



Written Public Testimony for the Record
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
National Endowment for the Humanities
Fiscal Year (FY) 2021
March 20, 2020

On behalf of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), I, Suzanne T. Ortega, President of CGS, respectfully submit this written testimony for the record regarding FY 2021 appropriations. For FY 2021, we request the subcommittee provide at least \$170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).*

The Council of Graduate Schools is the only national organization solely dedicated to advancing graduate education and research. CGS's core membership is comprised of its institutional members, universities, and colleges significantly engaged in graduate education, research, and scholarship. In total, CGS represents nearly 500 institutions in the United States and Canada and approximately 30 additional institutions in other countries. Collectively, our members confer roughly 87% of all U.S. doctorates and the majority of U.S. master's degrees.

As one of the leading organizations directly involved in the inception and establishment of the National Endowment for the Humanities, CGS has a longstanding commitment to the agency and the humanities. The agency is a critical source of support for numerous activities that advance humanities research, promote scholarship and lifelong learning, preserve and provide access to cultural and educational resources, and strengthening humanities education in schools and universities. Since it was first established in 1965, NEH has awarded over \$5.6 billion to support humanities projects via more than 64,000 grants.¹

We also know that graduate education in the humanities yields both short and long term returns on investment. CGS's PhD Career Pathways initiative, which examines career trajectories of alumni from a subset of CGS member institutions, reveals that humanities PhD education is of high value for individuals who work within academia and outside of it. According to CGS data, the vast majority of respondents report that their doctoral education prepared them "extremely well" or "very well" for their current job (surveyed individuals include those who were three, eight, and 15 years post-graduation).² The vast majority also reported they would pursue a PhD in general or in the same field, if they had to start over again. Moreover, the National Science Foundation found that 92 percent of humanities PhDs working in 2015 held jobs that are related to their PhD.³ Clearly, investments in humanities education, including that stemming from NEH, lead to successful career opportunities for those at the graduate level and that those individuals are making contributions to communities both inside and outside of academia.

* Aligns with the National Humanities Alliance's FY 2021 request for NEH.

¹ National Endowment for the Humanities. (n.d.) Retrieved from: <https://www.neh.gov/grants>.

² Council of Graduate Schools. (2018). Closing gaps in our knowledge of PhD career pathways: How well did a humanities PhD prepare them? CGS research in brief. Retrieved from: <https://cgsnet.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Career%20Pathways%20Research%20Brief%202010-18-2018.pdf>.

³ National Science Foundation. (n.d.). National Survey of College Graduates. Retrieved from: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvygrads/>.

With respect to higher education, including that delivered at the graduate levels, NEH grant programs and initiatives support the pipeline of humanities scholars and faculty, strengthen institutional infrastructure, advance humanities research, and increase the diversity of faculty and humanities projects. Below are some NEH programs that bolster these facets of humanities education and research:

The NEH Fellowship program provides eligible individuals up to \$60,000 to support their research endeavors or to produce materials and resources for public dissemination that stem from previous research.

The Dialogues on the Experience of War initiative supports the study and discussion of crucial humanities sources regarding war. These sources can help U.S. military veterans and others think more deeply about the issues raised by the effects of military service. The program can be valuable for student veterans and faculty to discuss their experiences while relating to peers, history, and films.

The Collaborative Research program supports partnerships between two or more scholars from certain institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, state and local governments, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments to embark on projects that “propose diverse approaches to topics, incorporate multiple points of view, and explore new avenues of inquiry in the humanities.” The grants promote collaboration and interdisciplinary work, which is a valuable asset in today’s ever-expanding workforce.

Other NEH awards, such as the *Awards for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* and *Awards for Tribal Colleges and Universities*, seek to strengthen humanities at these institutions by “encouraging and expanding humanities research opportunities for individual faculty and staff members.” Supported projects include those that lead to the development of books, peer-reviewed articles, institutional or community archival collections, and improvements in an existing undergraduate humanities course.

In addition to their own inherent worth, the humanities are embedded across virtually all disciplines. The humanities help us think analytically about the interconnectedness of our society, employ critical writing and reading skills, allows us to bridge meaning across cultures, and weigh ethical considerations. These skills can be applied to several non-humanities disciplines, including the STEM fields.

Again, we respectfully urge the subcommittee to provide at least \$170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities in FY 2021. If you have any questions, or if CGS can be of assistance, please contact CGS’s Vice President of Public Policy and Government Affairs, Lauren Inouye, at Linouye@cgs.nche.edu. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Suzanne T. Ortega
President