Peter Shaw
Buchanan’s criticism of financial Accounting Standards Board’s proposed statement of financial accounting concepts are more fundamental. Accounting is a basic concept in any organization and its financial statements are crucial for decision-making. The fundamental principle of accounting is that transactions should be recorded in a way that reflects the economic reality of the transactions. Buchanan incorrectly stresses the alleged differences between nonprofit accounting and business accounting. He challenges the single significant difference in the treatment of transactions. The differences relate almost entirely to the treatment of capital contributions, which are rarely found in business organizations.

Robert N. Anthony
Professor Emeritus
Harvard Business School
Burlington, Mass.

Intolerance of dissent reflected in letters

To the Editor:

In attacking my analysis of the Modern Language Association’s opposition to the nomination of Carol Iannone to the National Council on the Humanities ("How Non-Ideological Has the Opposition Been to Nominee to National Humanities Council?" [Chronicle of Higher Education, May 1]), six past presidents of the organization level charged (Letters to the Editor, May 22) that one might expect concerning a tract co-authored by Girolamo Serianni and Joseph R. McCarthy: "scurrilous," a "shameful personal attack," a "grossly unjust attack," impatient of "facts or moderation," "distorts the record and character of Phyllis Franklin," "cannot openly argue the merits of a case without irrelevant accusations," like "the cruel work of desperate and immoral people." None of these charges is, or can be, illustrated. Instead, Caroline Heilbrun turns from them to a gratuitous defense of Phyllis Franklin. Unlike the editor of P.M.L.A., Heilbrun rather insultingly volunteers, Franklin is not required to be "a highly qualified scholar." In contrast, I gave no assessment of my own about Franklin’s scholarship, but wrote that "My guess would be that she was qualified" for her job (italics in original).

Anyone who still believes that the academics currently in power tolerate dissent should compare the calculated insults and reckless charges directed at me by Caroline Heilbrun and her fellow past presidents with my original Chronicle article.

Peter Shaw
Professor of Humanities
St. Peter’s College
Jersey City, N.J.

We should ‘return’ Bush’s America 2000

To the Editor:

Lukewarm praise for President Bush’s education plan, "America 2000: An Education Strategy," is much more than this initiative deserves ("Bush Proposes ‘Populist Crusade’ to Reform Education; Colleges Would Help to Develop Schools, Train Adults," [Chronicle of Higher Education, April 24]).

When I read the 34-page report, it left me wondering where the 400 er of the Presidency and a masterful orchestration at the time of the release of the report. Mr. Alexander paraded President Bush from meeting to meeting. And, more comically, politicians and educators are falling over themselves to comment on it...

Why waste time commenting on nothing when more meritorious and promising reforms, led by the Theodore Sizers and Linda Darling-Hammond, exist?

Henry L. Fernandez
Director, Peace Corps Fellows Program
Teachers College
Columbia University
New York City

Souped-up history is worth sampling

To the Editor:

Reading about Gertrude Himmelfarb’s Jefferson Lecture ("In Jefferson Lecture, Historian Assails New Approaches to Studying the Past," [Chronicle of Higher Education, May 1)) brought to mind the occasion when my father first sampled vichysoise. "It’s not soup," he declared. "Soup is supposed to be hot!" He simply denied that soup might be anything other than what he had grown up with.

So likewise, Ms. Himmelfarb, with her critique of the new history. She takes issue not with the quality or execution of the various social his-