



## **The Heart of the Matter**

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## **Overview**

- **Brief introduction to the AAAS Commission on Humanities & Social Sciences June, 2013 report**
- **Report recommendations**
- **Moderated discussion to consider the report recommendations and if/how we should carry them forward**



AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF ARTS & SCIENCES

# *The Heart of the Matter*

The Humanities and Social Sciences

*for a vibrant, competitive, and secure nation*

## Report Context

- *Rising Above the Gathering Storm* (2007) leads to
  - Enhanced awareness of STEM for govt., higher ed., K-12
  - Disproportionate STEM emphasis inadvertently diminishing humanities & social sciences
- Bipartisan Commission requests report from AAAS
  - Reps. Price (D-NC) and Petri (R-WI)
  - Sens. Alexander (R-TN) and Warner (D-VA)
- Report released June, 2013

## Goals & Recommendations (1)

- **Goal 1: Educate Americans in the knowledge, skills, and understanding they will need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy.**
  - Support full literacy as the foundation for all learning.
  - Invest in the preparation of citizens.
  - Increase access to online resources, including teaching materials.
  - Engage the public.

### Goal 1

#### **Educate Americans in the knowledge, skills, and understanding they will need to thrive in a twenty-first-century democracy.**

The humanities and social sciences provide an intellectual framework and context for understanding and thriving in a changing world. When we study these subjects, we learn not only what but how and why.

- **Support full literacy as the foundation for all learning.** The nation depends on a fully literate populace—on citizens whose reading, writing, speaking, and analytical skills improve over a lifetime. These are among the principal skills that the humanities and social sciences teach, and they must be nurtured at every level of education.
- **Invest in the preparation of citizens.** Democratic decision-making is based on a shared knowledge of history, civics, and social studies. A thorough grounding in these subjects allows citizens to participate meaningfully in the democratic process—as voters, informed consumers, and productive workers.
- **Increase access to online resources, including teaching materials.** Foundations, private donors, libraries, and museums should partner with federal, state, and local education leaders—as well as with individual scholars—to help ensure that quality materials reach all students, especially those in economically disadvantaged k-12 schools.
- **Engage the public.** Through public-private partnerships, support a strong network of schools, museums, cultural institutions, and libraries that engage the public in humanities and social science activities.

## Goals & Recommendations (2)

- **Goal 2: Foster a society that is innovative, competitive, and strong.**
  - Increase investment in research and discovery.
  - Create cohesive curricula to ensure basic competencies.
  - Strengthen support for teachers (Master Teacher Corps)
  - Encourage all disciplines to address “Grand Challenges.”
  - Communicate the importance of research to the public.

### Goal 2

#### ***Foster a society that is innovative, competitive, and strong.***

The ability to adapt and thrive in a changing world is based not only on instruction for specific jobs of today but also on the development of professional flexibility and longterm qualities of mind: inquisitiveness, perceptiveness, the ability to put a received idea to a new purpose, and the capacity to share and build ideas with others.

• ***Increase investment in research and discovery.*** To ensure the vibrancy of humanities and social science programs at all levels, the federal government should significantly increase funding designated for these purposes through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and other relevant agencies. Because state and federal budgets are currently stretched to fund more programs with fewer dollars, a wider community of philanthropic individuals and foundations should also join the effort.

• ***Create cohesive curricula to ensure basic competencies.*** To ensure that graduates of k-12 education, as well as two-year and four-year colleges, are prepared for a satisfying and productive adult life, scholars and teachers should begin to reverse the trend toward an ever-more fragmented curriculum. Educators should focus new attention on the “qualities of mind”—problem-solving, critical analysis, and communication skills—that are embedded in all disciplines.

• ***Strengthen support for teachers.*** The Commission encourages the creation of a Humanities *Master Teacher Corps* to complement the stem Master Teacher Corps recently proposed by the White House. In addition, enhanced partnerships between elementary and secondary schools and higher education institutions, including continuing education opportunities for k-12 teachers and *loan-forgiveness programs* to encourage the entry of advanced-degree holders into k-12 classrooms, can help enrich teaching at every level.

• ***Encourage all disciplines to address “Grand Challenges.”*** The Commission joins the National Academies’ National Research Council, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health in recommending that foundations, universities, research centers, and government agencies draw in humanists and social scientists together with physical and biological scientists to address major global challenges. Humanists and social scientists are critical in providing cultural, historical, and ethical expertise and empirical analysis to efforts that address issues such as the provision of clean air and water, food, health, energy, and universal education.

• ***Communicate the importance of research to the public.*** Scholars and the public will both benefit if scholars project the broader implications of their research and writing, and if they articulate these implications for a wider audience. Scholars in all disciplines should embrace the chance to connect with the larger community.

## Goals & Recommendations (3)

- Goal 3: Equip the nation for leadership in an interconnected world.
  - Promote language learning (including K-12)
  - Expand education in international affairs and transnational studies.
  - Support study abroad and international exchange programs.
  - Develop a “Culture Corps.”

### Goal 3

#### ***Equip the nation for leadership in an interconnected world.***

The humanities and social sciences teach us about ourselves and others. They enable us to participate in a global economy that requires understanding of diverse cultures and sensitivity to different perspectives. And they make it possible for people around the world to work together to address issues such as environmental sustainability and global health challenges.

- ***Promote language learning.*** State and local school districts should establish programs to increase language learning, including immersion programs for second languages. Programs might include blended learning technologies to facilitate language learning in schools that lack funding or infrastructure for additional classes. Colleges should build on and expand these competencies.

- ***Expand education in international affairs and transnational studies.*** The Commission recommends the creation of a new “National Competitiveness Act”—which, like the original National Defense Education Act, would include funding for education in international affairs and transnational studies. In addition to stable support for existing study-abroad programs, this act would help revive endangered disciplines and prepare citizens for a global economy.

- ***Support study abroad and international exchange programs.*** Every undergraduate should be encouraged to have a significant international experience. Because government agencies including the Departments of State, Defense, and Commerce as well as the U.S. military require the kinds of expertise that students can acquire only through advanced study and immersion in other cultures, the federal government should increase support for the Fulbright Program and the Department of Education’s Title VI international and language programs, among others.

- ***Develop a “Culture Corps.”*** Encourage cities and states, libraries, and other organizations like the Corporation for National & Community Service to develop a “Culture Corps.” The corps would match interested adults (retirees, veterans, artists, library and museum personnel) with schools, community centers, and other organizations to transmit humanistic and social scientific expertise from one generation to the next.

## Moderated Discussion

- How does *The Heart of the Matter...*
  - Relate to LEAP and other discussions of liberal arts in the academy?
  - Connect to the new “Common Core”?
  - Further discussion and solution of The Grand Challenges?
  - Relate to colleges of education and K-12 efforts?
  - Inspire us to work with stakeholders and decision-makers in our states to advance its goals?



## For More Info...

<http://www.humanitiescommission.org/>

(includes full & executive drafts of report, additional resources & links, video, and Listserv to stay abreast of changes/updates)

<http://www.aacu.org/leap/>

(AAC&U site for Liberal Education: America's Promise)

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## **Addendum: Post-Presentation Info**

- 7 March, 2014: Panel discussion at NC State (contact [jbraden@ncsu.edu](mailto:jbraden@ncsu.edu) for more info)
- Suggestion to develop “toolkit” for CCAS members including resources is underway; look to CCAS Listserv for more info soon.