

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

1100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506



THE CHAIRMAN

May 26, 2006

Jessica Jones Irons  
Director  
National Humanities Alliance  
21 Dupont Circle NW, Suite 604  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Jessica:

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) stipulates that strategic plans developed by federal agencies "shall be updated and revised at least every three years." With three years having passed since the submission of NEH's last revised plan, we have begun the process of updating our plan in preparation for its resubmission to Congress this fall. Among the many provisions of the GPRA is a requirement that agencies "solicit and consider the views and suggestions of entities . . . potentially affected by or interested in the plan." The purpose of this letter is to invite your thoughts and suggestions regarding the goals and objectives of NEH's strategic plan.

Enclosed is a copy of the current NEH plan, which has served as our strategic roadmap for the last three years. We invite you to review this document, and we would welcome any comments and suggestions you may have. Please bear in mind, however, that you should not feel compelled to suggest changes just for the sake of change—if you believe that the plan's goals and objectives are appropriate in content and scope, we would like to know that too.

We would appreciate receiving your comments at your earliest convenience, but no later than Friday, June 23. Please send to:

Larry Myers  
Director, Office of Strategic Planning  
National Endowment for the Humanities  
Room 403  
1100 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20506

Page 2

If you would prefer to send your comments electronically, please address an e-mail message to [lmyers@neh.gov](mailto:lmyers@neh.gov). Should you have any questions, Mr. Myers may be reached at 202-606-8428.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Cole". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bruce Cole

Enclosure

cc: Larry Myers

# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

## STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Year 2004 – Fiscal Year 2009

### Goals, Objectives, Strategies

#### **GOAL 1: TO ADVANCE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING IN THE HUMANITIES IN THE UNITED STATES**

**Objective 1:** Facilitate basic research and original scholarship in the humanities.

##### **Strategies:**

- *Provide support to enable scholars to devote a concentrated period of time to research and writing on significant subjects in all fields of the humanities.*
- *Foster significant research and scholarship on American history and culture.*
- *Invest in collaborative research projects that develop significant intellectual advances and resources for scholars, teachers, students, and the general public.*
- *Support the preparation of authoritative and annotated editions of significant historical, literary, philosophical, and other primary documents and materials of value to humanities scholars and general readers.*
- *Encourage the digitization and dissemination of previously printed scholarly editions of major significance to the study of the history and culture of the United States.*
- *Support overseas research in the humanities by American scholars.*
- *Provide support for humanities scholarship by faculty members at Historically Black, Hispanic-serving, and Tribal colleges and universities.*

**Objective 2:** Strengthen teaching and learning in the humanities in elementary and secondary schools and higher educational institutions across the nation.

##### **Strategies:**

- *Support efforts to develop new teaching and learning resources to improve students' knowledge and understanding in the humanities.*
- *Provide opportunities for teachers to renew and deepen their knowledge of the humanities.*

- *Expand and strengthen the teaching and learning of American history, culture, and principles in the nation's schools and institutions of higher education.*
- *Provide support for projects and programs that respond to the need for liberal education for a free society.*
- *Support high quality humanities education programming in Historically Black, Hispanic-serving, and Tribal colleges and universities across the country.*

**Objective 3:** Preserve and increase the availability of cultural and intellectual resources essential to the American people.

**Strategies:**

- *Support the creation of research tools and reference works of major importance to the humanities.*
- *Encourage the digitization and dissemination of previously printed reference works of major significance to the study of the history and culture of the United States.*
- *Support the preservation of and expanded access to the content of brittle books, United States newspapers, and other historically significant materials.*
- *Work in partnership with other institutions, such as the Library of Congress, to digitize and make more accessible historic U.S. newspapers.*
- *Support the stabilization of fragile collections held by American museums, libraries, archives, historical organizations, and other cultural institutions.*
- *As appropriate, support emergency programs for collections of at-risk humanities materials.*
- *Support the development of standards and best practices for the use of digital technologies to preserve and provide access to humanities collections, with special emphasis on the development of standards and techniques for creating full text access to historical newspapers.*
- *Support the training of staff from the nation's cultural repositories in the appropriate procedures for preserving and enhancing access to the humanities collections for which they are responsible.*
- *Extend the Endowment's reach to institutions across the country by providing support for basic preservation activities to small and mid-sized libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations.*

**Objective 4:** Provide opportunities for Americans to engage in lifelong learning in the humanities.

**Strategies:**

- *Invest in substantive media presentations that advance public understanding of the humanities.*
- *Support interpretive exhibitions and educational materials at museums and other historical organizations that convey significant humanities themes and topics to public audiences.*
- *Support significant projects and programs that interpret and encourage the use of humanities collections of libraries and archives.*
- *Support projects that use creative formats and diverse venues to provide opportunities for lifelong learning in the humanities.*
- *Continue to extend the Endowment's reach by building the capacity of smaller institutions to implement humanities projects through consultation with outside experts.*
- *Circulate smaller versions of NEH-funded, high quality interpretative exhibitions to small- and mid-sized museums nationwide.*
- *Support local, regional, and national projects that encourage audiences to explore significant events and ideas in the nation's history and culture.*

**Objective 5:** Strengthen the institutional base of the humanities.

**Strategies:**

- *Invest in efforts of institutions to enhance their humanities resources and activities over the long term.*
- *Encourage cultural and educational institutions to engage in long-range planning for the financial and intellectual strengthening of their humanities programs.*
- *Support efforts of cultural and educational institutions to increase nonfederal contributions for their humanities resources and activities.*
- *Support the strengthening of cultural and educational institutions with excellent programs that enhance understanding of United States history, institutions, and culture.*

**Objective 6:** Maintain and strengthen partnerships with the state humanities councils.

**Strategies:**

- *Support efforts to develop locally initiated, substantive humanities programs for the people in each state.*
- *Encourage and invest in high quality council-conducted humanities programs in the various states.*
- *Enhance efforts of the state humanities councils to expand Americans' knowledge and understanding of the nation's history and culture.*
- *Make effective use of digital technologies to help strengthen the agency's partnership with state councils.*
- *Support state humanities councils in ongoing collaborations with colleges and universities, museums, libraries, and other institutions.*

**Objective 7:** Enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of the nation's history, culture, and principles.

**Strategies:**

- *Provide opportunities and resources for teachers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the nation's history and culture.*
- *Encourage improved course offerings in American history and culture.*
- *Foster the creation and wide dissemination of scholarly works and resources on American history and culture.*
- *Engage public audiences of all ages and in all states of the nation to explore topics in American history, culture, and principles.*

**Objective 8:** Develop collaborative partnerships with individuals and institutions in support of the humanities.

**Strategies:**

- *Forge partnerships that leverage resources and expand audiences for the humanities.*
- *Develop new programming, funding, and administrative partnerships with other agencies, foundations, and organizations, both public and private.*
- *Make the NEH review process available to other federal agencies to evaluate humanities activities proposed for their support.*

**Objective 9:** Stimulate third-party support for humanities projects and programs.

**Strategies:**

- *Provide offers of funds to match nonfederal contributions to meritorious projects and programs in the humanities.*
- *Support efforts of humanities projects and programs to raise nonfederal sources of funding.*
- *Leverage the contributions of the nation's businesses, foundations, and individuals on behalf of humanities projects and programs.*

**GOAL 2: TO BROADEN AWARENESS OF, ACCESS TO, AND SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANITIES**

**Objective 1:** Increase awareness of the importance of the humanities in American life.

**Strategies:**

- *Use NEH's national visibility and stature to communicate the importance of the humanities to all Americans.*
- *Use events such as the annual "Idea of America" student essay contest, the "Heroes of History" lecture, and a National History Bee to enhance understanding and awareness of the nation's history and culture.*
- *Use opportunities such as the Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, the National Humanities Medal awards, Coming Up Taller awards, reports to Congress, etc., to demonstrate the importance of the humanities.*
- *Effectively publicize NEH programs and activities and the accomplishments of NEH grantees.*
- *Work independently and in partnership with other national organizations to collect, analyze, and provide access to data and information on the state of the humanities in the United States.*

**Objective 2:** Extend the reach of the humanities.

**Strategies:**

- *Conduct outreach and place special emphasis on expanding access to NEH programs and activities.*
- *Enhance NEH participation in government-wide Presidential directives concerned with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, educational excellence for Hispanic Americans, accessibility of federal resources for Tribal Colleges, and increasing the participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in federal programs.*

- *Encourage applicants to address, where applicable, how their project may be replicated or the results of NEH funding distributed widely.*

**GOAL 3: TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF SERVICE AND EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONS**

**Objective 1:** Streamline and improve the agency's operations to provide more effective and results-oriented service to the American people.

**Strategies:**

- *Oversee and evaluate the agency's operations, particularly*
  - *the application process*
  - *the merit review process*
  - *grants management*
  - *budget and financial management*
  - *program review process*
  - *information management*
  - *human resources*
- *Work to implement key elements of the President's Management Agenda:*
  - *expanded electronic government*
  - *strategic management of human capital*
  - *competitive sourcing*
  - *improved financial performance*
  - *budget and performance integration*
- *As needed, constitute teams of staff members from a cross section of the Endowment to consider ways to improve agency operations and procedures.*
- *Where appropriate, work in consultation with NEH members of AFGC Local 3403 to enhance quality of service and efficiency of operations.*

**Objective 2:** Recruit and retain a diverse and results-oriented work force.

**Strategies:**

- *Maintain a diverse and results-oriented workforce that is deployed appropriately in support of the agency's core functions.*
- *Ensure that the NEH workforce has the education, skills, and training needed to advance the mission of the agency.*