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2 Scholarly Organizations Say Humanities Endowment’s Council Hasn’t Enough Academics; Chairman Calls Complaints ‘Elitist’

By CHRISTOPHER MYERS
WASHINGTON

Scholars are clashing with the chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities over who should be on the endowment’s advisory council.

The leaders of two major scholarly organizations are opposing a new nominee to the council, saying she does not have a distinguished record as a scholar or administrator. They say the number of academics on the 26-member council has been declining, making it imperative that the scholars who are appointed have strong records in academia. Critics of the endowment say that if the groups’ assessment that the representation of humanities scholars on the council has declined is erroneous, the decline continues, the council may become less effective at judging the merit of grant proposals for scholarly projects.

Lynne V. Cheney, the endowment’s chairman, says the groups’ complaints are “elitist,” politically motivated, and an example of “restricted thinking.” She says the groups’ assessment that the representation of humanities scholars on the council has declined is erroneous.

The National Council on the Humanities provides advice to the endowment’s chairman on policies and procedures, and also makes recommendations on grants. The White House nominates the council members, usually on the recommendation of the agency’s chairman, and nominees must be confirmed by the Senate.

The controversy came to a head over the recent nomination of Carol Iannone, an administrator and English instructor in New York University’s Gallatin Division. That nomination was announced before the council had declined, the chairman said.

Chairman Calls Complaints ‘Elitist’

U.S. and Dozens of Colleges Tangle Over Loans for Students Preparing for Health-Services Jobs

By SCOTT JASCHIK
WASHINGTON

The federal government and dozens of colleges and universities are fighting over the management of federal loan programs for students who are preparing for careers in health-related professions.

The government, charging that the colleges have violated federal regulations, is demanding that millions of dollars be repaid to it. Officials are threatening to bar institutions that do not repay from the loan programs.

Many of the institutions, however, maintain that the government is applying rules retroactively and unfairly. Some universities are considering suing the government or asking Congress to put an end to the repayment campaign.

Based on Enrollment Formulas

The controversy involves the Health Professions Student Loan Program, in which the Department of Health and Human Services provides money to colleges and universities, which in turn establish loan pools from which students can borrow.

The money is distributed to colleges based on enrollment formulas, and the institutions must match one-ninth of the amount they receive each year from Health and Human Services for the program.

Health and Human Services officials say many colleges failed to put back into their loan pools the interest they earned on pool funds while they were not being used. A department audit has projected that about $42-million was not reinvested. Colleges

Supercollider Scientists Are Embroiled in Dispute; Outcome Could Raise Project’s $8-Billion Cost

By KIM A. MCDONALD

Scientists working on the Superconducting Supercollider are embroiled in a dispute over the design of the collider’s magnets—a debate that could lead to another increase in the project’s $8.25-billion price tag.

Scientists at the s.s.c. Laboratory in Dallas and at the Department of Energy who are familiar with the discussion said last week that the design change, if it were approved, could lead to “substantial” increases in the cost of the subatomic-particle-collider and to delays in its construction. Some scientists estimate that the cost of implementing the changes suggested for the magnets could range from $50-million to $100-million.

The continuing debate and the possibility of a cost increase contradict assurances from officials at the s.s.c. Laboratory and the Energy Department that the technical questions surrounding the supercollider’s magnets have been resolved and that further increases in the project’s cost are not in the offing. The Energy Department is overseeing construction of the project, 25 miles south of Dallas.

Only two months ago, Deputy Secretary of Energy W. Henson Moore assured reporters that the department’s final estimate of the project’s cost was accurate.
that even after he had

Scholars Say

and has written numerous maga­

zine articles, most of them for

years. She is a vice-president of the

National Association of

Commentary,

does not have enough experience

to judge those matters.

The scholarly groups and

Cheney have disagreed about

many scholars are now con­

tmporary cultural matters”

and was “well-positioned to advise the

endowment.”

Ms. Iannone’s nomination came

to the Modern Language

Association’s Executi­

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of counting.

The National Humanities

ominees to the

N.E.H. council were strong scho­

lary groups are

American Council of Learned So­

ciety, which has jurisdiction

over the humanities endowment.

The groups say Ms. Iannone

does not have enough experience

as a scholar or as an academic ad­

ministrator to be qualified to advise the

N.E.H. chairman on grant and policy
decisions.

Ms. Iannone has been at New

York University for the past three

years. She is a vice-president of the

National Association of Scholars

and has written numerous maga­

zine articles, most of them for

Commentary, a conservative jour­

nal. She did not return repeated

phone calls.

The M.L.A. protested Ms. Iann­

one’s nomination in a letter last month to members of the Senate

Labor and Human Resources

Committee, which has jurisdiction

over the humanities endowment. The A.C.L.S., followed with a simi­

lar letter last

month to members of the Senate

Committee, which has jurisdic­tion

over the humanities endowment. The A.C.L.S., said in his letter:

“It seems to us that if Dr. Iannone is confirmed, it will set a disturbing

precedent and may lead to a dimin­

ution of the council’s prestige and influence, especially within the na­

tional academic community.”

Confirmation of nominees to the

N.E.H. council is usually routine,

but Ms. Iannone’s nomination has

been stalled since it was sent to

Congress in January. A staff mem­

ber of the Senate committee said

several Senators were “interest­

ed” in the nomination. She would

not elaborate.

Mrs. Cheney has defended Ms.

Iannone’s qualifications to serve

on the council. Mrs. Cheney said in a letter to the Modern Language

Association that the endowment

“should be ad­

vised by a council characterized by a diversity of scholars—and public

members as well.”

She wrote that Ms. Iannone was

“a well-published writer on con­

temporary cultural matters” and was “well-positioned to advise the

endowment.”

Ms. Iannone’s nomination came

to a time when many of the schol­

ars on the N.E.H. council were

nearing the end of their terms. Of the nine council members

whose six-year terms expire next

year, eight are faculty members or

administrators. Of those e­

but one are from large com­

sive universities.

‘Ludicrously Low’

Humanities advocates say hope nominations will be

influenced toward at least

keeping the current repres­

sion of humanities scholars fre­

versity. Mr. Katz of the

National Humanities Alliance, who

said humanities scholars could

make up a “ludicrously low

portion of the council’s members,”

He said at least 30 per cent council’s members should

represents the humanities scholars.

Added Mr. Katz: “There’s

almost everything that the

does to do with professional values

and standards in the

humanities.”

supported a broad range of activi­
ties besides research and that the

agency therefore should be ad­

vised by a council characterized by a

diversity of scholars—and public

members as well.”

The National Humanities

Council is

nominated to the

N.E.H. council were

strong protests from the scholarly

groups. The National Humanities

Council was set up in 1965

to advise the

N.E.H. and concluded that represen­
tation of humanities scholars from

universities would have ended

over the last 15 years. Mrs. Cheney took issue with the study and

Ferred her own accounting of

the council’s membership.

John Hammer, director of the

National Humanities Alliance, that even after he had adjusted

counting to conform to Mrs.

Cheney’s method, he still found a

crystal downward trend in the represen­
tation of scholars on the counc­

il.

Mrs. Cheney, as well as a cur­

rent and past members of the council, say the concerns of the

scholarly groups are mis­

plac­

Leon R. Kass, who was a member of the council for seven years,

before leaving the panel last

year, said the interests of colleges

and universities were “well rep­
sented” on the panel. Seven of

the people recently appoint­

ted the council were strong scho­

lars acceptance of Ms. Iannone’s

nomination, however. That nearly

thirds of the present members had

doctoral degrees, most of the

humanities. The makeup of the

panel, he said, is not “reason­

why or embarrassment.”

Kass is a professor in the Univer­

sity of Chicago’s Committee on

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why or embarrasse
The M.L.A.’s Phyllis Franklin: Council members should have “records of distinguished service and scholarship or creativity.”

Council fall once again into the old elitist pattern.”

The M.L.A.’s letter, Mrs. Cheney wrote, assumed “that only one kind of academic is suited to be on the council: someone from a research university who publishes in journals like Publications of the Modern Language Association.”

Political Motivation Seen

Mrs. Cheney’s letter went on to say that the N.E.H.’s governing legislation called for council members who would “provide a comprehensive representation of the views of scholars and professional practitioners in the humanities.”

Ms. Franklin then wrote again to Mrs. Cheney, pointing out that the N.E.H.’s legislation called for council members who have “records of distinguished service and scholarship or creativity.” Ms. Franklin argued that Ms. Iannone did not have such a record.

In an interview, Mrs. Cheney charged that the objections to Ms. Iannone were politically motivated. Although both Ms. Franklin and Mr. Katz said in their letters that their complaints were not motivated by politics, Mrs. Cheney said they “do not protest too much.”

One scholar, who asked not to be identified, said that in making recommendations for council members Mrs. Cheney was herself motivated by politics and was practicing “conservative populism.”

Mrs. Cheney responded: “I love it. Call me a conservative populist anytime, rather than the opposite, which is a liberal elitist.”

Washington Almanac

Congressional Hearings

WASHINGTON

The following hearings of interest to educators and scientists are scheduled for the coming weeks. Since changes frequently occur with little advance notice, it is advisable to check with committees on or near the hearing dates.

SENATE


Education Department and NIH. April 16-18. 23-25. Hearings on appropriations for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Department. Contact: Senate Appropriations Committee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education. (202) 224-7288.


National Science Foundation. April 24. Hearing on appropriations for the National Science Foundation and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. Contact: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies. (202) 224-7231.


Science education. April 23. Hearing on appropriations to examine the science-education programs of various federal agencies. Contact: Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies. (202) 224-7231.


HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
