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**Fields of Scholarship**

Well over 100 congressmen have sponsored bills to establish a national foundation to support the humanities and the arts. The bills differ in some important respects, but in general they propose establishment of a new foundation, very similar to the National Science Foundation, that would support the humanities through grants, loans, scholarships, fellowships, and similar devices, and would support the performing and other arts, through matching grants to the states, by assisting nonprofit groups in the arts to produce or display meritorious artistic work that cannot be supported in other ways, and by related means. House and Senate committees have started to hold hearings on these bills, and the President and an array of executive agency leaders have spoken in their favor. Thus it would now seem to be a good working assumption that some such legislation will be enacted. The unexpected speed of action gives urgency to the problem of deciding upon the form of organization that will best serve higher education generally, as well as the fields directly concerned.

Science has benefited greatly from government support, but one unfortunate, and quite unintended, outcome of the methods used (a variety of federal agencies, each relying primarily upon individual project grants, and each often dealing directly with individual investigators) has been to encourage a shift in faculty loyalties away from the university and toward the government agencies and the organizations that serve individual fields of science. Although federal assistance to the humanities and the arts appears to be desirable, it seems likely that a new foundation to support work in these fields would be an additional move in the direction of separating the several fields of scholarship and would further erode the responsibilities of universities as integrated institutions.

One means of reversing this trend would be for the government to support all fields of university scholarship through a single foundation. This is not the intent of the proposed legislation, and there will surely be vigorous objections to the suggestions. Some scientists would not want the NSF to be "diluted" by being required to attend to all fields of scholarship. And some humanists would prefer even a small foundation of their own to being low man on the totem pole in a foundation devoted to the sciences and the humanities. Nevertheless, the sciences and the humanities are both parts of "the seamless web of learning" and, administratively, there are sufficient similarities in the problems of supporting scholarly work in all fields, and sufficient differences between these problems and those of supporting a community orchestra, an art gallery, or a ballet, to suggest that the humanities belong with the sciences rather than with the performing and exhibition arts. Grants to universities, publication of results so that they become available to all workers in the field, close relations with teaching—these features characterize scholarly work in philosophy and history as well as in physics and physiology.

Plurality of support has advantages, and clearly there will continue to be a number of federal agencies that support work in the nation's universities. But if the federal government is now prepared to support scholarly work in the humanities as it does in the sciences, there is an opportunity that did not exist when the NSF was established: to create an agency to foster advanced scholarship and education of high quality, not by segments but in their totality.—DAEL WOLFLE