

Foundation Funding for the Humanities

AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT AND HISTORICAL TRENDS



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in cooperation with

The American Academy
of Arts & Sciences

JUNE 2004

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*The Foundation Center's mission is to strengthen the nonprofit sector
by advancing knowledge about U.S. philanthropy.*

To achieve our mission, we:

- Collect, organize, and communicate information on U.S. philanthropy
- Conduct and facilitate research on trends in the field
- Provide education and training on the grantseeking process
- Ensure public access to information and services through our Web site, print and electronic publications, five library/learning centers, and a national network of Cooperating Collections.

Founded in 1956, the Center is the nation's leading authority on philanthropy and is dedicated to serving grantseekers, grantmakers, researchers, policymakers, the media, and the general public.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES

The American Academy of Arts & Sciences was founded in 1780 by John Adams and other scholar-patriots "to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people." Its current membership of over 3,900 Fellows and 600 Foreign Honorary Members includes more than 150 Nobel laureates and fifty Pulitzer Prize winners. Drawing on the wide-ranging expertise of its membership, the Academy conducts thoughtful, innovative, non-partisan studies on international security, American institutions, education, and the humanities. This report is part of the Academy's Initiative for the Humanities and Culture, a major ongoing project that assesses the challenges and prospects for the humanities in America.

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Foundation Funding for the Humanities

Creating an Expanded Measure of Humanities Support

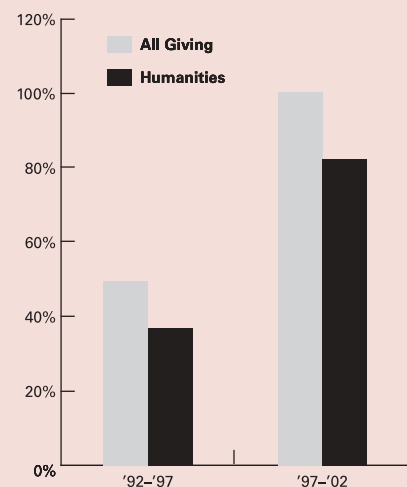
The humanities serve the critical role of developing and preserving human thought and culture. Yet their importance can often be underestimated in a society distracted by mass entertainments and the next SUV. Even among U.S. foundations with a commitment to scholarship in history, literature, philosophy, and other humanities disciplines, cutbacks in government support for human services, global health crises, or other pressing needs may lead them to direct less attention and fewer resources to humanistic studies. Moreover, without full and consistent measurement of this support, proponents of the humanities lack an essential tool for determining the overall wellbeing of the field and the status of its many subfields and disciplines.

This critical need for comprehensive, detailed, and ongoing measurement of foundation support for the humanities has led the Foundation Center and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to join together to create *Foundation Funding for the Humanities*. Since the early 1980s, the Foundation Center has

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR THE HUMANITIES

prepared by James Allen Smith, identifies the principal grantmakers and trends influencing foundation support for the humanities from the start of the twentieth century through today. It begins on page 15.

Foundation support for the humanities grew more slowly than overall giving between 1992 and 2002



Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 960 larger foundations for 1992, 1,016 for 1997, and 1,005 for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

What Are the Humanities?¹

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, the term “humanities” includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following:

- language, both modern and classical
- linguistics
- literature
- history
- jurisprudence
- philosophy
- archaeology
- comparative religion
- ethics
- the history, criticism, and theory of the arts
- those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods
- the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life

1. Excerpted from the National Endowment for the Humanities Web site, www.neh.fed.us/whoweare/overview.html, Internet accessed on 4/7/04.

tracked foundation giving annually across a range of fields and disciplines—from the arts, to human services, to religion. The Center’s “Grants Classification System” (based on the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities or “NTEE”) also provides a specific breakdown of giving for the humanities, which includes humanities—multidisciplinary, art history, history and archeology, classical languages, foreign languages, language and linguistics, literature, philosophy/ethics, and theology and comparative religion.¹ Still, the definition it provides does not capture all of the activities—e.g., women’s studies, ethnic studies, and other interdisciplinary fields—that are encompassed within the humanities.

To establish a broader definition, the Foundation Center and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences convened an advisory committee of humanities experts to review the Center’s humanities coding practices and identify possible additional fields and criteria for inclusion (see “Defining the Humanities” on page 13). Based on this broader definition, *Foundation Funding for the Humanities* provides the most detailed examination available of changes in U.S. foundation humanities support between 1992 and 2002 overall and across the many humanities subfields and disciplines.

The Foundation Center and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences expect to update this analysis periodically, as part of the American Academy’s effort to create a range of indicators on the health of the humanities field. The Center will also continue to provide annual updates on foundations’ humanities support based on the narrower NTEE definition of the field.

Changes in Humanities Funding, 1992 to 2002

Foundation funding for the humanities increased steadily during the past decade. Overall, humanities giving by funders included in the Foundation Center's annual grants set (see "Sampling Base" for details) climbed two and one-half times from \$134.1 million in 1992 to \$335 million in 2002. The number of grants benefiting the humanities doubled from 1,649 to 3,296. At the same time, humanities support grew more slowly than overall giving between 1992 and 1997 and 1997 and 2002.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation ranked as the largest humanities funder in 2002 and topped the list a total of eight times between 1992 and 2002. Following Mellon by amount of humanities giving in the latest year were the Packard Humanities Institute, Righteous Persons Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Annenberg Foundation. These five funders together provided one-fourth of overall humanities giving in the latest year. Interestingly, two of these foundations were not included in the 1997 humanities grants set: the Packard Humanities Institute, an operating foundation established in 1987, which raised its giving following the receipt of a more than \$1.5 billion transfer from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in 1999; and the Righteous Persons Foundation, established in 1994 by Steven Spielberg with profits from the film *Schindler's List*.

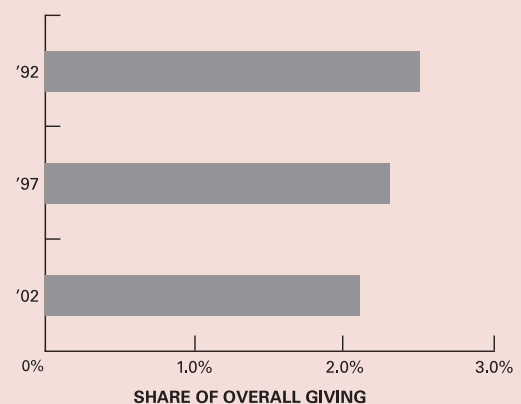
Since the amount of an individual foundation's giving may fluctuate from year to year, an analysis of *share of giving* often provides a better indicator of commitment to a particular field. In 2002, 20 foundations included in this analysis directed at least one-quarter of their overall giving to the humanities. A total of 53 foundations targeted at least 10 percent of their grant dollars to the field. Interestingly, there was a notable overlap between the top funders by share of giving and actual grant dollars. In the latest sample, for example, 10 of the top 25 foundations ranked by share of giving for the humanities also ranked among the top 25 humanities givers overall.

Despite the dominant role played by a handful of larger and/or more involved funders, the humanities have benefited from broader foundation support over the past decade. While the number of foundations in the Foundation Center's grants set grew only slightly between 1992 and 2002, the number of foundations making humanities grants climbed 37 percent—from 498 to 683. Stated another way, more than two-thirds of foundations in this analysis gave at least one grant for the humanities in the latest year, up from roughly one-half a decade earlier.

Sampling Base

The information presented in this report is based on the Foundation Center's annual grants sets. Each set includes *all* of the grants of \$10,000 or more awarded to organizations by approximately 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations and represents more than half of total grant dollars awarded by the universe of independent, corporate, community, and grantmaking operating foundations in that year. Specifically, the 2002 grants set included 127,728 grants awarded by 1,005 foundations totaling \$15.9 billion; the 1997 set included 86,203 grants awarded by 1,016 foundations totaling \$7.9 billion; and the 1992 set included 46,376 grants awarded by 960 foundations totaling \$5.3 billion. Grants to individuals and grants from donor-designated and restricted funds of community foundations are not included. (See Appendix A in *Foundation Giving Trends* for complete sampling information.)

The humanities accounted for a slightly decreased share of overall foundation giving between 1992 and 2002



Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 960 larger foundations for 1992, 1,016 for 1997, and 1,005 for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (NY) supports “a wide range of initiatives to strengthen selective private research universities in the United States, with particular emphasis on the humanities and ‘humanistic’ social sciences”; funds humanistic scholarship initiatives at key centers for advanced study and independent research libraries; and supports the Mellon Fellowships in Humanistic Studies—administered by the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Foundation.

Rockefeller Foundation (NY), through its Creativity & Culture program, supports the “preservation and renewal of the cultural heritage of people excluded from the benefits of globalization” and “strengthening civil society and the free flow of ideas through initiatives in the humanities and religion.” The foundation also provides support for scholarship and research through its Resident Fellowships in the Humanities and the Study of Culture, hosted by humanities centers in North and South America.

Consistent Humanities Funders

Within any field and discipline, a limited number of generally large foundations will account for a substantial share of overall giving. For example, the top 25 humanities funders in 2002 provided half of humanities grant dollars included in the sample. Still, the composition of this set of top funders will change from year to year. A core group of leading funders *will* appear consistently, but other funders will move in and out of the top ranks based on variations in their grants budgets or in response to special funding opportunities. For a field to experience relative consistency in foundation support over time, the majority of foundation giving will ideally come from a combination of consistent major donors and a large pool of steady, smaller donors.

An analysis of foundations with a consistent strong commitment to the humanities showed that no single funder or group of funders accounted for the majority of giving during the past decade. Overall, nine foundations made humanities grants each year from 1992 through 2002 that totaled at least \$1 million or represented 25 percent or more of their total giving. Together, these grantmakers—the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts,² Lilly Endowment, Rockefeller Foundation, Henry Luce Foundation, Annenberg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—accounted for 26 percent of humanities support during this period. (They awarded over 10 percent of the number of grants tracked in the humanities set since 1992.) An additional three foundations met the criteria for ten of the past eleven years—the J. Paul Getty Trust,³ Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, and Samuel H. Kress Foundation—but their support totaled 2 percent of overall humanities giving between 1992 and 2002.

These findings suggest that, while a small number of consistent leading grantmakers are very important to the field, the humanities received support from an increasing number of foundations. However, they also suggest that only a handful of the foundations that funded humanities over the past decade maintained a consistent commitment to the field. In fact, only 27 foundations that made a major commitment to the humanities (based on the criteria outlined above) between 1992 and 2002 provided humanities support in at least six of the eleven years analyzed. Moreover, only a handful of these foundations—most notably the Andrew W. Mellon and Rockefeller foundations—provided broad, field-wide support.

Priorities in Humanities Funding

OVERVIEW OF TRENDS

In 2002, two humanities subfields—historical activities and humanities-related museum activities—together captured 49 percent of grant dollars and over 54 percent of grants. The other principal areas of humanities giving included art history, history, humanities-related arts, culture, and media, humanities-related social sciences, and multidisciplinary humanities activities. Between 1997 and 2002, support for the humanities increased 82.5 percent. Yet growth was extremely uneven across subfields. The rise of new and large funders with narrow interests in the humanities and the impact of several exceptionally large grants all contributed to changes in the patterns of humanities giving. In addition, levels of support have dropped for some of the least-funded disciplines. Specifically, the study of classical and foreign languages received fewer dollars than in both 1997 and 1992, while support for literature was up from 1997 but down from 1992. These findings suggest that the languages subfield was failing to attract new donors, while literature may be having some limited success in this area.

Ford Foundation (NY), through its program on Education, Sexuality, and Religion, supports scholarship to “deepen understanding” of issues including gender and identity and “the participation of historically marginalized groups in the interpretation of diverse religious and cultural traditions”; and, through its program on Media, Arts, and Culture, supports increased opportunities for cultural expression and the documentation of “both new and traditional creative art forms.”

Top 25 U.S. Foundations Giving for the Humanities, 2002

Foundation	State	Fdn. Type ¹	Amount	%	No. of Grants	%	% Change in Humanities Giving, '97-'02	Humanities Giving as a % of Overall Giving
1. Andrew W. Mellon Foundation	NY	IN	\$ 25,893,000	7.7	62	1.9	17.8	11.6
2. Packard Humanities Institute ²	CA	OP	21,221,916	6.3	17	0.5	N/A	63.6
3. Righteous Persons Foundation	CA	IN	17,375,387	5.2	5	0.2	N/A	82.9
4. Ford Foundation	NY	IN	11,172,135	3.3	85	2.6	38.7	2.1
5. Annenberg Foundation	PA	IN	9,613,000	2.9	13	0.4	232.5	2.7
6. Lilly Endowment	IN	IN	6,870,550	2.1	10	0.3	196.5	1.1
7. Rockefeller Foundation	NY	IN	6,867,302	2.1	48	1.5	55.8	5.6
8. J. Paul Getty Trust ²	CA	OP	5,900,280	1.8	58	1.8	N/A	40.6
9. Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation	IL	IN	5,816,672	1.7	21	0.6	2,440.0	5.3
10. Gilder Foundation	NY	IN	5,501,547	1.6	3	0.1	597.3	65.1
11. Charles H. Revson Foundation	NY	IN	5,098,000	1.5	12	0.4	518.3	40.1
12. Ford Motor Company Fund	MI	CS	5,033,268	1.5	34	1.0	131.8	4.7
13. Perry and Nancy Lee Bass Corporation	TX	IN	5,000,000	1.5	1	0.0	N/A	42.7
14. Kresge Foundation	MI	IN	3,550,000	1.1	5	0.2	238.1	3.4
15. William Penn Foundation	PA	IN	3,498,786	1.0	14	0.4	202.2	6.2
16. Pew Charitable Trusts	PA	IN	3,470,000	1.0	3	0.1	19.0	2.1
17. Greenwall Foundation	NY	IN	3,438,390	1.0	26	0.8	1,010.5	85.0
18. Edward C. Johnson Fund	MA	IN	3,324,833	1.0	39	1.2	21.0	21.3
19. Kohler Foundation	WI	IN	2,980,050	0.9	2	0.1	N/A	95.6
20. Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation	NY	IN	2,955,000	0.9	16	0.5	1,106.1	7.6
21. Henry Luce Foundation	NY	IN	2,826,000	0.8	14	0.4	-6.8	15.2
22. Carnegie Corporation of New York	NY	IN	2,747,000	0.8	25	0.8	339.5	1.9
23. Watson-Brown Foundation	GA	IN	2,391,500	0.7	7	0.2	N/A	37.1
24. T. L. L. Temple Foundation	TX	IN	2,340,905	0.7	2	0.1	1,345.0	16.7
25. General Motors Foundation	MI	CS	2,310,000	0.7	7	0.2	40.4	6.5
SUBTOTAL			\$167,195,521	49.9	529	16.0		
All other foundations			167,761,113	50.1	2,767	84.0		
TOTAL			\$334,956,634	100.0	3,296	100.0		

Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹IN=Independent; CS=Corporate; OP=Operating.

²In addition to direct grants support for organizations (reflected in this list), operating foundations also provide humanities support through foundation-administered programs.

N/A = Not available.

Humanities Grants by Major Fields and Subfields, 2002

Humanities Fields/Subfields ¹	Amount	%	No. of Grants	%
Art History	\$ 2,918,880	0.9	34	1.0
History/Archeology	\$ 49,041,275	14.6	257	7.8
Historical Activities	\$ 82,314,630	24.6	1,051	31.9
Centennials/Commemorations/ Memorials	9,767,541	2.9	67	2.0
Historical Societies/Preservation	72,547,089	21.7	984	29.9
Humanities—Multidisciplinary	\$ 18,817,890	5.6	176	5.3
Humanities-Related Arts, Culture, and Media	\$ 33,403,746	10.0	275	8.3
Ethnic Awareness/Folk Arts	4,368,294	1.3	49	1.5
Film/Television/Radio	17,225,797	5.1	16	0.5
Other Arts	8,823,391	2.6	168	5.1
Other Media	2,986,264	0.9	42	1.3
Languages	\$ 4,488,769	1.3	59	1.8
Classical	10,000	0.0	1	0.0
Foreign	2,456,956	0.7	31	0.9
Language/Linguistics	2,021,813	0.6	27	0.8
Libraries/Archives²	\$ 12,531,194	3.7	108	3.3
Literature	\$ 10,156,238	3.0	214	6.5
Museum Activities²	\$ 81,746,327	24.4	739	22.4
Ethnic and Folk Museums/Museum Activities	21,606,720	6.5	228	6.9
History Museums/Museum Activities	55,940,197	16.7	457	13.9
Other Museums/Museum Activities	4,199,410	1.3	54	1.6
Philosophy/Ethics	\$ 10,161,585	3.0	93	2.8
Bioethics	6,528,005	1.9	51	1.5
Philosophy/Ethics—General	3,633,580	1.1	42	1.3
Social Sciences²	\$ 22,393,858	6.7	199	6.0
Ethnic/Gender Studies	11,463,054	3.4	97	2.9
Interdisciplinary Activities	6,437,345	1.9	51	1.5
International Studies	2,303,009	0.7	28	0.8
Other	2,190,450	0.7	23	0.7
Other	\$6,982,242	2.1	91	2.8
TOTAL	\$334,956,634	100.0	3,296	100.0

Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹Categories are those used in the Foundation Center's grants classification system and are adapted from the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE).

²Only humanities-related grants are included.

J. Paul Getty Trust (CA), an operating foundation, “seeks to promote the understanding and conservation of the visual arts.” Although the foundation primarily operates its own programs, it provide humanities-related grants support for “individuals and institutions throughout the world to promote scholarship in the history of art” and the conservation of historical buildings and archeological sites.

HISTORICAL ACTIVITIES

Historical activities ranked first among humanities subfields by grant dollars (24.6 percent) and number of grants (nearly 32 percent). The vast majority of grant dollars funded historical societies and preservation activities, including support for historic sites. A smaller proportion of funding supported local centennial activities, such as Detroit 300, as well as war memorials and commemorations. Funding for historical activities nearly doubled between 1997 and 2002, and growth in this area surpassed increases in humanities support overall. Among the most active funders of historical activities and preservation were the J. Paul Getty Trust, which provides assistance throughout the world to preserve sites of outstanding architectural or cultural significance, and also the Andrew W. Mellon, Annenberg, and Samuel H. Kress foundations and the Lilly Endowment. While corporate grantmakers play only a modest role in providing humanities support, three corporate foundations ranked among the top funders of historical activities, preservation, and commemorations in 2002, including the AXA, General Motors, and Ford Motor Company foundations.

HUMANITIES-RELATED MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

Museum activities captured over 24 percent of humanities grant dollars and 22 percent of grants.⁴ History museum programs claimed the largest share of support, followed by ethnic and folk museum programs. Funding for museum activities overall grew by close to four-fifths from 1997 to 2002. The pace was much faster for history museums but slower for ethnic and folk museums. Some of the leading funders of museum activities in 2002 included, for history museums, the Annenberg and Robert R. McCormick Tribune foundations, the Perry and Nancy Lee Bass Corporation, and the Edward C. Johnson Fund; and for ethnic/folk museum activities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Horace W. Goldsmith and Rockefeller foundations. The top recipient of this support by far was the Philadelphia-based National Constitution Center, a history museum established to create awareness and understanding of the U.S. Constitution. The Center received \$12.5 million primarily from local foundations for a new building and operating support.

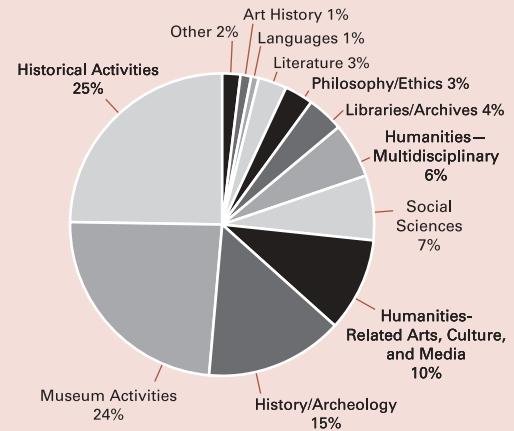
HISTORY/ARCHEOLOGY

History, including archeology, ranked third by share of humanities giving and fourth by share of number of grants. Funding for history scholarship and programs realized a nearly fivefold increase between 1997 and 2002, making it the fastest growing humanities subfield. Almost half of that increase in grant dollars resulted from support for the Los Angeles-based Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which has created a multimedia, online archive of interviews with Holocaust survivors. In 2002, the organization received \$19.7 million in grants, mainly from the Righteous Persons Foundation. The foundation was the largest funder of history programs in 2002. Other leading funders of history included the Gilder Foundation, which funds the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; the Packard Humanities Institute, which funds archaeological projects overseas; and the Andrew W. Mellon and Charles H. Revson foundations.

HUMANITIES-RELATED ARTS, CULTURE, AND MEDIA

Arts, culture, and media programs with purposes linked to the humanities and historic preservation received 10 percent of grant dollars and just over 8 percent of grants in 2002. This subcategory included a wide range of programs—from folk and ethnic cultural programs, to film, video, and publishing (including literary presses), to visual arts and art conservation, to theater and other performing arts. Funding for humanities-related arts, culture, and media increased nearly five times between 1997 and 2002, making it the fastest growing subfield after history. Within this broad category, funding nearly quadrupled for ethnic heritage and other cultural awareness programs, while increasing even faster for humanities-related media programs. In the latter area, much of the growth in 2002 resulted from support totaling nearly \$17 million from the Packard Humanities Institute to the Stanford Theater Foundation, a film preservation and historic theater foundation located in Palo Alto, to purchase property for a new film archive.

Historical activities and museum activities accounted for nearly half of foundations' humanities grant dollars in 2002

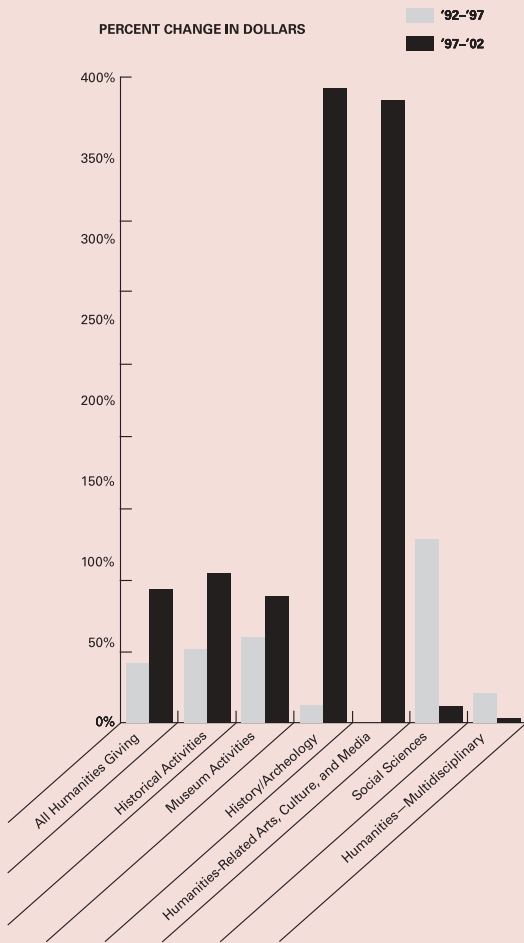


Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

Packard Humanities Institute (CA), an operating foundation, was founded to create tools for basic research in the humanities and to “foster a wider interest in history, literature, and music of the past.” More recently, the foundation has expanded its humanistic focus to include archaeology and film preservation.

Gilder Foundation (NY) primarily funds the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, which “promotes the study and love of American history” through support for history-centered schools and academic research centers, seminars and enrichment programs for educators, publications, exhibitions, and lectures, and awards and fellowships.

History/archeology and humanities-related arts, culture, and media benefited from the fastest growth in foundation giving between 1992 and 2002



Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.
 *Includes subcategories accounting for at least 5 percent of humanities grant dollars in 2002.

HUMANITIES-RELATED SOCIAL SCIENCES

Humanistic social science disciplines and scholarly activities received close to 7 percent of humanities dollars in 2002 and 6 percent of grants. Ethnic and gender studies accounted for roughly half of all funding, with humanities-related interdisciplinary activities, international studies, anthropology and sociology programs, jurisprudence, and other social science research activities claiming most of the balance. Following record growth in the early 1990s—especially for ethnic and gender studies—support for humanistic social sciences grew by a modest 10 percent between 1997 and 2002. The Ford Foundation was by far the largest funder of this subfield, followed by the Charles H. Revson and Rockefeller foundations.

OTHER FUNDING AREAS

Among the remaining humanities subfields, multidisciplinary humanities studies programs and field-wide humanities organizations received the largest share of grant dollars (5.6 percent) followed by libraries and archives (3.7 percent), literature and philosophy/ethics (3 percent each), foreign and classical languages (1.3 percent),⁵ and art history (0.9 percent).⁶ By number of grants, however, literature ranked first with a 6.5 percent share. Between 1997 and 2002, support grew fastest by far for philosophy/ethics, followed by art history, humanities libraries, and literature. During this period, support for multidisciplinary humanities activities was almost unchanged, while funding for languages—notably foreign languages—declined sharply. (As noted earlier, compared with 1992, grant dollars for both languages and literature have declined.)

By far the most active supporter of these core, yet less-funded areas of the humanities was the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Mellon provided roughly one-third of the nearly \$19 million that supported broad humanities studies programs and organizations in 2002, two-fifths of the \$12.5 million for humanities libraries and archives, and was also the largest funder of scholarly publishing and other literary services and philosophy/ethics (excluding bioethics). In the multidisciplinary humanities subfield, the Ford and Rockefeller foundations were also major contributors. In the language field, the top funder was the Florence Gould Foundation. In bioethics, the Greenwall Foundation provided more than half of all funding.

Humanities Funding by Recipient Type

Although the humanities encompass a broad range of fields and disciplines, the vast majority of funding is concentrated among a relatively small number of institutional types. The largest shares of 2002 humanities support targeted museums (25.4 percent) and historical societies and historic preservation and commemorative organizations (23.9 percent). Museums accounted for a roughly similar share of the number of humanities grants (23.8 percent), while historical societies and preservation and commemorative organizations benefited from a much larger 31 percent share of number of grants. This suggests that grants to museums tend to be larger on average than grants for historical societies and historic preservation organizations.

Following these institutions were colleges and universities and graduate schools, which benefited from 12 percent of humanities grant dollars and 11.4 percent of the number of grants. The only other types of recipients to account for at least 5 percent of humanities grant dollars in the latest set were history and archeology organizations (10 percent) and media organizations (8 percent).

Top 25 U.S. Foundations by Share of Giving for the Humanities, 2002

Foundation	State	Fdn. Type ¹	Amount	Humanities Giving as a % of Overall Giving	No. of Grants
1. Kohler Foundation	WI	IN	\$ 2,980,050	95.6	2
2. Greenwall Foundation	NY	IN	3,438,390	85.0	26
3. Righteous Persons Foundation	CA	IN	17,375,387	82.9	5
4. Gilder Foundation	NY	IN	5,501,547	65.1	3
5. Packard Humanities Institute ²	CA	OP	21,221,916	63.6	17
6. Martin Bucksbaum Family Foundation	IA	IN	1,010,000	51.5	1
7. AXA Foundation	NY	CS	2,085,000	50.9	6
8. Perry and Nancy Lee Bass Corporation	TX	IN	5,000,000	42.7	1
9. J. Paul Getty Trust ²	CA	OP	5,900,280	40.6	58
10. Charles H. Revson Foundation	NY	IN	5,098,000	40.1	12
11. Samuel H. Kress Foundation	NY	IN	1,618,000	40.0	55
12. Charlotte W. Newcombe Foundation	NJ	IN	733,700	38.1	1
13. Watson-Brown Foundation	GA	IN	2,391,500	37.1	7
14. Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation	NY	IN	801,500	30.9	25
15. Fred L. Emerson Foundation	NY	IN	1,177,000	30.0	2
16. Florence Gould Foundation	NY	IN	1,806,432	28.2	45
17. Wunderkinder Foundation	CA	IN	1,171,429	26.3	1
18. Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation	WI	IN	1,700,229	25.9	4
19. David H. Koch Charitable Foundation	KS	IN	729,000	25.8	2
20. Wallace Genetic Foundation	DC	IN	1,030,000	25.8	2
21. Oxford Foundation	PA	IN	1,350,000	21.8	3
22. Wilf Family Foundation	NJ	IN	1,063,700	21.6	4
23. Edward C. Johnson Fund	MA	IN	3,324,833	21.3	39
24. WEM Foundation	MN	IN	655,000	20.8	3
25. Mary Morton Parsons Foundation	VA	IN	750,000	20.1	7

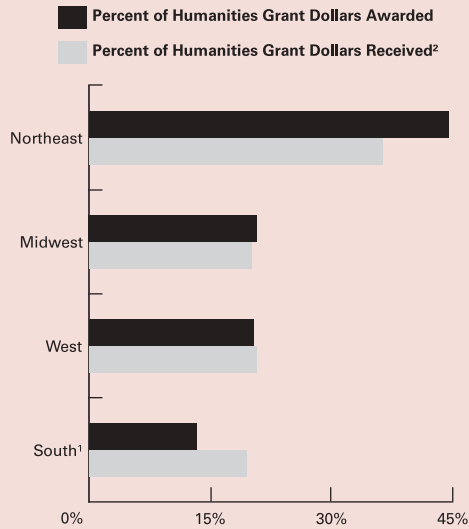
Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹IN=Independent; CS=Corporate; OP=Operating.

²In addition to direct grants support for organizations (reflected in this list), operating foundations also provide humanities support through foundation-administered programs.

Samuel H. Kress Foundation (NY) seeks to advance “the history, conservation, and enjoyment of the vast heritage of European art, architecture, and archaeology from antiquity to the 19th century”; funding includes support for academic resources, publications, and conferences and for Kress Fellowships, which support “the development of the professional expertise of art historians and conservators.”

Northeastern foundations awarded more than two-fifths of humanities grant dollars in 2002; organizations in that region accounted for over one-third of dollars received



Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹Figures for the South exclude the District of Columbia, which represented less than 1 percent of grant dollars awarded but more than 3 percent of grant dollars received.

²Excludes 139 humanities grants totaling \$16.3 million awarded outside the United States.

Humanities Giving by Funder and Recipient Region

Foundations in the Northeast region provided by far the largest share of support for the humanities in 2002 (44.5 percent). In fact, 13 of the top 25 humanities funders in the latest year were located in the Northeast, primarily in New York and Pennsylvania, and they included a number of national and international funders. Following the Northeast region by shares of foundation giving for the humanities were the Midwest (20.8 percent), West (20.4 percent), and South (13.3 percent).

Not surprisingly given the concentration of humanities funders in the region, Northeastern organizations also benefited from the largest share of grant dollars received (36.3 percent). Overall, nine of the top 25 recipients of humanities grants were based in the region. Western recipients followed with 20.7 percent of grant dollars; Midwestern organizations received 20.1 percent of giving; and 19.5 percent supported recipients in the South. Reflecting the concentration of national humanities organizations, an additional 3.4 percent of humanities grant dollars funded recipients based in Washington, DC. Finally, nearly 5 percent of humanities support was directed to recipients outside the United States, while an additional 12.2 percent of domestic humanities giving supported internationally focused programs.

Types of Support and the Humanities

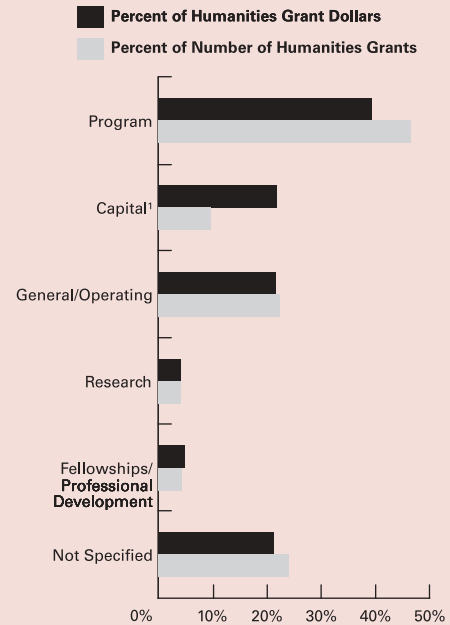
Roughly two-fifths (39.3 percent) of humanities grant dollars funded special projects and programs in 2002, down from close to half of giving in 1997. (In contrast, the share of number of humanities grants providing program support increased marginally to 46.6 percent during this period.) Historical societies/activities and historic preservation and history and ethnic/folk museum activities benefited from the largest shares of program support dollars in the latest year. This concentration of program support reflects the focus of many of the organizations working in these fields on creating exhibitions, publications, and films, preserving collections, and organizing conferences and cultural events.

Of the remaining funds, nearly 22 percent of humanities dollars supported capital projects (down from more than 29 percent in 1997), especially building and renovation, land acquisition, endowments, and collections acquisition. Museum activities, particularly those related to history and ethnic/folk art museums, historical societies/activities and historic preservation, and commemorative organizations/activities received two-thirds of all capital grants.

An additional roughly 22 percent of humanities grant dollars and grants provided general operating support and capacity-building grants to increase income and improve management. These shares were up substantially from 12.6 percent and 14.1 percent, respectively, in 1997. In the latest year, general support grants favored historical societies/activities and historic preservation, museum activities, history, humanities libraries and archives, field-wide humanities activities, and literature.

Nearly 5 percent of grant dollars funded humanities fellowships and professional development, scholarships, and awards and prizes in 2002, down from 7 percent in 1997. Nearly one-third of the dollars for fellowships supported unspecified humanities studies. The other principal areas of fellowship awards included philosophy, bioethics, history/archeology, and historical societies/historic preservation. Finally, just over 4 percent of grant dollars supported scholarly research in areas such as art history, bioethics, history, ethnic/gender and interdisciplinary studies—just over half the 7.5 percent share tracked in 1997.

Nearly two-fifths of humanities grant dollars targeted specific projects in 2002



Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 683 larger foundations for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹Capital support includes endowment funds.

Looking Ahead

Although a larger share of funders provided humanities grants in the latest year, the humanities accounted for a slightly reduced share of foundation support over the past decade. Moreover, the number of foundations supplying *broad* support for the humanities remains small. A modest recovery in the nation's economic fortunes should help to boost diminished foundation assets and encourage measured increases in giving for the humanities and other fields over the next several years. Nonetheless, the long-term health of the humanities field will require an active effort on the part of humanities funders and leaders in the field to educate grantmakers about the needs and opportunities presented by the humanities and to encourage them—especially some of the tens of thousands of foundations formed in the last decade—to include the humanities among their giving priorities.

ENDNOTES

1. For the purpose of this report, support for theology and comparative religion has been omitted. See “Defining the Humanities” for details.
2. On January 1, 2004, the Pew Charitable Trusts changed status to a public charity.
3. As an operating foundation with an extensive programmatic and research agenda, the J. Paul Getty Trust maintains only a modest grantmaking program. In 2002, the Getty Trust expended \$203.5 million for foundation-administered programs, \$17.7 million for grants to organizations, and \$1.5 million for grants to individuals. Much of Getty's support for the humanities is provided through operating programs and support for individual scholars and, therefore, is not captured in this analysis.
4. Giving for all museum activities—e.g., exhibits and infrastructure—totaled \$589.6 million in 2002, including \$81.7 million in support for humanities-related museum activities. See *Foundation Giving Trends* and *Arts Funding IV* for more details on support for museum activities.
5. This figure excludes support for the foundation-administered programs of operating foundations, such as the Packard Humanities Institute.
6. This figure includes only art history grants awarded to organizations. The leading funder of art history in 2002 by far was the J. Paul Getty Trust, which awarded \$1.6 million in 12 grants to organizations for projects in the United States and abroad. Overall, the Getty Trust made grants to organizations totaling \$17.7 million in 2002 to promote research in the history of art and related fields, advancement of the understanding of art, and conservation of cultural heritage.

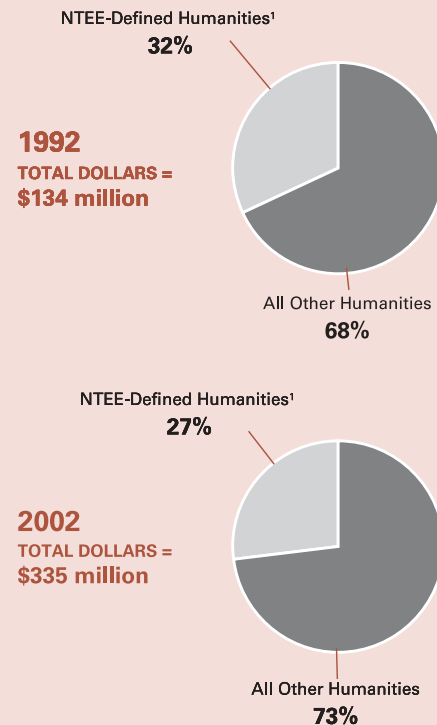
Defining the Humanities

Members of the *Foundation Funding for the Humanities* advisory committee met in January 2004 to create an expanded definition of the humanities for use in this analysis, drawing from sources such as legislation creating the National Endowment for the Humanities. While broader than the standard definition included in the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE)¹ and reflected annually in the Foundation Center’s report, *Foundation Giving Trends: Update on Funding Priorities*, the expanded definition does make use of NTEE codes. This enables the Center and the American Academy to compare changes in humanities funding over time and with a high degree of consistency.

The expanded humanities definition developed by the study’s advisors also utilizes the Foundation Center’s practice of separately coding a grant’s primary and secondary purpose, the primary and secondary purpose of the recipient organization, and the types of support provided by the grant (when known). With these tools, the advisors agreed upon a humanities definition that encompassed all grants with a:

- primary grant purpose or recipient type code for humanities—multidisciplinary, art history, history and archeology, classical languages, foreign languages, language and linguistics, literature, philosophy/ethics, historical activities, commemorative events, ethnic and folk art museums/activities, and history museums/activities.
- primary purpose of historic preservation, *excluding* grants for capital campaigns, building and renovations, and land acquisition—if these grants focus exclusively on preserving physical spaces (although it’s likely that some fraction of all funding for historic preservation includes support for historical research on buildings and their surroundings).
- primary grant purpose or recipient type code of arts, libraries and archives, or social sciences and a secondary code for the humanities (based on the expanded definition above).
- primary purpose of African American studies, women’s studies, or ethnic studies or a primary recipient type of African American studies, women’s studies, or ethnic studies and a secondary code for the humanities.
- primary purpose of bioethics.

NTEE-Defined Humanities as a Share of Overall Foundation Giving for the Humanities, 1992 and 2002



Based on all humanities grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by 498 larger foundations for 1992 and 683 for 2002, excluding grants paid directly to individuals.

¹The National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) defines humanities as including humanities—general, art history, history and archeology, classical languages, foreign languages, language and linguistics, literature, philosophy/ethics, and theology and comparative religion. However, for the purpose of this report, grants for theology and comparative religion have been excluded.

The definition developed for this analysis provides the most comprehensive accounting of foundation support for the humanities available and captured more than three times the humanities grant dollars identified using the modified NTEE definition in 1992 and close to four times the dollars tracked in 2002. (See “Sampling Base” for details about the Foundation Center’s annual grants sets.) Still, limitations in the information provided by some foundations and in the specific coding terms available in the NTEE system mean that this expanded definition may not capture all foundation giving for the humanities.

EDUCATION AND THE HUMANITIES

Using the definition outlined above, all grants to academic institutions (K–12 schools, colleges, universities, and graduate schools) and to educational associations to support the teaching and learning of art history, languages, linguistics, literature, history, historic preservation, philosophy/ethics, bioethics, and humanistic social sciences, or to facilitate research and scholarship in the humanities disciplines, are captured in this report. Also captured are grants to history and ethnic/folk museums, literary presses, and humanities libraries and archives housed within academic institutions. Not included in this analysis are grants for the general support of liberal arts colleges and other academic institutions, even though broad support for these institutions may in part benefit the humanities.

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1. The standard humanities definition, based on NTEE and tracked by the Foundation Center, includes *only* grants with a primary purpose of humanities—general, art history, history and archeology, classical languages, foreign languages, language and linguistics, literary services, philosophy/ethics, and theology and comparative religion. Funding for theology and comparative religion has been excluded from this analysis, as Foundation Center coding does not allow grants specifically for comparative religion to be separated out. Overall, grants for theology and comparative religion totaled \$1.3 million in 1992, \$3 million in 1997, and \$93 million in 2002. Nearly all of the increased funding in 2002 resulted from the Lilly Endowment’s Program for Theological Exploration of Vocations (established in 1999).

Historical Perspectives on Foundation Support for the Humanities

by *James Allen Smith*
Senior Advisor to the President
The J. Paul Getty Trust

The humanities have never found it easy to garner philanthropic dollars. In the early years of the twentieth century, supporting humanistic scholarship was very far from the minds of America's wealthiest donors as they established the first general purpose foundations. Medical research, public health, and applied social science held sway as donors and their advisers grappled with the most urgent social and economic problems of an increasingly urban, industrial nation. Their quest, which they often described as a search for the root causes of social ills, did not lead them to see history, philosophy, or other humanistic disciplines as practical tools for investigation. And to this day, most American foundations have persisted in looking to the future, trying to spark innovation, and pressing for social change. It is a habit that Jacques Barzun once decried as the foundations' "principle of compulsory newness."

To be sure, some donors in the late nineteenth century—most famously, Andrew Carnegie and Enoch Pratt—had seen the value of establishing free libraries and embellishing their cities with new cultural institutions, thereby broadly embracing the humanities. There were, of course, other individuals, such as Johns Hopkins, Leland Stanford, and John D. Rockefeller, who devoted substantial resources to founding or expanding universities where scholars would make their mark on humanistic disciplines. And wealthy collectors—J.P. Morgan and Henry Huntington, to

name but two in the early twentieth century—created institutions to make their collections of books, manuscripts, and artifacts more widely available to scholars and the public. For some donors, and they are rare, philanthropy has also included an impulse toward cultural preservation.

When we look at the accomplishments of foundations and generous individuals who have been moved to support the humanities, we should acknowledge that, while such donors have been few in number, their cumulative contributions have created a substantial institutional infrastructure for the humanities. That framework has deep footings in colleges and universities, with their varied museums, special collections, and endowed chairs; the infrastructure also embraces independent libraries, archival collections, museums, and countless historic sites.

But funding for the humanities has typically had to go against the philanthropic grain. In the early 1920s, frustrated in his dealings with foundations who wanted only to fund "constructive research," the executive secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies complained, "I have been racking my brain for weeks in an effort to think of undertakings appropriate to the Council of Learned Societies which might be characterized as having 'practical' bearings upon present day problems. It seems difficult. But this is what I think we have got to do if we are to win any funds from trustees of endowments and foundations."¹

The funding imbalance was apparent early on to Abraham Flexner, the impassioned instigator of early Rockefeller philanthropic endeavors, who remains best known today for his transforming work in medical education. To the end of his days, he also remained a passionate advocate for the humanities. In 1926, he organized a conference in Washington, DC, to explore the needs of the key humanistic disciplines. After spending several days with scholars from the fields of art history, archaeology, literature, philosophy, and history, Flexner wrote to a friend, “I was struck by the unaggressiveness of the group; that is, these scholars have been—as a rule—quietly at work on their own studies, letting their scientific and medical brethren hustle for the resources which all alike have needed.”² Only five years later, in one of the first surveys of foundation giving, the Twentieth Century Fund estimated that less than \$1 million of the roughly \$52 million given away annually by American foundations was flowing toward the humanities.

However, the humanities were not ignored entirely. In the 1920s, with Flexner’s encouragement, the Rockefeller-funded General Education Board sought to “assist in righting the balance” with the sciences, making sizeable commitments to the fields of art history and classical archaeology. Throughout the twentieth century the Rockefeller Foundation and a handful of other foundations, large and small, have offered substantial assistance both to advance scholarship and to improve public understanding of current issues through the humanities. It is therefore misleading merely to tally the dollars (and they are admittedly very difficult to measure precisely) and to lament the comparatively low levels of support for the humanities. Indeed, if a case for increased humanities funding is to be made, it will not emerge merely by lamenting the imbalance with other fields but rather by reminding ourselves of some of the specific accomplishments in the humanities over many decades.

Early Accomplishments of Humanities Funders

From early in the twentieth century, the General Education Board (GEB) and later the Rockefeller Foundation (which took over GEB programs in 1932) supported major research institutions. The Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, the American Academy in Rome, and the American School of Classical Studies in Athens

were all given significant funding to train archaeologists and to pursue excavations at various ancient sites. Substantial five-year grants were also made to promote teaching and research in the humanities at Princeton, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Harvard, and Yale. Although, in leaving it to each university to determine precisely how to advance the humanities, the results were judged by the foundation to have been less than consequential, indeed rather ephemeral.

Supporting humanistic scholarship was very far from the minds of America’s wealthiest donors as they established the first general purpose foundations.

After Andrew Carnegie’s death, the Carnegie Corporation of New York under Frederick Keppel looked anew at what its vaguely conceived mission of advancing and diffusing knowledge might mean for the humanities. In 1922, Keppel and his colleagues asked how they could

“further the understanding of that deeper structure of knowledge and feeling which involves philosophy, art, and the comprehension of human relations.”³ Programs for teaching art history (art “appreciation” would more accurately describe the curricular aims) and improving the skills of museum curators soon took shape. As it did in other fields, Carnegie pushed toward greater professionalization. Even earlier, both the Carnegie Institution in Washington and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace had found practical value in supporting the work of historians, the former supporting the American Historical Association and for two decades its own historical division, the latter contributing to research, writing, and publishing on the historical causes of war.

When foundations have provided funding, there have been indisputable accomplishments. Perhaps the most noteworthy sustained philanthropic enterprise, one in which the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation have been leaders, was the construction of the academic framework for regional and, later, area studies. In the early 1930s, the humanities were the beneficiary when the Rockefeller Foundation provided training fellowships in Asian languages, history, and religion. At the end of the decade, it added Russian, other Slavic languages, and Turkish and, later still, Spanish language and Latin American studies. These initial forays into languages, literature, and history necessarily included the development of such basic scholarly tools as the preparation of language dictionaries, bibliographies, teaching materials, and translations of texts. These initiatives were central to training a first generation of scholars and equipping them with the skills to understand distant regions. Much of this work was undertaken in collaboration with the American Council of

Learned Societies (ACLS), with ACLS receiving approximately two-thirds of its funding from Rockefeller in the years from 1926 to 1950, most of it regranted to individual scholars and university programs.

From the outset, the Rockefeller Foundation staff thought of these initiatives as practical and constructive ways of advancing “international cultural relations.” They also made a conscious effort to broaden the definition of the humanities, moving from the early foundation funding for classical archaeology and preservation of western European cultural heritage to projects that would improve American understanding of less familiar parts of the world.

Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, with American institutions and values subject to probing doubts, the search for a more expansive definition of the humanities also propelled American philanthropists to think about their own nation’s heritage. Raymond Fosdick, the Rockefeller Foundation president, asked pointedly whether the humanities program in the 1920s had simply supported an “aristocratic tradition” of humanistic activity unrelated to the contemporary era. David Stevens, the director of the humanities program, had himself wondered whether by “holding to the tradition of polite learning and exact scholarship humanistic scholars have kept their disciplines away from active life.”

As early as the 1930s, the Rockefeller program for the “the preservation and interpretation of American cultural traditions” began to expose fault-lines that have endured when humanities funding is being debated: How is a balance to be maintained between support for traditional academic disciplines against the demands of new research fields? How are the needs of scholarship to be balanced against the possibilities of reaching a wider public audience?

The Rockefeller Foundation began to move away from some traditional, discipline-based research, focusing on radio, film, and theater (especially regional drama) in order to heighten popular appreciation of the humanities. It also spurred work in new scholarly fields devoted to folk and popular culture, such as J. Frank Dobie’s research on southwestern folklore at the Huntington Library and the work of Henry Nash Smith, author of *Virgin Land*. A very modest grant of \$350 even went to help the Lomaxes purchase recording equipment for their forays on behalf of the Library of Congress to capture the songs and stories of the rural South. Collecting primary source materials became a high priority for the foundation, and oral history would be a field in which it intensified its work in the post-war years.

In the 1930s and 1940s, despite declining financial resources, the Rockefeller Foundation’s giving for the humanities also managed to maintain its international outlook. By far the single largest international project before the war was Rockefeller’s support (totaling well over \$2 million) for the expansion of Oxford University’s Bodleian Library. The

Defining the Boundaries of the Humanities

Whether at the Carnegie Corporation of New York or the Rockefeller Foundation, the boundaries between the humanities and the arts were not clearly drawn in the first half of the twentieth century. The borders seem even less clearly defined today. Indeed, one of the most difficult problems in measuring private philanthropic contributions to the humanities over the years lies in setting meaningful definitional boundaries—and in keeping up with intellectual changes in the humanities as those boundaries have shifted. Throughout the 1930s, for example, the Rockefeller Foundation’s Humanities Division made very substantial contributions to the development of American theater on college and university campuses. Does this count as a contribution to the humanities or to the arts? Or

does it matter? In studies of various regions during the 1930s, with strong roots in language training and history, the contributions to the humanities remain clear. However, it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a sharp line between contributions to the social sciences and the humanities when examining Ford Foundation support for area studies after about 1950. And in recent decades, as foundations have promoted women’s studies and initiated work on race and ethnicity, these emerging fields have broken through all sorts of disciplinary walls. Boundaries with adjacent social science disciplines, with public policy research, with activities in the visual and performing arts, and with work in some professional fields, especially theology and law, render any assessment of overall support for the humanities a rough (and always debatable) approximation.

foundation also funded construction projects at Cambridge University, cataloguing projects at the British Museum, the expansion of the periodicals collections at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the American Library Association's listings of foreign government publications. But in the 1930s it was the push given to language training and to studies focused on particular regions of the world that ultimately paid the greatest practical dividends when the nation began to mobilize for war. Wartime teaching methods for "exotic" languages emerged directly from the techniques that had been used to capture and analyze the spoken words and sentences of the rapidly dying languages of Native American tribes. When war mobilization got fully underway, a Rockefeller grant went to the government to plan the language teaching program at the Monterey Institute. And several grants helped in preserving and protecting cultural treasures in war-ravaged regions.

As early as the 1930s, the Rockefeller program began to expose fault-lines that have endured when humanities funding is being debated: How is a balance to be maintained between support for traditional academic disciplines against the demands of new research fields? How are the needs of scholarship to be balanced against the possibilities of reaching a wider public audience?

Humanities Funding in the Post-War Years

After World War II, the Ford Foundation came of age, receiving a huge infusion of Ford Motor Company stock that left it with assets far outstripping those of Carnegie and Rockefeller. Its work in the humanities soon expanded, attaining far greater international scope. Ford program planners in the 1940s had ruefully acknowledged that "the history of philanthropic support for the humanities may bear the subtitle 'the short and simple Annals of the Poor.'" In 1952 they sought to re-write those annals, providing tens of millions of dollars for graduate students and scholars in diverse disciplines through the foundation's Foreign Area Fellowship Program (administered by committees from the ACLS and the Social Science Research Council). In the early 1960s, institutional support began to flow to U.S. universities to strengthen international training, research, and scholarly exchanges. Between 1960 and 1972, Ford devoted over \$120 million to the support of international studies in American universities—to the benefit of both the social sciences and the humanities.

Purely humanistic scholarship was also supported by Ford in the two decades from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s. Much of this \$75 million commitment sustained the

scholarly infrastructure. The largest single beneficiary was the Council on Library Resources. Other sums went to assist university presses and to support editing and publishing projects, such as one devoted to the papers of the Founding Fathers. Over \$15 million was given to the ACLS for a program of post-doctoral fellowships and grants-in-aid. These figures still do not represent a thorough accounting of Ford's support for the humanities in these two decades. Professors and students of the humanities clearly derived benefit from a portion of the \$1.1 billion that went to the general support of higher education, whether for salary support, challenge grants, venture funds, or minority fellowships. While it would be difficult to quantify precisely, it is also fair to add that a wider popular audience for the humanities derived benefit from at least some portion of the \$300 million in Ford funding that went to educational television in the 1950s and to public television in the 1960s and 1970s; nor should one

forget the Carnegie Corporation's role in funding the commission that spurred passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

While three large foundations—Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford—shaped the over-arching patterns of humanities funding through much of the twentieth century, they have been joined in recent decades by other large foundations with missions substantially devoted to the support of the humanities. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation came into being in 1969 when two older family philanthropies were merged. It has continued a tradition of strong institutional support for leading academic institutions. Mellon resources sometimes served as matching grants for Ford Foundation and U.S. government funding in area studies; they have also been used to strengthen university programs in several specific humanistic disciplines. Mellon has also supported library cataloguing and electronic digitization projects and, during the decade of the 1990s, was the major private funder of graduate education in the humanities. Mellon's work has also continued a tradition of supporting academic institutions in other countries. Just as Rockefeller had supported European libraries in the 1930s, built important Latin American institutions such as the Colegio de Mexico in the 1940s, and funded universities in several developing countries in the 1950s and 1960s, the Mellon Foundation in the 1990s funded library development in Latin America and

Eastern Europe, and worked to build the university infrastructure in South Africa.

Other grantmaking foundations, large and small, have aided the humanities, as this Foundation Center report shows. But the picture of foundation support for the humanities is not complete without acknowledging, more fully, the role of two very sizeable operating foundations. First, the J. Paul Getty Trust, one of the nation's largest endowed private foundations, was established in 1978 and began to see its assets expand in the mid-1980s. As an operating foundation, Getty is not required to make grants. However, in 1984 it launched a modest (relative to its overall expenditures) grant program that complements its primary functions, which include operating a museum, research institute, and conservation institute. Its grantmaking activities, along with its separate institutes, support art and architectural history, cultural conservation, and work at museums and historical sites. Through the educational programs of the museum, Getty also makes a major commitment to public understanding of the humanities. Second, the Packard Humanities Institute, which was set up in 1987 as a way to continue certain humanities programs of the Packard Foundation, is also a very substantial operating foundation. Among other projects, its efforts have produced electronic databases of Greek papyri and inscriptions, Latin literary texts, and the documents of the Founding Fathers.

Smaller, more specialized foundations have also been important for their sustained support of work in particular humanistic fields. The Samuel H. Kress Foundation, founded in 1929, has been one of the most focused, concentrating exclusively on the European artistic heritage. Early on it made the Kress Collection available widely to the public, most notably at the National Gallery in Washington but also in scores of museums across the U.S. It has devoted its financial resources to the preservation of European art and architecture and to professional training in art history and related fields. More discretely focused both geographically and programmatically, the Kohler Foundation has supported the preservation of folk architecture, art environments, and the works of self-

When we look at the accomplishments of foundations and generous individuals who have been moved to support the humanities, we should acknowledge that their cumulative contributions have created a substantial institutional infrastructure for the humanities.

taught artists, primarily in Wisconsin. Some foundations, though they work across several broad program areas, have also made a mark in specific fields. These foundations include the Charles H. Revson Foundation in Jewish studies; the Henry Luce Foundation in Asian studies, art history, and religion; the Florence Gould Foundation in foreign languages; and the Greenwall Foundation, which expends two-thirds of its grant budget on a program in bioethics, a sum that amounts to more than half of all foundation funding in that field.

The Current State of Humanities Funding

This brief historical excursion provides a context for examining the Foundation Center's new report on the most recent trends in private foundation support for the humanities. It more than hints at some of the challenges faced by the Foundation Center and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences as they tried

to define the humanities and to create meaningful categories for analysis. It also points toward unanswered, perhaps even unanswerable, questions about humanities funding.

Several findings of the report are worth underscoring:

- *The report confirms that today, as in the past, the bulk of the financial support for the humanities comes from a relatively small number of foundations.* Five foundations currently provide approximately one-quarter of total funding for the humanities; 25 foundations provide approximately half of the support. But the core group, the consistent funders across the decade (1992 to 2002) covered by the Foundation Center report, remains very small. While the report does make note of the fact that over 600 other foundations made at least one grant that can be classified under the general rubric "humanities" in 2002, it is hard to gauge whether these foundations are an as yet untapped resource or whether grants made with other explicit purposes in mind can simply (and quite coincidentally) be categorized as benefiting the humanities.
- *The report also suggests another broad conclusion, namely, that there has been a long-term trend toward support for public programming in the humanities and away from the funding of scholarship in the core disciplines.* The report is only suggestive in this regard, first, because we have no earlier benchmarks and, second, because it is impossible to

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Advancing knowledge about philanthropy

determine whether grant dollars aggregated in such encompassing categories as “historical activities” or “museum activities” support scholarly research or public programs or some indeterminable proportion of both. One of the key questions—What is the balance between support for scholarship and support for public programs in the humanities?—still eludes the available data.

- *The report also points toward very uneven support across the disciplines and within sub-fields of the individual disciplines.* Classics and foreign languages, the fields that apparently received the largest portion of dollars from humanities funders in the 1920s and 1930s, have seen their support diminish drastically, with even further declines over the decade measured by the Foundation Center. But, as always, the data must be read carefully. Art history and the classics seem to receive relatively little support, although this does not reflect the role of operating foundations. Philosophy seems to have significant support but it is likely that much of the support is for one sub-field: ethics. History seems to be flourishing, yet closer examination suggests that this may be the result of capital investments in history museums, such as Philadelphia’s National Constitution Center. Indeed, it is crucial that long-term trends be distinguished from the distorting effects of exceptional projects or the sudden entry of a new funder with a singularly focused mission, such as the Righteous Persons Foundation’s commitment to create an online archive of holocaust survivor interviews.

In providing aggregate data on humanities funding, especially the data showing support for new and emerging fields and for multidisciplinary projects, this report prompts at least as many questions as it answers. Recalling

Recalling Barzun’s “principle of compulsory newness” and his blunt conclusion that where foundations are concerned “the humanities don’t fit in,” we must continue to ask how they do fit in.

Barzun’s “principle of compulsory newness” and his blunt conclusion that where foundations are concerned “the humanities don’t fit in,” we must continue to ask how they do fit in. This report should encourage us to return to questions about the humanities that foundation donors and staff have been asking throughout the twentieth century:

What is the relationship between the humanistic disciplines and other fields of intellectual inquiry? What is the right balance between supporting the traditionally conceived humanistic disciplines and emerging fields? How are the demands of supporting scholarship to be weighed against the continuing need to improve popular understanding of the humanities? How do the humanities serve cultural and international understanding? How useful (or how urgently so) must

projects in the humanities be to warrant foundation support? What are the obligations to preserve the most endangered aspects of our cultural heritage? And who, if not private foundations, will fulfill those obligations? Despite the recurring sense that the humanities do not easily fit in or, rather, that they cannot compete with seemingly more urgent philanthropic goals, there have been significant achievements whenever foundations have chosen to support the humanities. It is a record worthy of far more extensive exploration.

ENDNOTES

1. Letter of Waldo Leland to Charles Homer Haskins (11 May 1921) quoted in Ariel De, “International Understanding and World Peace: The American Council of Learned Societies, 1919–1957” (Ph.D. Dissertation: City University of New York, 2004), p. 50.
2. Letter of Abraham Flexner to Cyrus Adler (21 December 1926) quoted in Joel Colton and Malcolm Richardson, *The Humanities and “The Well-being of Mankind.” The Humanities at The Rockefeller Foundation Since 1928* (Unpublished Manuscript at Rockefeller Archive Center, 1982), p. 1–14.
3. Keppel, Frederick Paul, *Philanthropy and Learning with Other Papers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 81.