programming characteristic of the NEH role. "The conviction of the Council is that the public interest will not be wisely served by the creation of 'mini-Endowments' in each state--programs which fully duplicate all of the functions and programs of the Endowment--because of the obvious danger of redundancy, inefficiency, and waste of limited resources." The instruction did not explain how its advice should be reconciled with the legislation which, from a programmatic perspective, created "mini-Endowments" in each state by assigning to the state endowments the same tasks it had assigned to the National Endowment in Section 7 (c) of the law. As a result, whereas the National Endowment was functioning in a policy void, the state endowments were now the beneficiaries of two different policies.

In fact, the "advice" was good advice, although, perhaps, unnecessary. Had NEH thought to ask the state endowments, it would probably have found little or no interest in academic programming, except as a support for applied, public humanities programs. Having cut their teeth on the zesty morsel of creating a new humanities and a new humanities constituency, few states would have willingly turned to the drab passivity of sifting fellowship applications. The fears of the National Council were not confirmed in practice, nor, to the best of my knowledge, was their new, "advisory" role ever formally questioned.

To add to the confusion, the second instruction seemed at once to call for cooperation between NEH and the state endowments to gain maximum effect from limited resources, while avoiding all mention of ways in which such cooperation could be inaugurated, and ruling it out a priori with respect to academic programming. In one place we read: "Frugality will have to be the mother of invention and the mother of cooperation as well,"

and in another: "Nor . . . does there seem to be a coherent rationale to an approach which would 'divide up the pie' in such a way that committees would make, for example, one type of fellowship award while the Endowment made others, or one type of education grant while the Endowment made others." Why not? That sounds like a good start towards cooperation. Is there a serious intent here? There is no call for a meeting to explore modes of communication, even within the sphere of public programming. And yet, were the national public programming efforts coordinated with state programs, the impact and efficiency could be truly impressive. The instruction suggests that there are collaborative roles. State endowments are encouraged to take their place in the context of "nation-wide priorities in the humanities," and to honor the "relationship between the National Endowment's mission and the state committees' mission," when, as we have seen, these missions and priorities have never been articulated in a coherent and comprehensive policy for promotion for the federal humanities program.

As has been noted, the most disturbing concept introduced by the instruction was the suggestion that state endowments were no longer to find their goals in the Congressional charge "to promote progress and scholarship in the humanities." Rather, they were to seek "imaginative new means to be of service to the state." They were to develop plans, not based upon collaboration with NEH to accomplish the federal mandate, but "after careful assessment and consultation within the state . . . to serve broadly the citizens of their state." Henceforth, a major element in the state endowment review process at NEH would be, not the fulfillment of federal priorities within the state, but assessing and serving the distinctive needs of the individual state. But, since human beings' needs for the humanities do not differ substantially between New York and California, and since "wisdom and vision" in citizens is not something different in each state, what this shift means in practice is that we focus, not on goals, but on affirmative action quotas. This is a triumph of formality over finality.

Thus, not merely on the level of program focus, but in terms of the very goals and objectives of the federal program in the states, the states were to be transplanted from federal to state terrain. More and more they would



be regarded not as state-based federal programs, but as state programs; eventually, in all likelihood, as state agency programs. Affirmative action to meet demographic targets is supplanting the accomplishment of federal goals in importance. Why don't we simply give each citizen of the state 5¢ to attend the humanities program of his or her choice—a triumph of demographic balancing of no value whatsoever. There is no necessary connection between demographic balance and the success of the state endowments.

This movement towards a state, rather than a federal, orientation submerges the common federal origin, support, and goal of our programs, and renders the possibility of collaboration with NEH remote, indeed. It is confirmed, if confirmation is needed, in NEH's "Seven General Questions for State Proposal Review." A question is asked:

Are the committee's overall program goals and objectives clearly defined? Are they adequately explained in terms of the humanities and of the character and resources of the state? 58

One is not asked: "Are the goals and objectives any good? Do they have anything to do with Congressional intent? Is the program accomplishing the purpose for which it was established and nurtured?"

## 2. Special Status or State Agency Status?

If state endowments are federal programs in the states, then their special status as the primary program development agency of the federal humanities program should be acknowledged and affirmed, and they should embark upon an intense program of collaboration with NEH for joint national/state promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities. If, on the other hand, state endowments are to be separated from the federal program in their exclusive pursuit of distinctive state goals, then they should affiliate with their states and seek their primary support and their organizational base in state government. The present situation, in which they are both, and neither, is not a promising one.

What obstacles impede the acknowledgement of a "special status" for the state endowments? One is certainly the term itself which, while appropriate, is rhetorically unfortunate. It suggests a slightly different term, "special privilege," and an even more offensive one, "entitlement." Now, if there is one Congressional complaint from which NEH has

suffered more than any other, it is the charge that NEH has been extending "special privilege" bordering upon "entitlement" to a limited number of prestigious and elite institutions and agencies. It has, so the charge is made, functioned in a "closed circle," channeling funds to its friends and intimates. Nothing could strike more to the heart of a passive, grant-making institution, than the suggestion that its goals of quality review and fair access have been undermined by favoritism. This is why NEH finds it so difficult to consider with an open mind the fact of the special status of state endowments, and to reorder its relationship to the state endowments from one of distance and detachment to one of intimate, mutual collaboration.

The core of the problem lies with NEH's self-concept as a passive agency. It cannot be resolved unless NEH becomes more aware of, and willing to embrace, its active role and purpose. The reason is that active programs have other criteria, besides the formal standards of fairness and quality, in ordering their affairs; namely, the accomplishment of goals. For an active, goal-oriented, agency, the forming of partnerships for the pursuit of difficult goals is a natural, not an unnatural, act. Were the state programs supported by contract, instead of by grant (and there appears to be no reason why they should not be), then the acknowledgement of special status would appear to be easily done. Or, alternatively, it might be possible for Congress to find a way to appropriate funds directly to the states. In any event, something should be done to remove once and for all the crippling effect of a situation in which the state endowments are called upon to do, for NEH and for Congress, tasks that no other grantee is asked to do, while, at the same time, they are treated as if they were no different from other, self-interested applicants.

State endowments exist for no other purpose than to implement the federal humanities program. They were created by Congress and NEH exclusively for this purpose. They do not apply for funds to suit their own purposes, as other applicants do. They are in competition with no one; rather, they were all invited to take on a task for which no one was competing, and for which few would care to compete. No applications were made in open competition in response to widely promulgated guidelines and a request for proposals. The proposals that were submitted were really contracts dictated by NEH, submitted in the form of proposals to fulfill the jots and tittles of the grant-making process. The 1976 legislation

confirms, and does not alter, the special status of the state endowments. Rather, it asks them to take on even broader responsibilities in pursuit of the federal goals. What other NEH grantee is specifically authorized in the Congressional legislation, with detailed instructions governing its characteristics, its number in each state (one), its minimum level of funding, its required level of performance ("adequate"), its permanence (there must be one in each state), its accountability, its relationship to state government, and its relationship to NEH? For what other grantees is NEH required by Congress to spend 20% of its program funds at a minimum. If all of these things do not constitute something special, it is hard to imagine what would.

Chairman Duffey acknowledges the special status. He calls it a "partnership":

I come to the chairmanship of the Endowment with confidence that the partnership which has been forged between the State Programs and the National Endowment is a firm foundation upon which we can build in our common efforts to insure that the humanities will continue to play a central role in all our lives. . . . this partnership of purpose which informs our collective efforts in this important work and which defines the programs and activities at state and national levels . . . .I accept my responsibilities as Chairman on this assumption: that without your effort, the full mandate of the Congress in this area cannot be carried out. . . . For my part I pledge the full cooperation of the Endowment to this end and look forward to working with the states in mapping a coherent strategy which will meet our common objectives.<sup>59</sup>

But, not much has happened since Chairman Duffey said those encouraging words to express their implications or to promote their implementation. By way of contrast, the National Endowment for the Arts has established an Office of National/State Partnership, and for more than two years representatives of NEA and the state arts agencies have been engaged in a shared decision-making process based upon shared long-range planning for "better serving the arts nationwide."<sup>60</sup>

The task and the opportunity before us is to translate the rhetoric of "partnership" into a reality of collaboration with openness and mutual respect. The reward of success will be greatly enhanced fruitfulness, and a far more effective achievement of the goals that we jointly specify within the overall general intent of Congress. In all honesty, not every state will look with joy upon the prospect of collaborating with NEH. I

suspect that many would be happy to surrender any claim to special status if they could get their money and be left alone to do their job. In fact, any attempt to collaborate will initially be simply one more burden on agencies that are already overburdened. NEH will have to restrain its penchant for paternalism, and the states will have to learn to be less wary and more trusting and open. Some states have been hurt, and they blame it on NEH. Others are so challenged by their local task that collaboration in a national effort seems superfluous. From NEH's point of view, the task of establishing a collaborative relationship with 50+ programs and their thousands of active and inactive members, not to mention their governors, representatives, and senators, might well seem a formula for certain madness. Nonetheless, as NEH moves beyond its former exclusive preoccupation with judging, evaluating, and motivating, all rather distancing kinds of activities, and begins to devote its energies to supporting, helping and collaborating, as is forecast in its program initiatives for 1981; and as the state endowments develop a national perspective, and we all increase our sensitivities and professionalism, so that we are able to help each other and not simply get in each other's way, then we will discover both greatly enhanced productivity and a lot more fun in our work.

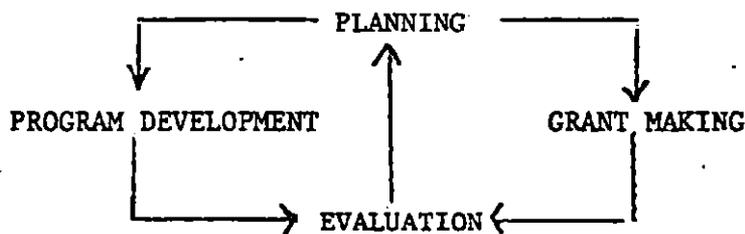
#### D. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: THE CHARACTERISTIC OF AN ACTIVE ENDOWMENT

##### 1. The Many Meanings of "Program Development."

By one of those happy accidents, the state-based endowments were prevented from addressing the needs of academic humanities during their early years. This liberated them, whether they wished it or not at the time, from the merely passive role, and channeled them in the direction of the Congressional goals. Like NEH, the state endowments saw themselves as grant-making institutions, and they would most likely have been happy to function as passive institutions, carefully doling out funds to an eager constituency. Unfortunately, there turned out to be no ready constituency for the kinds of programs they were allowed to fund. Prepared to review proposals with standards of quality and access in mind, the state-based endowments quickly found that there were few applicants for their funds. In those days, no one even knew what public humanities

programming might be; how could they, then, apply for funds to do it? The task called for the creation of a new public constituency for a new kind of public activity. It also called for the enlistment of a special kind of humanist and the development of a special kind of humanities. State endowments soon found themselves immersed in a wide range of activities designed to inform, persuade, assist, induce, convert, and seduce constituencies, and designed to evoke, stimulate and foster exciting ideas. In addition, they found themselves learning the skills of public humanities pedagogy and conference management, and training others in those skills. They became creative as conceptualizers, and the brokers of projects that otherwise would not have come to be. They designed and implemented a variety of support systems to make it easier for others to do public programming. In short, they engaged in that bewildering complex of activities we now call "program development."

For goal-oriented, catalytic foundations that seek not merely to support, but also to transform the status quo, program development is equal in importance to grant-making. Their program activity looks like this:



The term is sometimes used to describe a management process we might rather call "development of the program." This process, which encompasses the setting of goals and the monitoring of their accomplishment is not what we will be discussing. We may define program development, in the sense we are using it, as activity that facilitates the accomplishment of goals. In the analysis below I will indicate five major kinds of program development activity, and fourteen separate variations, all of which are presently employed in the state endowment programs. Every year the program development activities of state endowments become more sophisticated and more burdensome. It is because of the extensive commitment

to program development activity that state endowment operating expenses are so high, in proportion to the total resources available (at present, approximately \$1 of every \$3 is used for operating expenses). The most promising means to further enhance the effectiveness of program development activity while reducing cost lies in the possibility of national/state collaboration.

a. Outreach to Important Constituencies.

Outreach efforts differ according to the kind of constituency being addressed, and the purpose intended. In some cases, it is enough merely to communicate information. In others, you are trying to persuade, convince, or entice. In still others, you are seeking to provide assistance.

(1) Reaching Academic Humanists.

The first stage is simply making contact, and communicating an understanding of the public humanities program. The second stage is encouraging participation, in spite of the fact that academic reward systems do not recognize such activity as professionally certifiable. Some committees have sought to alter this attitude. Others have tried to build into their programs provision for publications that might legitimate participation. The third level is trying to improve the quality of the involvement. This is approached, on the one hand, by means of directories of humanists that indicate special skills and capacities so that the talents may be readily matched with the needs of various projects. On the other hand, humanist performance in public programs can be structured so as to promote effectiveness, and some training can also be provided. It is all a matter of how far the state endowment staff can afford to involve itself.

(2) Reaching Underserved Constituencies. This important activity in recent years has tended to get attention at the expense of other important program development objectives. It has become fashionable, and sometimes seems to be all that NEH means when it speaks of "program development." It is a troublesome area, because the key terms are not defined, and the criteria have not been clearly established. We all use the term "underserved," but no one knows what it means. In a simplistic way we tend to think that if, say, 10% of the population is rural, then they ought to be sponsoring 10% of our projects. But that is not necessarily true.

Suppose they do not want to? Do we make them? Suppose they are not capable? Do we support them? Suppose they are not ready? Do we rush them? Chairman Duffey has used the interesting phrase "willing and able" in this connection. That is, in this view, our responsibility is to make our program available to those who are "willing and able" to respond to it. But, in the context of needs assessment and affirmative action targets, we have not the refined instruments to distinguish between the willing and able, and those who are not. Consequently, it is impossible to tell who is really underserved. In many cases, we cannot even define the target group. In Florida, we think we are underserving the Hispanics, but we don't know who they are, or how many they are. Do we mean "Spanish-speaking"? Do we mean the descendants of the conquistadors? There is a fair indication that the Spanish-speaking, right now, are not really "willing and able." It seems that grant-making is foreign to their culture. Should we undertake to transform their cultural perspective just to get them to fill our quotas? Is the goal of affirmative action equal opportunity (how is this measured?) or equal participation? There is great need for a national policy for affirmative action dealing with these questions, and others. There is great risk of tokenism and the misapplication of resources here. The same three stages of contact, encouragement, and skill-development are involved here. Most programs provide extensive technical assistance to all applicants for funding; here it is apt to be even more extensive. One of the problems here is that technical assistance is easier to provide for the proposal than it is for the project. Often, but not always, the skills required for one are also required for the other. Thus, we may get an applicant through the review process, only to expose him or her to a failure experience in the implementation.

### (3) Reaching the General Public.

The primary vehicles for program development activity with the general public are the newsletter and the projects themselves. Most states disseminate widely their newsletter. They use the newsletter, among other ways, as a means of suggesting project ideas to the broad public. Secondly, most states find ways to make use of their projects as forums for publicity about their program. This is done by providing handouts, banners,

or other printed materials (one suggestion: name tags, with the endowment name on them, for use in projects), or by making personal addresses of welcome at project events.

(4) Reaching Opinion Leaders.

Opinion leaders pose special problems: they are busy, preoccupied, and skeptical about ivory-tower idealists. They are unlikely to read the newsletter. They are too busy to attend any but the most carefully designed project. In my opinion, they require a very special kind of program development activity; they can be drawn by invitation into very selective programs of high quality. This raises questions of elitism, which quickly yield, I hope, to the more important (and largely unaddressed) question of a structured program. We tend to think in monolithic terms, applying univocal standards to a wide range of different situations. There is great possibility in a state endowment approach that deliberately seeks out projects embodying an elitist component, a middle level component, and a lower level component. The humanities need not be fed to all with the same strength of dosage. I am particularly intrigued by the thought that a program at one level might generate the material for a program at another level--a little like the fourth-grader helping the second-grader with her homework.

b. Removing Obstacles; Giving Special Support(Special Status)

(5) A very important area of program development that is easily overlooked is the efficiency of the grant-management system. A program may work hard to involve an important constituency, and succeed, but for one time only. The experience of the applicant with the unnecessary burden of the application and reporting system may be so discouraging that it discourages further application. The applicant may also experience a kind of failure in the execution of an otherwise good program that discourages further participation. In the former case, state endowments try continually to balance their need for information against the weight of burden placed upon the participant. In general, the tendency is to "play safe," at the expense of the applicant, by requesting more information in proposals and reports than is really required to make good judgments. In some cases we request the wrong information. Continual review is needed to simplify and streamline the experience of the applicant. With



respect to project implementation, there is a greater burden. Some states have engaged in training sessions for new project directors. My impression is that such sessions are not really effective. States neither have the staff, nor the right, to intrude in the execution process. This remains a most vexing problem. There is a high enough incidence of experiences that are depressing for project directors to suggest that we may be, in the long run, simultaneously developing, and discouraging, our constituency.

(6) Most states would acknowledge that they give special attention to proposals from hard-to-reach constituencies but, if you pressed them, they would probably not want to admit that they show favoritism by employing a flexible standard of quality in proposal review. They would be even less likely to admit this in the case, not of an underserved constituency, but of a program priority; e.g., if our priority is to involve broadcasters, we are likely to give very special attention, indeed, to the first application we receive from them. This makes us uncomfortable on the level of fairness, but something inside tells us it is right. We are engaged in the formal/final dilemma: our formalities are in conflict with our goals. I would argue strongly that fixed standards of quality are not applicable to an active foundation, that our goals have a very special status, and that agencies submitting applications to foster our goals directly should be given very special treatment. This is a basic form of program development activity.

c. Systematized and Structured Support

(7) Packaged Project Kits.

Some states purchase, or produce, media materials, and combine these with background material and, sometimes, study guides, and then make these available to their constituency for the basis of local humanities programs. By providing the core content, they make the execution of a project much simpler while providing enhanced audience appeal. These kits are especially useful for small projects in remote areas, typically a rural library, where they make possible a series of good experiences with a minimum of effort. Film, television, or exhibit material is the core of such kits.

(8) Media Centers.

Some states have institutionalized their kit development efforts in

"media centers." These centers are a necessary base for extensive work with kits, since this is beyond both the time and ability of the regular endowment staff. In addition, media centers turn out in practice to be advertising agencies, as well, providing very important public relations services for the endowment, itself, and for its projects. The major unresolved question about media centers is one of cost/benefit, since they are very expensive operations. Here, the possibility of national/state collaboration is most exciting. The ideal probably would be to have all state-based endowments satellited upon a single, extremely well staffed and equipped, media center.

(9) Broadcasting.

An ongoing liaison with broadcasting agencies can be an extremely fruitful program development component. Although most program development outreach is through the organized structures that represent constituencies and are likely to sponsor projects for them, some direct appeal to the mass public through the mass media can set the climate for humanities programming and draw attention to the endowment, itself. The most natural form of relationship is one through which the content of other funded projects becomes the core of programs for broadcast. This may involve an edited presentation of the highlights of a conference, or simply an interview with the principals. Or, a film or television program may be prepared both as a resource for a live project, and as a means to reach a larger public. Since what broadcasting does best is to present the surface of things, however, there is always a problem that the substance of the project will be lost on its way to the station. In this respect, radio and print, with their focus on words, are the natural mass media for humanities programming, and we have only begun to explore their possibilities. Courses by Newspaper is an outstanding example on the national level, but, because of the impossibility of national/state collaboration in the past, it is my impression that state endowments have not benefited greatly from this project supported by the National Endowment. Some state-based endowments have had extraordinary success with brief public service announcements, or programs ranging from one to five minutes and conveying a single, humanistic insight relevant to contemporary life.

d. Special Program Initiatives: Requests for Proposals.

(10) Project-Concept Only.

At the most elementary level, a request for proposals simply identifies a general concept (topic, audience, approach) that the state-based endowment would like to promote, and asks for a response from groups interested in the concept. This is a very effective way to help the public understand how the humanities can relate to their needs and interests and, if it is well done, it invariably produces results. The original "state theme" was based upon this insight, but foundered on the unwarranted assumption that special initiatives should be the core of the program, and could only be dealt with one at a time. An example of a concept initiative would be an announcement of interest in programming for rural people, possibly specifying a rural topic (the decline of the family farm), or involving use of a packaged kit of rural materials.

(11) Project Design.

More ambitious special initiatives involve the state endowments in the specification of the details of design not merely for the content but also for the format of programs. An example would be a weekend retreat for legislators to explore a specific issue in the light of its value implications, according to a certain process designed to produce a certain kind of effect. While such a project would be announced in the newsletter, it is very likely that the endowment would personally solicit the potential sponsor of such a project, and collaborate closely with such a sponsor in the design of the program. The more important it is to insure that the project is a success, the more necessary it is for the endowment to be involved in the design.

(12) Project "Implementation."

I have placed the word "implementation" in quotes so as to ease the anxiety of the devotees of passivity. When an endowment wishes to bring about a major project involving coordination between several different sponsoring agencies, each of whom is responsible for only part of the whole, then it must of necessity get involved in the implementation, at least in a coordinating role. When the components are intended to build together, the endowment may find itself in a training role, as well. Suppose, for example, that a state endowment wishes to stimulate major conferences in

every region of the state to culminate in a statewide conference that is itself based upon the regional conferences. Suppose further that it wants, for policy reasons, to have each of these conferences sponsored and directed by a different kind of agency. Then, a coordinating and training role becomes unavoidable.

e. State Endowment Image and Resource Building.

(13) Public Relations.

For some time the state-based endowments thought that it was enough to promote progress in the humanities in a quiet way. Gradually it has become clear that that is not enough: they must promote themselves as well. It is not enough to do good, one must look good as well. This is not a matter of vanity, but of political reality. Especially in the absence of program policy and verifiable systems to measure the accomplishment of objectives, the only grounds for continued public support is a favorable public awareness of the agency. Senator Pell made much of the fact that the head of the arts agency in one state did not even know the name of the head of the humanities endowment in that state, and thought of the latter as a "secret society." In the absence of documented accomplishment, public visibility is the only grounds for public support. Consequently, states have begun to give much greater attention to this element of program development. The most effective form of image building is, first, to fund very successful projects, and, second, to be sure that you are identified with them. A second form of image building involves the design of projects that will involve the opinion leaders of the state. By setting out to involve them successfully in projects, you bring their attention to the agency behind the projects. A third important means of image building, of course, is broadcasting. Media centers, capable of designing and producing slick brochures and impressive releases of various sorts are a major help in this connection.

(14) Fund Raising.

Fund raising for state-based endowments used to be of crucial importance to relieve the crippling austerity of their administrative budgets whose size bore no relationship to the tasks expected to be done. The intelligent response of NEH in recent years to this need, while it has

relieved for the moment the administrative crunch, has created a new problem: the disproportion between the total budget and its administrative component. Currently state endowments are using \$1 for administration (primarily for program development activity, to be sure), for every \$2 they give in grants. Senator Pell has been raising the question of administrative ceilings in the range of 5-10%. You can see that we have a problem, at least potentially. We can easily cut back our administrative budgets by eliminating our program development efforts. But, without such efforts, we will not accomplish our objectives. The only other possibility is to increase the total size of the program in order to achieve the efficiency of scale. Our programs at present are simply too small to sustain the core staff necessary for the responsibilities involved. If we double the size of each program, it is likely that we could reduce our administrative cost to less than 20%; if we triple the total size, to less than 15%. In the absence of any indication that NEH is about to double the budgets of its state-based endowments, our only hope is substantial fund raising.

## 2. The Opportunity for National/State Collaboration.

### a. A Policy for Promotion.

One glance at the kinds of things the state-based endowments are doing with respect to program development, in contrast to what the National Endowment is doing, should convince us that there is no real chance for collaboration without a new policy for promotion establishing the federal humanities program as indisputably active in the pursuit of clear objectives. In a meeting recently held at NEH, at which several states explored with NEH staff the difficulties of reaching Hispanics with humanities programs, representatives of the Hispanic community entreated NEH to get involved in doing something of significant scope in cooperation with the states in order to put the federal program "on the map" in the Hispanic community. The response was the predictable: we are a passive agency. But, if NEH and the state endowments are both commissioned by the same legislation, and both pursuing the same goals, something is quite wrong when one sees itself as passive, and the other sees itself as active. A reconciliation is required before real collaboration can begin.

b. Collaboration in Program Development.

After the national/state partnership has developed a comprehensive policy for promotion of progress and scholarship in the humanities, it should review the kinds of program development activity I have outlined above asking the question: in what areas could collaboration multiply effectiveness? Let me simply list below some possibilities.

(1) A national/state newsletter.

What about a nationally computerized mailing list? What about a national newsletter incorporating substantial material on state themes, and allowing for the insertion of a different local section for each state? What about nationally produced special newsletters for state program staff? For state committees? For state chairpersons?

(2) Media Production.

What about the systematic production on a national basis of high quality film, television and radio material suitable for promoting the progress of the humanities, or for use in state program projects? A film could be prepared documenting the role of the humanities in exploring important public policy issues, or demonstrating how humanists function effectively in an applied humanities context. Media materials could be prepared that would set the base for a national debate in the scholarly community about the concepts of academic humanities, applied humanities and comprehensive humanities. These media materials could be complemented by essays and other materials needed to support the great debates both in the public forum and within the humanities community. Just as it is almost a scandal that the present national media program operates in complete disregard of state endowment needs, so it is cause for great concern on the level of dissipation of resources that each state should seek to respond separately to provide these important resources.

(3) Media Acquisition and Dissemination.

Besides producing media materials to order, there is a large opportunity to make use of existing materials in new ways as support for the federal humanities program. It is far cheaper to purchase than to produce. It is far cheaper to develop packaged program kits on the national level than it is to do it separately in the 50 states. And, it can be done

with far greater quality control. Economies of scale cannot be realized in media centers at the state, or even at the regional level. The effective dissemination of media materials requires the creation of a network of information based upon critical review, similar to the book review industry, that will make possible choices for use without pre-screening of material. This is an enormous task. In addition, not everything that is produced is worth saving, not to mention distributing. There has to be some quality control. On the other hand, it is likely that many fine media productions at the state level are simply being lost because there is no provision for their proper storage. This is a national problem requiring a national solution.

#### (4) Print Materials.

State endowments spend great efforts trying to translate the concepts of their programs for hard-to-reach constituencies. Why should we not make a national effort to generate print materials that will speak to each constituency in its own "language" about the relevance of the goals we are pursuing to their needs and interests? What does the humanities mean to the farmer, to the laborer, to the skilled craftsman, to the white collar worker, to the executive, to the professional, to the artist, to the indigent? What do cultural roots mean to the American Indian, to the Hispanic, to the Black, to the Jew, to the Irish, to the Italian, to the Scandinavian, and so on? What does work mean to a person; and leisure? What does family mean? and community? and individuality? What does justice mean? and equity? and generosity of spirit? The most misleading assertion about the state-based programs is that they are not all, alike pursuing these fundamental questions. By exaggerating the distinctive characteristics of individual states we blind ourselves to the common core of our programs, and to the possibilities of common approaches to our goals.

#### (5) Major Demonstration Projects.

State endowments are handicapped in opening up new territories by the limited funds at their disposal. The AFL-CIO is not likely to get overly excited about the possibility of a \$7,000 grant for humanities programming. But NEH is doing work on the national level to reach the blue collar worker with humanities programming. A national/state collaboration here could produce fruitfulness beyond what one might imagine, but,

to the best of my knowledge, there is no plan to use the federal effort as a demonstration project in the states. The same is true with rural people, recent immigrants, and other hard-to-reach constituencies. We need the capability of major projects just to get their attention.

(6) Image Building and Fund Raising.

If we have to do these things, why not do them professionally, through a national, humanities, public relations firm? I can hear the groans arising now! But, think a minute. Do you object to the substance, or to the image? If we are, in fact, doing PR, and if we are, in fact, seeking to raise funds, are we any more virtuous because we do so in a piecemeal and, I am afraid, often unprofessional manner? I am not suggesting a kind of centralized image-control that will constrict the individual personality of the various state endowments. I am arguing for a national agency that will provide essential professional services to the states individually, as well as a core of common materials that each state may use at its discretion.

c. The Role of the Federation of Public Programs.

National/state collaboration need not be a threat to the Federation. To the contrary, the Federation is the natural vehicle through which the states will focus and express their collaboration. The primary and adequate purpose of the Federation has always been to provide the states with a single voice in their dealings with Washington. It can now become the expression of that "single voice" as we explore with NEH the areas in which collaboration will initially be most fruitful. It may also become the contractual agency to implement the programs of collaboration upon which we agree.

E. STATE ENDOWMENT PROGRAM REVIEW: PROFESSIONAL? OR UNPROFESSIONAL?

1. Background.

In 1979, the Florida Endowment for the Humanities received a poor review. Based upon this review, NEH imposed conditions on its grant that had a crippling effect from which the program is just now recovering. In retrospect it is clear that 1979 was by far the most successful year FEH had ever experienced. For example, audiences for its projects increased by 500% that year. The purpose of this study was to try to determine



how such a thing could occur, and to make suggestions that would prevent the same thing happening to others.<sup>61</sup> While NEH was unable to release any of its review documents for study,<sup>62</sup> it did make a contribution of great significance by directing me towards the Urban Institute, in Washington, D. C., an organization that has done outstanding work in designing evaluation systems for federal programs. A number of state-based endowments provided me with copies of their recent proposals and review letters.<sup>63</sup> Review of these documents disclosed some of the patterns that I will mention below.

Very early in the study it became clear that you could not begin to design a professional evaluation system unless you had a clear idea of the nature and goals of the organization you were trying to evaluate. This led me to broaden my study to include the question of special status as defining the nature of the state-based endowments, and to explore the question of program development as defining the goals. It quickly became apparent that one could not define the special status of the state-based endowments without some clear knowledge of the status (nature) of the NEH, nor could one deal effectively with the goals of the state-based endowments unless one also clarified the goals of the NEH. It seemed clear that both the state and the National endowments were components of a single federal humanities program, rooted in the Congressional legislation. Consequently I reviewed the legislation and the reauthorization and reappropriations hearings, and various reports related to these hearings, in order to discern as best I could the nature and goals of the program in which we are all involved so intimately.

I was very surprised to find that, as a federal program, we have no comprehensive policy that tells us who we are and what we are supposed to accomplish. I was also surprised to find that, because of the absence of clear objectives for our program that could be accomplished in a verifiable manner, NEH was engaged in the same kind of wasteful and inconclusive self-justifying activity that was the core of the state review process. As the result of these discoveries, I found myself trying to deal with the question of program policy and program design as a prerequisite to addressing the question of program review and assessment. In fact, the two are inseparable.

Professional program assessment presupposes professional program design. You cannot measure success, unless you have defined it. This is, I suppose, the major conclusion of this report. Before turning to some more particular aspects of the state-based endowment review process, I would like to encourage as strongly as possible the employment of the Urban Institute specialists to critique and help us improve the program design and evaluation system of the federal humanities program.

Of course, this presupposes that we would prefer to function on the level of reality and not on the level of appearance. The advantage of professional program design is that it greatly enhances the chance for success. The disadvantage of professional program assessment is that it greatly diminishes the opportunity to disguise failure. If we are content to continue to orchestrate the plaudits of those who have benefited from our funds, and if these voices speak with political force, it may be unnecessary to document achievement in any other way. Certainly this has been the basis of our success in increasing federal support to this point. But, a new age may be upon us, an age of minimal government and financial stringency, and this may call for a new professionalism in the way we justify support. If so, our need for professionalism may be more urgent than we may realize.

## 2. The Review Process for State-Based Endowments.

The only thing more striking to me than the lack of professionalism in the present state-based endowment review process is the general lack of awareness of this lack of professionalism. The complacency of the Division of State Programs in this regard can only be described as stunning, if not shocking. The defects are not subtle, but gross; and, it seems to me, one must be totally lacking in reflectivity not to perceive them. By way of extenuation, many of them are rooted in the failure of NEH to recognize the special status of state-based endowments, and others are based upon an unawareness of the role of goals and of program development activity in the full sense of the term. The confusion between federal goals and state goals pervades the process, as do many of the other confusions and ambiguities that have been dealt with in the earlier portions of this report.

In summation, one may say with accuracy that the review process is based upon unreliable sources, and inappropriate assumptions; that it is implemented by persons untutored and unskilled in the demands of professional evaluation; that the process is, itself, unaccountable; and that it produces results that are unverifiable. At extraordinary cost (perhaps 20% of the total administrative funding of the program), it produces results that are neither useful, nor used to any great extent.

It puzzles me that Jacob Neusner seems to stand alone in his awareness of at least part of this problem when he says that the Endowment's critical task in the coming years is to formulate criteria for success, so that the Endowment will know what failure is—and therefore how to improve. So far as I can see, there is nothing akin to quality control, and we scarcely know when a project works and when it does not, nor can we tell what we think a successful project succeeds in doing. So we are not learning from our mistakes.

The absence of criteria, naturally, yields little interest in an 'office' of evaluation of programs. I asked, for instance, how we know when youth programs in the humanities—surely an imaginative idea, but rich in kooky potentialities—succeed.

'Do we even know that the program has been carried out?'

'Sure we do,' I was told, 'because there is a report on the project.'

'Who writes the report?'

'The person who does the project.'

'Isn't that like having our students grade their own papers?'

Silence.<sup>64</sup>

As Dr. Neusner correctly observes, the fundamental flaw is the lack of criteria. The "policy for promotion of progress and scholarship," so long awaited by Congress, is the document that would, did it exist, identify the specific goals we are pursuing, the priorities we are honoring, and the criteria of success we are using. The absence of goals and criteria means that the state endowments do not know what they are supposed to achieve, and their evaluators do not know what they are supposed to judge, or according to what standard. The absence of clearly defined criteria means that judgments cannot be validated, nor, indeed, even replicated. As a consequence, each evaluator supplies his or her own set of unexamined and unmeasurable assumptions, and uses these as the basis of judgment. Panelists take comfort in the unanimity of the group, like blind people, holding hands. The resulting chaos of standards is reflected in the bewildering

variety of comments transmitted in review letters. This confusion is amplified by the unexamined (and erroneous) assumption that state programs should not be evaluated according to a common set of goals, priorities, and criteria, as if they were not all rooted in the identical legislative mandate. Misinterpreting the 1976 legislation, this view presupposes that, in freeing the states from NEH control (to some extent), Congress also intended to set them free from the goals of the enabling legislation. Further refining this error, it is maintained that state endowments can be judged exclusively by their fulfillment of state goals; or, rather, since the accomplishment of fundamental goals is not measured in this system, by the process by which they go about assessing and responding to state "needs."

In the absence of objective and verifiable norms of achievement, both state endowments and NEH revert to self-serving descriptions of the good things they have done and expect to do, complemented by testimonials from the people who have benefited from these good things. Like the states, NEH is forced to produce ponderous, almost unreadable, and certainly inconclusive reports. The main point is missing in all of this talk: what were you supposed to accomplish, and did you accomplish it? Yes? or No? It is not enough to do something good, or even to accomplish something worthwhile. It is essential to accomplish the particular worthwhile thing that you have been asked to accomplish. No multiplication of words, lively anecdotes, touching stories, impressive testimonials, can substitute for the bottom line: did you accomplish what you were expected to accomplish? Silence.

One finds evidence of a lack of professionalism in the use of reports by those being evaluated as the sole basis by which reviewers and panelists are to form judgments of merit. This is an incentive to seduction that would be out of place in any professional evaluation system, certainly in one involving humanists.

There is a distressing confusion in the review process of two very different kinds of evaluation. On the one hand, the judgment of accomplishment as the basis of reward or punishment cannot be done professionally in the absence of verifiable criteria. On the other hand, the attempt

to provide helpful suggestions for the improvement of performance would never be made by a professional without day-to-day involvement in the program, and interaction with those responsible for its implementation. It is very difficult for any one evaluator to provide both kinds of evaluation, since the former requires detachment and objectivity, while the latter requires an intimate and trusting relationship.

How long has it been since anyone has asked: why are we doing this review, anyway? Are we simply trying to ape, in some inappropriate way, other NEH divisions? What is this focus on quality and merit, this desire to increase the range of funds available to reward the successful? This seems on the surface to be directly contrary to Congressional intent: that all programs should be "adequate," and that special help should be provided to the weak.<sup>65</sup>

Why do we use the word "proposal" to refer to the "reports" called for by Congress, as if the state-based endowments were not permanent programs? A proposal is a written rationale for something that might be done, and it is evaluated based on the cogency and creativity of its verbal presentation. A program exists primarily in deeds, and secondarily in reports, and even the latter are deed-related rather than dream-related. Program reports document the accomplishment of objectives over a long period of time, and indicate what fine tuning will be undertaken to improve performance in the future. It is quite feasible for a report to properly affirm that the plan for the coming year is essentially to keep doing what has been done in the past (to the extent that it has been successful). Novelty is not a consideration. In a proposal, on the other hand, the phrase "more of the same" is anathema. A proposal always proposes something new; by definition, it has no past. One of the more excruciating infelicities of the present review process is the importance it places upon the creation, every other year, of new, fanciful, imaginative and exciting plans, for the delectation of reviewers who know nothing of the past. The dull, determined, tenacious pursuit of long range goals, so crucial to success, has no honored place for proposal reviewers.

Why do we presume that a group of 10 or so presumably intelligent and almost-certainly well-intentioned persons, perhaps half of whom have

no prior experience with the state-based program, can meet one time, for a single hour, based upon a single report, and make judgments of program performance and direction that contradict the judgment of 20 equally intelligent and well-intentioned persons, who have spent, perhaps, several hundred hours or more, designing and implementing a program for a state of whose needs and opportunities they are intimately aware? This would be a triumph of remote perception over immediate knowledge.

The review process, itself, does not appear to be accountable. Members of the National Council, who make the final recommendation, do not even see the state endowment reports, in most cases, but only staff summaries. Members of the panels, who make the initial criticisms, have no knowledge of, or control over, how their criticisms are synthesized and translated by staff into judgments of "conditions" and recommended levels of funding. Staff members accept responsibility for making decisions, but do not accept responsibility for the kind of decisions they make (attributing this to the panelists). Not only is it impossible to assign clear responsibility for the kind of decisions made, but there has been no attempt, to the best of my knowledge, to professionally assess the quality of the decisions that are being made in this cumbersome manner.

Finally, no professional evaluation process could afford to be so wasteful to such little effect. Efforts associated with providing documentation for review consume between 15% and 30% of administrative resources available to the state, depending upon whether the state happens to be "in trouble" at the time. Adding to this the cost of the Division of State Programs, whose sole function until most recently was to administer this system, one gets an overall cost of about 20% of all administrative funds available for the program. By way of contrast, the Urban Institute recommends, based upon comprehensive study, that program review cost between 0.5% and 2.0% , or about 1/20th of what we are presently spending (and their figure is for a professional, accountable, reliable and beneficial evaluation system).<sup>66</sup>

### III. CONCLUSION

This report affirms that we should give second thoughts to the things we are doing: to our goals, to our means, and to our methods of measuring progress and success.

It identifies and tries to clarify some of the most persistent ambiguities in the way we talk about what we do, so as to remove if possible the rhetorical blocks to clear thinking.

It describes a federal program still without coherent policy, and a state component of that effort suffering from too many, often conflicting policies.

It traces the history of varied understanding between Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities made possible by the absence of a coherent, agreed-upon policy. It considers why NEH would have resisted the formulation of policy, and why NEH continues to do so to this day. And it reveals the state-based endowments as caught in the crossfire, receiving mixed signals from Congress, on the one hand, and from NEH, on the other.

It argues that our policy, whatever else it be, should be an active, goal-seeking, change-inducing, catalytic policy, and not merely one of passive, acquiescent support for the status quo.

It outlines the possibility of collaboration for a national/state program development effort that will dwarf our previous accomplishments.

Finally, it suggests that it is time to liberate ourselves from wasteful and non-productive forms of self-justification. It recommends that we seek to employ the Urban Institute as a consultant, and that together, state and national, we design the program policy that will ground our efforts, and the system of assessment that will document our achievement.

## FOOTNOTES

1. William Brennan is Executive Director of the Florida Endowment for the Humanities. This report is the result of a recent sabbatical.
2. FR (Federation Reports) Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1978, p.49. Federation Reports is the journal of the Federation of Public Programs in the Humanities (15 South 5th Street, Suite 720, Minneapolis, Minn., 55402. (612) 332-2407
3. This novel title is used to encourage a fresh look. It suggests a fundamental similarity to the National Endowment ("endowment") and the federal quality of these programs ("state-based").
4. Cf. Geoffrey Marshall memorandum with enclosures, "State Proposal Review Process," National Endowment for the Humanities, December 7, 1977.
5. The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965 (Public Law 209-89th Congress) as amended through October 8, 1976, Section 1.
6. Report of the Commission on the Humanities, The American Council of Learned Societies, New York, N. Y., 1964, p. 8.
7. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 318. (Arts, Humanities, and Museum Services Act of 1979. Hearings before the Subcommittee On Education, Arts and Humanities of the Committee on Labor and Human Resources, United States Senate, Ninety-Sixth Congress, First Session, on S. 1386, to amend and extend the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965, and for other purposes, June 26, 27, and 28, 1979.
8. FR, Vol. 1, No. 9, July/August, 1978, p. 33.
9. FR, Vol. 1, No. 8, May/June, 1978, p. 17.
10. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 8.
11. 1979 Senate Hearings, pp. 227 and 447.
12. FR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1977, p.5.
13. FR, Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1978, p. 14.
14. Chronicle of Higher Education, July 7, 1980, p.3.
15. FR, Vol. 1, No. 8, May/June, 1978, p. 38.
16. FR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1977, p. 5.
17. FR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1977, p. 7.
18. FR, Vol. 1, No. 9, July/August, 1978, p. 35.
19. FR, Vol. 2, No. 5, March, 1979, p. 24.
20. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, pp. 6-10.
21. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 822. (Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations for 1980. Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Ninety-Sixth Congress, First Session: Subcommittee on the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies.



22. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p.806.
23. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 824.
24. House Hearings for 1981, Second Session, Part 9, p. 224.
25. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 255.
26. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 377.
- 26a. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 8. NEH lists 200,000 humanities scholars and teachers. If we assume an average gross salary of \$20,000 (including FICA and fringe), and institutional overhead of 100% of direct salary, this totals \$8 billion (\$40,000 x 200,000). NEH lists 16,000 school districts. If we assume 100 teachers each district in humanities education, and gross salary of \$12,500 plus 100% institutional overhead, this totals \$40 billion (\$25,000 x 100 x 16,000). The remaining 17,000 independent schools, 8,500 libraries, and 6,000 museums would account for at least an additional \$2 billion.
27. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 57.
28. cf. page 18 of this report.
29. FR, Vol. 1, No. 4, January, 1978, p. 4. William Shaefer of the Modern Language Association, expresses this opinion: "In spite of having created in America the most extensive educational structure ever conceived by any nation, we have still failed to produce a truly educated citizenry."
30. FR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1977, p. 12. Chairman Duffey: "Our emphasis will be on a determination that the insights, perspectives, and understandings which characterize humanistic knowledge and learning shall be accessible to men and women everywhere who are able and willing to accept what the humanities have to offer." (underlining added)
31. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 999 ff., especially p. 1021. Cf. also House Hearings for 1981, Part 9, p. 274. In the latter document, NFAH defines its purpose to be not policy formation (as in Section 4 (b) of the legislation), but coordination only. NFAH acknowledges that it has made no policy decisions.
32. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 12, p. 486 ff. "A Report to the Committee on Appropriations" by the Surveys and Investigations Staff, March, 1979.
33. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 12, p. 543 ff. "Response of the National Endowment for the Humanities." Cf. pp. 545-550.
34. Wholey, Joseph S., Joe N. Nay, John W. Scanlon, and Richard E. Schmidt, "If You Don't Care Where You Get To, Then It Doesn't Much Matter Which Way You Go." An Urban Institute reprint from Social Research and Public Policies: The Dartmouth/OECD Conference, edited by Gene M. Lyons, Dartmouth College, 1975, p. 175-176.

"The typical Federal program cannot be managed to achieve stated objectives (as implied, for example, in the authorizing legislation) because:

- (a) the program lacks specific, measurable objectives related to program goals, or

- (b) the program lacks plausible, testable assumptions linking program activities to the achievement of program objectives, or  
 (c) managers lack the motivation, ability, or authority to manage.

Though every Federal program has a number of objectives, they are generally not defined by those in charge (policymakers and program managers) in such a way that progress toward objectives can be measured or important underlying program assumptions tested. The programs are sufficiently well defined to be funded but are not sufficiently well defined to be managed to achieve specific objectives related to the goals implied in the authorizing legislation. (In such programs, whatever activities are carried out tend to become synonymous with objectives, i.e., from a 'management' perspective the intended effect is achieved when the program activities are carried out, regardless of program outcome or subsequent impact on the problem addressed by the program."

35. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 674.
36. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, pp. 101, 106, 117.
37. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 825.
38. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 14.
39. House Hearings for 1981, Second Session, Part 9, p. 215.
40. House Hearings for 1981, Second Session, Part 9, p. 224.
41. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 675.
42. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 678.
43. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 8.
44. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 10.
45. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 7.
46. 1981 NEH Appropriations Request, p. 13.
47. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 825.
48. House Hearings for 1981, Second Session, Part 9, p. 224.

Chairman Duffey:

"We have a mandate from the Congress to support the study and nurture of the humanities by as many people as possible. In fulfilling this mandate, the Endowment, as a federal agency, can offer, it can administer, it can even on occasion persuade, but it cannot do. The doing is in the hands of those who bring projects and proposals and ideas for work in this area."

49. FR, Vol. 1, No. 3, December, 1977, pp. 33-36, reprints a feature article from The Providence Sunday Journal, entitled "Arts, Humanities Hubbub Pell's Puzzlement," October 16, 1977, by Lorraine Hopkins. On page 36 we read:  
 "there was a fundamental disagreement between Pell and the humanities lobby. Pell . . . was always more interested in visual arts . . . . The humanities push was a separate effort, generated by a coalition of scholars who had tapped Brown's Keeney as their head . . . . The humanists wanted the kind of federal money and prestige that had been going to the scientists. Arts had even less stature, and when Pell, the third time around, coupled arts and humanities in the same bill, to pick up strength, he had to give

the humanities endowment a structure that never sat well with him. . . . Keeney and the humanists insisted on the centralization of all funding decisions in Washington, where the staff, Keeney said, could be 'very distinguished.' There was also a question of intrinsic difference between arts and humanities, whether humanities lent themselves to popularization."

50. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 12, p. 548.
51. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 186.
52. 1980 Senate Hearings, p. 260. Chairman Duffey: "Originally, State programs funded by the Endowment were restricted, by NEH policy, to public humanities programs which focused on issues of public policy of particular interest to the citizens of the various States. The 1976 legislation expanded the State program opportunities to embrace a range of options comparable to those of the Endowment itself." (underlining added)
53. FR, Vol. 1, No. 3, December, 1977, p. 36. The Providence Journal feature (footnote 49) quotes President Carter as follows: "I want to be sure any elitist attitude . . . is ended. We've got a need to preserve the quality of our programs . . . and expand opportunities for people who are isolated from them."
54. FR, Vol. 1, No. 2, November, 1977, p. 12.
55. House Hearings for 1981, Second Session, Part 9, p. 188.
56. House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 12, p. 583.
57. 1980 Senate Hearings, pp. 304-311, and 318-322, give the full texts of the two "comments" by the National Council.
58. cf. footnote No. 4.
59. FR, Vol.1, No. 2, November, 1977, p. 8. Cf. also House Hearings for 1980, First Session, Part 10, p. 1040.
60. 1980 Senate Hearings, pp. 22-23, 108.
61. "Assessment of the NEH State Program Review Process." A memo from the Florida Endowment for the Humanities to the Federation of Public Programs and other state endowments; October 4, 1979.  
 "So surprising was the (NEH) review letter, and so inconsistent with FEH's own self-assessment and the NEH assessment 16 months earlier, that the Interim Executive Committee decided to ask for copies of the written statements of readers of the proposal. A comparison of readers' written comments, which were primarily positive, with the negative review letter, confirmed the Interim Executive Committee's judgment that the NEH review process was seriously defective and could not be taken to be an accurate assessment of the FEH program nor the grounds for future planning.  
 "Attached is an outline of the kinds of questions and concerns that arose in FEH's careful consideration of the NEH review process. These are intended to suggest useful areas for the Federation to explore with NEH.

1. What is the extent and limit of NEH's responsibility and authority with respect to the state programs? Can a merely advisory role be reconciled with acts of dominion . . . .?
  2. What is the proper goal of an NEH review process?
    - a. What are the standards of quality and success?
    - b. How is the unique context of each state program to be adequately recognized . . . .?
    - c. Is the goal to evaluate . . . . state programs, or . . . . state proposals?
    - d. Is the goal to evaluate performance, plans, or both; if both, what is the relative value of each?
  3. Does the review process, as it has been practiced, produce results that are significant enough to warrant the time and effort involved . . . .?
  4. Does the present review process produce generally reliable results . . . .?
  5. Are the state programs radically different from other NEH funding activities? In consequence, is it wrong to act as if they did not have, in some very real sense, an entitlement?
  6. Is NEH well suited to review the quality of state programs?
  7. Is there a sound alternative method of evaluating state programs?"
62. The difficulties were well summarized by B. J. Stiles, Director of the Division of State Programs at NEH, in a letter to William Brennan, dated January 24, 1980:
- "I do foresee complications in making extensive materials from our files available without specific prior approval from the states involved, and even then I suspect that there will be some materials dealing with sensitive matters which both the states and NEH would be hesitant to open to 'public' use. As I stated in our conversation, I certainly would not be able to give blanket or individual authorization for such access to our files without review and specific approval from both the chairman and the general counsel of NEH. They, in turn, could conceivably want review and discussion by the National Council. All of which doesn't occur quickly, thus some further cause for allowing ample time for clear presentation of a formal request, and appropriate time for review and decision within NEH."
- I asked that the question of access to evaluative materials by researchers be brought before the National Council at its next meeting, but, so far, this does not appear to have happened.
63. The following states provided copies of their review letters for consideration in this study: Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington State, West Virginia, Wisconsin.
  64. FR, Vol. 2, No. 4, January, 1979, p. 21.
  65. 1980 Senate Hearings, pp. 219, 402.
  66. Hatrey, Harry P., Richard E. Winnie and Donald M. Fisk. Practical Program Evaluation for State and Local Government Officials. The Urban Institute, Washington, D. C., 1973, p. 123: "A reasonable way to consider evaluation costs is to relate them to the magnitude of the programs being evaluated. A figure of from 0.5 to 2 percent of program funds for program evaluation has been applied to federal programs."