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APSA's Stake in Humanities Funding

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In 1981, when the Reagan administration proposed large cuts to the National Endowment of Humanities (NEH), a group of scholarly societies came together to form the National Humanities Alliance, an organization dedicated to speaking with one voice to support NEH. The American Political Science Association was one of the first twenty members of the new organization and it has remained a key member of the organization over the past 35 years, as NHA has grown and extended its policy priorities beyond the NEH.

Political science has long been one of the key fields that benefits from the existence of the NEH and the other funding streams that NHA advocates for. Indeed, NEH's founding legislation explicitly mandates support for "those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods" (National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act). As many political scientists are aware, NEH funding often supports research on political theory: recent grants, for example, have been awarded to Peter Ahrens Dorf to study Homer and the history of political philosophy¹ and to Lorraine Smith Pangle to study the moral foundations of Aristotle's political philosophy.² Perhaps less well known is that NEH also awards research support to comparative and international relations projects. Recent examples in those fields include an award to Mary Alice Haddad to study environmental advocacy strategies in East Asia³ and one to Jacques Hymans for a study of the international politics of sovereign recognition focused on the recognition of Japan's sovereignty at the end of the nineteenth century.⁴ Both of these projects were funded through the NEH's Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan, a joint endeavor between NEH and the Japan–United States Friendship Commission. Other political scientists receive support under NEH's Collaborative Research Grants, which fund an array of interpretive humanities projects. Political scientist grantees Daniel Tichenor and Robin Dale Jacobson, for example, will work together, along with sociologist Elizabeth Durden, to research state policies and attitudes toward immigration in Virginia, Maryland, New Mexico, and Arizona.⁵

NEH's support of political scientists, meanwhile, extends beyond research. Several political scientists have been recipients of the "Enduring Questions" grant line, which supported faculty members in developing courses that address a "fundamental concern

of human life addressed by the humanities" (Enduring Questions Corner, n.d.). Of the cohort of Enduring Questions grantees announced in March 2016, three of the twenty awards went to political scientists who will be developing courses on freedom, political community, and the nature of ambition, respectively.⁶ Grantee Robin Turner's course "What is Freedom?" will be integrated into Butler University's core curriculum, and she and her collaborators will share their experiences developing and teaching the course through workshops and academic presentations.⁷ A new Humanities Connections grant competition similarly supports course development, with a focus on collaboration across departments and courses that include undergraduate research, civic engagement, project-based learning, or other high-impact student engagement activities (Humanities Connections, n.d.). The Summer Seminars and Institutes for School Teachers, meanwhile, supports faculty interested in providing professional development for K–12 teachers. In the summer of 2015, William Harris, of the University of Pennsylvania, and John Hale, of the Center for Civic Education, directed a seminar on "Political and Constitutional Theory for Citizens," bringing on prominent constitutional scholars as faculty for the institute.⁸

Equally important is funding NEH awards to projects that preserve and enhance access to primary sources crucial to the work of political scientists—whether for the storage of the senatorial papers of Joe Biden⁹ or the creation of a documentary history of the ratification of the Constitution and adoption of the Bill of Rights.¹⁰ The latter has received funding not only from NEH, but also from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a division of the National Archives, for which NHA also advocates for funding.

Finally, NEH Chairman Bro Adams' signature initiative, the Common Good, launched in 2015, "seeks to bring the humanities into the public square and foster innovative ways to make scholarship relevant to contemporary issues" (About the Common Good, n.d.). The implementation of this initiative has led to further grant opportunities relevant to political scientists. For those interested in engaging a broader public in questions of civic and political concern, a new "community conversations" grant supports "community-wide public discussions in which diverse residents creatively address community challenges, guided by the perspectives of the humanities" (Chapin 2016).

One of NHA's other top funding priorities is the Department of Education's Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs, which support international education and foreign language study. These programs equally benefit those on the humanistic and social scientific side of the discipline with research interests that extend to other parts of the world and require foreign language skills. FLAS fellowships, which fall under Title VI funding, support both undergraduates and graduate students in acquiring proficiency

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in modern foreign languages. Title VI funding also goes to on-campus area studies centers, which offer a venue for political scientist to work across disciplines with their area-studies colleagues. Fulbright-Hays, meanwhile, provides dissertation support for graduate students across the humanities and social sciences conducting research abroad.

Ongoing advocacy for these programs is essential: while they are small, they often come under attack during the yearly appropriations process. NHA focuses year-round on building relationships in the executive and legislative branches of the government to promote NEH, NHPRC, Title VI, and Fulbright-Hays, along with other funding streams that benefit the humanities community. It also facilitates advocacy of its members and broad network of advocates by keeping them apprised of funding developments, organizing a yearly Humanities Advocacy Day, and issuing action alerts when a high volume of constituent letters promises to sway congressional opinions on a pressing legislative issue. APSA's collaboration with NHA and APSA members' support play a key role in promoting strong funding for the humanities and the continuation of programs that sustain diverse research projects across political science. ■

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NOTES

1. Grant number FA-231864-16.
2. Grant number FA-232901-16.
3. Grant number FO-50251-15.
4. Grant number FO-50243-15.
5. Grant Number RZ-249870-16. See also ohc.uoregon.edu/tichenor.html and <http://www.politicalsciencenow.com/neh-grant-recipient-daniel-tichenor-shares-research-on-immigration/>.
6. Grant Numbers AQ-248191-16, AQ-248179-16, AQ-248195-16.
7. Grant Number AQ-248191-16. See also <http://www.politicalsciencenow.com/meet-neh-grant-recipient-robin-turner/>.
8. Grant number ES-50587-14.
9. Grant number PW-51259-12.
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