

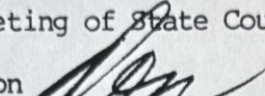
# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

January 24, 1984

## MEMORANDUM

To : Participants  
National Meeting of State Council Chairs

From : Donald Gibson 

I am pleased to send you materials, including a tentative agenda, for the National Meeting of State Council Chairs in Dallas.

We are not planning a rigid agenda with predetermined topics for the plenary and workshop sessions. However, based upon our conversations with several of you, we anticipate that a great deal of our discussion will focus upon three areas of common interest:

1. The mission of the state program, including council leadership and initiatives, constituency based and subject based programs, contemporary issues, and controversial topics;
2. The relationship of NEH to individual state councils, including the review process, the role of the Division staff, and the budget process;
3. Information and resource sharing.

We welcome discussion of other issues which you find pertinent and we have arranged the schedule to encourage the exchange of idea.

I enclose the Criteria for Review and Proposal Format, the Guidelines for Exemplary Award applications, a draft of an Orientation Handbook for New Members of State Councils, and a Brief History of the Legislation with Special Attention to the State Programs.

The Texas Committee will host a reception on Friday evening and an exhibit from the Texas Humanities Resource Center will be on display. We invite you to bring materials from your council, such as guidelines, newsletters, annual reports, or information about specific projects. In our observation, one of the principal advantages of regional and national meetings is the opportunity to learn about programs in other states.

Under separate cover, we are sending you copies of the new Procedures Manual and NEH Guidebook. We think you will find them interesting and useful as reference documents, but you need not bring them to Dallas.

- 2 -

All of the Program Officers from the Division of State Programs will be present. In addition, Walter Capps, President of the Federation, and Jacob Nyenhuis, the immediate past President, will attend.

We anticipate a very productive meeting and look forward to seeing you on Friday afternoon.

Enclosure

cc: Executive Director

DG:dmr

# MEETING OF CHAIRS OF STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

Sheraton-Park Central  
Dallas, Texas  
February 3-4, 1984

## AGENDA

### Room

### Friday, February 3

12:00 - 3:00	Registration	Marsalis Foyer
3:00 - 3:15	Welcome and Introductions	Marsalis
3:15 - 4:15	National Endowment for the Humanities William J. Bennett, <i>Chairman</i>	
4:15 - 4:45	Break	
4:45 - 6:00	State Leadership and Initiative Donald Gibson	Marsalis
6:00 - 7:15	Reception Texas Committee for the Humanities	DeGolyer
7:15 - 8:30	Dinner	Tenison
8:30	Informal Conversations	Suite

### Saturday, February 4

7:45 - 8:30	Coffee	Marsalis Foyer
8:30 - 10:00	Conversations Among Chairs Introduction: Donald Gibson Presiding: Walter Capps	Marsalis
10:00 - 10:30	Break	
10:30 - 11:30	NEH/State Communication Donald Gibson	Marsalis
11:30 - 1:00	Small Group Discussion 1. Planning 2. The Challenges of Humanities Programming for the General Public 3. The Role and Responsibility of a Chair	Benbrook Lavon Whitney
1:00 - 3:00	Lunch and Closing Remarks Donald Gibson Walter Capps	Laurels

NATIONAL MEETING

CHAIRS OF STATE COUNCILS IN THE HUMANITIES

February 3-4, 1984

Dallas, Texas

Friday, February 3, 1984

2:00-3:00 Registration

3:00 Welcome and Introductions

3:15-4:15 William J. Bennett  
Chairman  
National Endowment for the Humanities

4:15-4:45 Break

4:45-6:00 Donald Gibson  
Director  
Division of State Programs

6:00-7:15 Reception  
Texas Committee for the Humanities

7:15-8:30 Dinner

8:30 Informal Conversations

Saturday, February 4, 1984

7:45-8:30 Continental Breakfast

8:30-10:00 Conversations Among Chairs  
Introduction: Donald Gibson  
Presiding: Walter Capps

10:00-10:30 Break

10:30-11:00 Plenary Session  
Presiding: Donald Gibson  
Walter Capps

11:00-1:00 Small Group Discussions

1:00-3:00 Lunch and Closing Remarks

# National Federation of State Humanities Councils

12 South 6th Street

Suite 527

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

(612)332-2407

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## Government and Public Affairs

TO: Federation Board of Directors

FROM: Geri Malandra

DATE: June 5, 1984

SUBJECT: Letter from Walter Capps to select state council chairpersons, about nominations to the National Council on the Humanities

Enclosed is a copy of the letter that went to state council chairpersons whose states are represented by Senators on the Labor and Human Resources Committee, the committee that deals with nominations to the National Council on the Humanities.\* The process of reviewing the nominations has suddenly picked up speed, and Walter asks in the letter for rather quick action.

The goal of the request is to produce enough contacts with key Senators so that they are encouraged to look more closely at the nominations. We have learned that the matter is already being discussed not only in the Senate but also among current members of the National Council. Also, the National Humanities Alliance and the American Association of Universities has taken action similar to ours. At the very least, a hold may be placed on the most problematic nominations; if enough controversy arises, a hearing might be called.

Please contact us if you have questions about this. We will, of course, keep you posted on developments as they occur.

Enclosures

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\*We have concentrated on the Democratic side of the Committee, but have also encouraged contacts with Senator Hatch (Committee Chairman) and Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut.

June 4, 1984

Dear

I am writing to ask you to give some thought to and take action on a matter of recent concern to several members of state councils: the pending nominations of new members of the National Council on the Humanities. A number of state council members have expressed concern regarding the lack of significant background in the humanities on the part of those nominated, especially the absence of any apparent experience with public programs. Moreover, their evident strong political leanings have been the focus of published statements, notably one by Richard Lyman, President of the Rockefeller Foundation. (See the attached story from the New York Times.)

In our memo of April 30, we very briefly described the backgrounds of six nominees. A seventh, Robert Laxalt (author and director of the University Press at the University of Nevada, Reno), has recently been nominated; an eighth name will be proposed soon. The enclosed memo from the National Humanities Alliance makes it clear that several of the nominees have no discernible experience with the humanities and their political credentials appear to have been a major criterion in their selection.

I have heard concerns, and even calls for action, from state councils, but the question is how to proceed within a very short timeframe. Ordinarily, nominations for the National Council are circulated by a mail poll to all members of the full Senate Labor and Human Resources committee (a list is attached here). No hearing on the nominations is called unless a Senator raises questions about any individual (holds can also be put on confirmation if questions are raised). The situation now is that at least three Senators (Kennedy and Pell, as quoted in the Times, and Dale Bumpers

(D-AR), a member of the NEH appropriations committee, according to Congressional staff people) have voiced some misgivings about the nominees. But so far, there has been very little public response or comment, and without it, the nominations will probably be confirmed without a public inquiry.

We have been informed that the most effective way to draw attention of the Labor and Resources Committee to the concern regarding the appropriateness of some of the nominees, is for constituents of the Senators to write and and phone their Washington offices. Phone calls are most important, since the poll of the Senators will begin Monday, June 11 with responses due in Senator Hatch's office (he is chairman of the committee) on Thursday, June 14. That is why I am writing to you, since your state is represented by \_\_\_\_\_, a key member of the committee. His number is \_\_\_\_\_. You may reach a staff person, who will take your message (they do keep track of phoned-in responses to issues such as this one). His address is \_\_\_\_\_.\*

After much deliberation and consultation, we think the best strategy is to explain, in your phone call and in a follow-up letter, first, your connection with and interest in nominations to the National Council on the Humanities. Then, rather than focusing on the political side of the matter, propose some questions about the experience of these people in the humanities, questions a Senator can consider as he or she reviews the nomination poll. We wonder, for example, whether Ms. Kilpatrick or Ms. Taylor have been involved in any humanities activities. Our research so far as shown that none of the nominees have experience with state humanities council programs. How would they be able to work with and advise the NEH? How do they feel about public programs in the humanities?

I am well aware of the dangers implicit in even indirectly criticizing people who may come to some decision-making authority over us. Please give this some thought, call me or the Federation staff if you have questions, and act as you see fit. If you choose to phone your Senator, it is important that you do so immediately, since the poll of the Committee will begin Monday, June 11. I realize this does not leave much time for deliberation, but we must act quickly to reach the Senators before they make decisions about the nominees. And, if you can encourage others in your state to call, that will be a great help.

Sincerely,

Walter Capps  
Federation President

(805) 569-2636 (home)  
(805) 961-3134 (office)

\*If you have time, call and send a copy of your letter to Senator Orrin Hatch, Chairman of the Labor and Human Resources Committee, (202) 224-5375, SD-425 Dirksen Senate OB, Washington, DC 20510 and to Senator Edward Kennedy, ranking minority member of the committee (202) 224-4543, SR-113 Russell Senate OB, Washington, DC 20510.

# National Federation of State Humanities Councils

12 South 6th Street Suite 527 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402 (612)332-2407

## Government and Public Affairs

TO: Government and Public Affairs Committee

FROM: Geri Malandra

DATE: June 28, 1984

SUBJECT: Statement on reauthorization for the National Humanities Alliance

As the next step in the NHA's reauthorization project (following the March regional conferences), Lisa Phillips has asked all Alliance members to prepare a summary statement on the state of their "disciplines." This summary will be used first to help draft committee report language for a preliminary reauthorization bill. Second, the summaries will appear in a publication similar to those prepared in 1964 and 1980.

What follows here is a summary, based on the statements delivered on behalf of state councils, at the March conferences. It responds to questions posed by the Alliance: What are your goals and how do you meet them? How does your program interrelate with others in the humanistic community? What target groups particularly need your programs and what target groups have you not reached as successfully as you would like? What unmet needs exist in your type of program?

You are the first group to take a critical look at this draft. Once I have incorporated your suggestions, I will send it to our G & PA advisory group and also to those who participated in the NHA conferences. Lisa needs a final version by August 1, so we have some time, but not a great deal to polish our statement. Would you please call me as soon as you can with your comments.

Thanks for your help.

Dear Walter,

This should give you enough information to respond to Bennett's request <sup>re</sup> reauthorization. It would be very helpful if you could talk to me before you write to him. Thanks. *Jui*





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## Grass-roots programs fostering interest in the humanities from coast to coast

Walter - for  
you from Ron  
Gross

By Ronald Gross  
Special to The Christian Science Monitor

Washington

The humanities may be languishing on the nation's campuses, according to several recent national commission reports. But these subjects are thriving off-campus among adult learners who are encountering Shakespeare, Spinoza, and Spengler in sites as unlikely as union halls and prisons.

Each year millions of Americans explore history, philosophy, and literature in more than 4,000 "public humanities programs." These programs, sponsored locally by state humanities

councils, often have intensely personal impact.

"I never realized what my parents went through in coming to America," recalls May Schapp, who visited "Places of Origin," an exhibit at the American Museum of Immigration created through the auspices of the New York Council for the Humanities. "It started me reading some of the new books about that period. I never would have done that without seeing those photos of the old country."

Participants in these programs are studying not for academic credit, but for the joy of learning or to better

understand their world. "These people are discovering that they *need* the humanities to make informed decisions involving values in their personal and public lives," says Sondra Myers, president of the National Federation of State Humanities Councils.

In Massachusetts, a program on the theme of "Doing Justice" brought together professionals in the judicial system and humanities scholars to discuss "King Lear," "Billy Budd," and "Heart of Darkness." In Nevada, a film depicting the history of cattle ranching in the border area with California — "A

Please see **COUNCILS** next page

Cowhand's Song: Crisis on the Range" — sparked discussion of proposals to limit grazing in recreational areas. Ohioans gathered for a laughter-spiced celebration of the 90th anniversary of the birth of humorist James Thurber, while Louisianans pondered a provocative episode in their past through a program on politician Huey Long.

Behind these activities are 53 state humanities councils (one in each state, plus Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands), organized 15 years ago by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

"The councils are neither federal nor state agencies, nor private foundations," says Margaret Kingsland, acting executive director of the councils' national association, headquartered in Minneapolis. "Yet they mix all three in their funding, control, and style," she says. "On the one hand, they're authorized by Congress and supported in part by earmarked funds channeled through the NEH. But the remainder of their budgets — matching and often exceeding the federal money — comes

from private sources within each state. . . ."

"Each state knows its own needs better than we can here in Washington," says John Agresto, acting chairman of the NEH. "This is federalism at its best: 53 laboratories for experimentation in the humanities, each one developing its own strengths. So you get top-flight projects on Faulkner in Mississippi, or work on Twain in Missouri. But some of the best ideas are replicable, and are picked up by other states." Town meeting-style discussion groups started in New England, for example, but have now spread to other states.

The councils themselves don't usually create the projects or conduct them. Rather, they invite proposals and choose among the submissions. Together they make available more than \$20 million annually for projects conducted by a host of nonprofit organizations — from colleges, museums, and libraries to unions, prisons, and citizens' groups. (Most grants are for only a few thousand dollars.)

Tapping the ingenuity of citizens throughout each state, the councils sponsor some imaginative ways to communicate the various disciplines. One produced a radio version of "The Odyssey." Another sponsored a film evoking the rich history of a vintage movie theater, while yet another funded a major exhibit of Middle East antiquities imported from a "sister city" in Egypt.

Looking to the future at their ninth annual anniversary conference late last year in Kansas City, Mo., state council leaders saw a growing need for their activities. "People don't come to these programs for simple answers to simple questions," concluded Walter Capps, outgoing president of the National Federation. "That's not what the humanities offer. Rather, they come and come again, to read, to think, to talk — preferably in that order — about matters they have been too busy to think about since they left school."

For further information, write: National Federation of State Humanities Councils, 12 South Sixth Street, Suite 527, Minneapolis, Minn. 55402.