



President

The [American Council of Learned Societies](#) (ACLS) seeks an energetic, charismatic, and creative leader to serve as President. In 2019, ACLS will observe its centennial, affording the opportunity to celebrate its many accomplishments while looking ahead to an exciting future. At this momentous time, ACLS seeks a President with the drive, agility, and insight to build on its legacy and move it to higher levels of impact, innovation, and distinction. To celebrate the centennial, a \$125M Centennial Celebration campaign will be publicly launched in early 2019.

Building on the exceptional work of outgoing President [Pauline Yu](#), the next President will join ACLS during an unprecedented time as scholars in the humanities and social sciences face increasing pressure to justify their work while seeking to embrace innumerable opportunities to engage with interdisciplinary studies and new technologies in research. As the leading private funder of scholars in the humanities and related social sciences at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels, ACLS has a sterling reputation and plays an indispensable role in academia. It is well suited for a leader with deep academic credentials and a passion for supporting, advancing, and advocating for these fields of study, since the new President will be charged with further expanding resources while deepening and widening the scope of fellowships awarded, supporting the creation and development of new fields of intellectual inquiry, and advocating for the importance of the humanities and social sciences both nationally and internationally.

Introduction

In 1919, the year that the ACLS was founded, the biggest challenge facing the academic humanities was securing a place in the research culture that had emerged only recently in U.S. higher education. Today, with increased stratification and inequality within higher education and society broadly, ACLS sees the new challenge as assuring that the values and cultural power of the humanities and related social sciences remain a common wealth available to many, both domestically and abroad. Although the specific priorities may have shifted over time, for a century ACLS has followed the mission of pursuing “the advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and the social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies.” ACLS also sees the humanities and social sciences not merely as academic disciplines confined to universities and colleges but as functioning components of society that affect the lives and well-being of the entire population, and thus the organization advocates for these fields both inside and outside of academia.

About ACLS

Formed a century ago to represent the United States in the [International Union of Academies](#), ACLS is now a nonprofit federation of 75 scholarly organizations with a \$140M endowment and a \$35M operating budget. As the preeminent representative of American scholarship in the humanities and related social sciences, ACLS adheres to the core belief that knowledge is a public good. As such, ACLS strives to promote the circulation of humanistic knowledge throughout society. In addition to stewarding and representing its member organizations, ACLS fulfills this mission through granting fellowships in support of humanities and social science research and through far-reaching advocacy and support of service.

Support for Scholarship

Awarding peer-reviewed fellowships is central to ACLS's work. In the 2017-2018 competition year, ACLS awarded over \$24M to 350 scholars worldwide. The humanities and related social sciences fields that are eligible to receive funding from ACLS include, but are not limited to: American studies; anthropology; archaeology; art history and architectural history; classics; economics; ethnic studies; film; gender studies; geography; history; languages and literatures; legal studies; linguistics; musicology; philosophy; political science; psychology; religious studies; rhetoric, communication, and media studies; science and technology studies; sociology; and theater, dance, and performance studies. Proposals in interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary fields are also considered. Across these fields, ACLS fellows and grantees are engaged in creating new knowledge that benefits our understanding of the world.

ACLS fellowship and grant programs cover the entire arc of the scholarly career, from advanced graduate study through emeritus professorships, and include independent scholars and scholars who work outside of the academy as well. Some programs focus on particular career stages such as dissertation research or the years immediately post-tenure; others, including the endowment-funded ACLS fellowships, are broadly open. Programs may focus on particular methods, such as digital or collaborative research; particular subjects, such as art history or studies of religion; or particular sectors, such as community colleges or liberal arts colleges. All ACLS programs make awards on the basis of rigorous peer review, a process that requires recruiting a significant cohort of expert reviewers each year.

Strengthening Scholarly Societies

The [75 learned societies](#) that are constituent members of ACLS are independent, not-for-profit, national and international organizations in the humanities and related social sciences. Each society is concerned with a distinct field of study, from African Studies to World History, but all are involved in the promotion of research, scholarly publication, and education. Societies publish work in their disciplines; hold conferences at which members present and discuss research, teaching, and professional issues; and circulate their own newsletters, magazines, and academic journals, most of which operate under the system of peer review. The societies also function as the professional organization for their members, serve as forums to discuss matters of interest to their constituents, and set professional and scholarly standards.

The executive directors of the member societies meet together as the [Conference of Executive Officers](#) (CEO). These meetings, held since 1925, have the goals of promoting connections and collaboration between the members of various societies to discuss the activities of their organizations and to address the common issues faced by their societies. Recent conferences have hosted sessions on topics such as "Learned Societies and Public Controversies," which focused on the policies that guide societies in deciding what issues fall within their mandate, and "Learned Societies and Evolving Definitions of Scholarship," which considered new forms of scholarship that fall outside traditional evaluation protocols based on print books and articles.

Beyond its constituent membership, ACLS offers two other categories of membership: associate and affiliate membership. Today, more than 200 universities, colleges, research libraries, and other scholarly institutions endorse ACLS through associate membership. Affiliate membership is held by a number of additional organizations and institutions whose goals and purposes are closely linked to those of ACLS. Affiliate members serve to increase the community and the effectiveness of those actively working on behalf of the humanities under the ACLS umbrella. Both associate and affiliate members are invited to send representatives to annual meetings and receive copies of all major ACLS publications.

Advocacy and Service

Just over fifty years ago, ACLS co-sponsored the Commission on the Humanities, whose 1964 report helped convince Congress to create the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The report noted the importance of not seeing the humanities as solely academic in nature, but as a set of disciplines that contributes to society and affects lives. ACLS is committed to expanding the humanities' presence and recognition outside of the classroom and advocates for continued governmental funding of entities such as the NEH, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Historic Publications and Records Commission.

Through the [Mellon/ACLS Public Fellows Program](#), ACLS has placed nearly 150 humanities PhDs in careers in government and nonprofit organizations, where their expertise can serve the public. This year, ACLS again partnered with [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) to launch a new fellowship program, [The Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellowships](#). This program deepens ACLS's commitment to extending the reach of its programs to humanities scholars from a broader range of institutions, and the program plans to fund up to 26 scholars in the 2018-2019 year. Additionally, ACLS is piloting another program in partnership with The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Inspired by the Public Fellows Program, the [Mellon/ACLS Scholars & Society Fellowships](#) will place fellows at nonprofit and government organizations to engage significant societal questions in their research, serve as ambassadors for humanities scholarship beyond the academy, and deepen their support for doctoral curricular innovation.

Pioneering Work

ACLS has taken the lead on a number of initiatives central to the advancement of humanistic inquiry both in the United States and around the world. Specifically, ACLS has been a leader in developing new areas of study, adapting and advocating for the use of new technologies, addressing the challenges faced in scholarly publication, and connecting with the global community of scholars.

New Fields of Study

By organizing committees of academically accomplished and innovative scholars, ACLS has been a leader in identifying new and promising fields of study. In fact, the development of area studies generally in the United States owes much to the impetus provided by ACLS, which first conceptualized this idea through its early work in Far Eastern and Slavic studies and language training. The organization's ability to bring a wide variety of humanists and social scientists together in interdisciplinary work made it possible to launch area studies and sustain them over time. In the mid-twentieth century, ACLS partnered with the Social Science Research Council to organize and develop African, Asian, Latin American, Near and Middle Eastern, Russian/Soviet, and East and West European studies. ACLS also played roles in establishing the Committee on Research in Native American Languages, the Committee on Founding a Journal of Medieval Studies, and the Committee on the History of Ideas, among others. Many of the fields of study encouraged by ACLS have reshaped our understanding of the eras, peoples, and subjects they explore.

New Technologies

As early as 1964, ACLS developed a program of grants and fellowships designed to encourage new and significant use of computers in humanistic research. The effort to help scholars explore the impact of new technologies on their fields continues today through the [ACLS Digital Extension Fellowship](#), funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Funds are provided to enhance and extend the reach of established digital projects by, for example, diversifying content or developing systems to make content more broadly available. ACLS's support promotes inter-institutional collaborations, new forms of and sites for training, new modes of engaging with projects, and new methods of making project content available.

Scholarly Publication

ACLS has a continuing interest in addressing challenges faced in scholarly publication. In the past, ACLS conducted surveys, advised scholars, and carefully evaluated aspects of the publication and dissemination of humanistic scholarship. As a result of this work, ACLS operated an Office of Scholarly Communication and Technology in Washington, D.C. until 1984.

Created in 1999, the [ACLS Humanities E-Book](#) (HEB) is an online collection of more than 5,000 humanities books, including digitized versions of already-published titles and a select list of new, "born digital" titles. These titles are offered by ACLS in collaboration with [31 learned societies](#), more than 100 contributing publishers, and the Michigan Publishing division of the University of Michigan Library. The result is a collection of works of major importance, recommended and reviewed by scholars, that remains vital and is frequently cited. ACLS also has commissioned major scholarly reference works, including the [American National Biography](#), which is continuously renewed online and in print.

International

While continuing to represent the United States in the International Union of Academies, ACLS has been active in broader international scholarship. ACLS helped found the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, the agency that administers the Senior Fulbright Program. In 1992, ACLS was asked by the United States Information Agency to reinstitute the Fulbright Program in Vietnam. In recent years, ACLS has extended its support of research to scholars in the former USSR through the [ACLS Humanities Program in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine](#) and in Africa through the [African Humanities Program](#). Additionally, ACLS has helped administer the global competitions of [The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Program in Buddhist Studies](#).

Structure and Governance

Staffing and Location

ACLS employs 27 full-time and one part-time staff members in a variety of departments, including Fellowship and Public Programs; International Programs; Philanthropy; ACLS Humanities E-Book; Finance and Administration; and Web and Information Systems, in addition to the Offices of the President and Vice President. There are plans to add four additional FTE positions during the 2018-2019 fiscal year as well. The ACLS offices are in New York City on Third Avenue between 40th and 41st streets.

The Current President

Pauline Yu has served as President of the American Council of Learned Societies since July 2003. A nationally recognized higher education leader, President Yu previously served as dean of humanities in the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Los Angeles and as founding chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of California, Irvine. President Yu received her BA in history and literature from Harvard University, her MA and PhD in comparative literature from Stanford University, and is the author or editor of five books and dozens of articles on classical Chinese poetry, literary theory, comparative poetics, and issues in the humanities. President Yu has also received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. She was awarded the Modern Language Association's [William Riley Parker Prize](#) for the best *PMLA* article of 2007. She regularly speaks all over the world on the importance of the humanities and social sciences.

President Yu is a fellow and member of the board of the [American Academy of Arts and Sciences](#) and a member of the [American Philosophical Society](#) and [Committee of 100](#). She serves on the Board of Directors of the [Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange](#), The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, and [The Teagle Foundation](#). In addition, she is a trustee of the [American Academy in Berlin](#) and the [National Humanities Center](#). She is also a member of the Governing Board of the [Heyman Center for the Humanities](#) at Columbia University and the Board of Governors of the [Hong Kong-America Center](#). President Yu holds five honorary degrees and is a senior research scholar at Columbia University. In 2017, President Yu announced her plan to retire on June 30, 2019, ensuring a smooth and orderly transition.

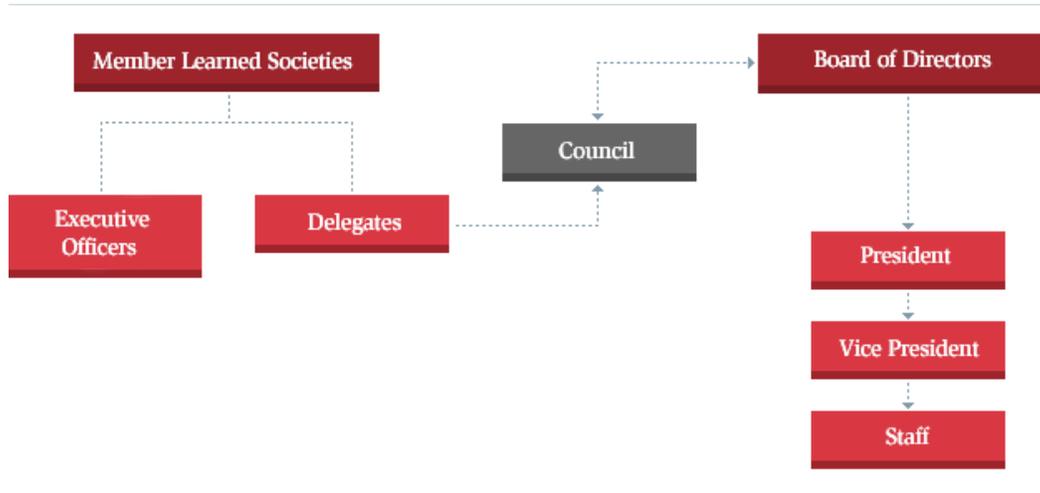
Governance

The [Board of Directors](#) is responsible for the control and management of the affairs and funds of the Council. The Council is defined in the ACLS Constitution as a Board of Directors of up to 20 elected members and one [Delegate](#) from each constituent society. Selected by their societies, ACLS Delegates serve four-year terms.

The Council holds an annual meeting, elects officers and members of the Board of Directors, provides general and fiscal oversight, and admits new members. Working with the President, the Board of Directors establishes overall direction and policy, allocates funds, oversees investments, and reports on all major decisions to the constituent societies.

The principal administrator from each of the constituent learned societies serves as a member of the Conference of Executive Officers. The CEO elects a seven-member Executive Committee of the Conference of Executive Officers, whose chair serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Directors. The Delegates also elect an Executive Committee, whose chair serves as an ex officio member of the Board of Directors.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the President manages four direct reports: Vice President and Chief Operating Officer; Director of Member Relations; Director of Philanthropy; and Executive Assistant. The President also indirectly oversees the departments of Finance, Fellowship Programs, Public Programs, International Programs, Web and Information Systems, and the Humanities E-Book.



The Next President

ACLS’s next President has the unparalleled opportunity to lead an organization and influence the future direction of the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Working with a strong board and dedicated staff, the President will steward ACLS into its second century, maintaining its tradition of support and advocacy for scholars in humanities fields while also expanding the organization’s audience and engaging actively in the public sphere.

Opportunities and Challenges

Charged with fulfilling ACLS’s mission of advancing the humanities and related social sciences, the President is responsible for publishing statements on issues of concern and speaking widely to advocate for these fields. Additionally, the next President will:

- **Champion the humanities and humanistic social sciences broadly:** The next President will continue Pauline Yu’s leadership by speaking broadly, domestically and internationally, on topics vital to scholarship and the academy today. S/he will ensure that ACLS continues and expands its publication of reports on relevant areas of interest, statements on issues of concern, and recommendations for scholars in the fields. The President will leverage the bully pulpit provided by the role to engage with individuals in an ever-wider range of disciplines and explore deepening engagement with those outside of academia as well.
- **Diversify and expand ACLS’s fellowship programs:** ACLS continues to be the leading private institution supporting scholars in the humanities and related social sciences at both the doctoral and postdoctoral levels. The next President will continue this legacy by working with the staff to evaluate each fellowship program for its enduring relevancy, expand the number of fellowships awarded, and ensure that a diversity of academic fields is represented across fellowships. The President will also promote diversity among the fellows themselves, in terms of their personal backgrounds and their institutional experiences.

- **Grow resources through foundational, individual, and other philanthropic efforts:** ACLS enjoys long-standing relationships with many high-profile foundations that support and enable the organization's work. While maintaining and enhancing these relationships is essential, the next President will also diversify revenue streams through efforts such as building new foundational relationships and expanding the individual donor base for the organization. The President will join shortly after the public launch of an unprecedented \$125M campaign and will manage the campaign's successful execution.
- **Create and execute a strategic plan for ACLS's near and long-term future:** In collaboration with the board, members, staff, and other constituencies, the next President will create and execute a strategic plan to promote the organization's relevance and ensure success for its next century. The President will make certain that the plan is created inclusively and delineates lofty yet obtainable goals for both the near and long term.
- **Steward ACLS's member societies:** In close collaboration with the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, the President will ensure that the work of ACLS supports member societies and advocates actively for their collective interests. S/he will also encourage and support the strengthening of their operational capacities, mutual collaboration, and the development of new synergies between society priorities and ACLS programming.

Qualifications and Personal Characteristics

The right leader for ACLS will demonstrate a passion for the humanities and related social sciences and will possess broad managerial experience. In order to successfully move ACLS forward into its second century, the following experiences and personal characteristics will be essential. The next President of ACLS will ideally:

- Be a public intellectual, able to work closely with ACLS members and those engaged in the humanities and related social sciences;
- Possess a PhD in the humanities or a related social science field along with a deep publication and/or research record;
- Exhibit firsthand knowledge of the academy, preferably from holding a leadership position;
- Show proven administrative ability to lead an organization;
- Bring experience in and enthusiasm for fundraising from multiple constituencies;
- Have experience and interest in traveling frequently and speaking widely on behalf of the humanities and related social sciences;
- Maintain a broad awareness of the conditions shaping scholarship and education today and in the future;
- Value diversity and demonstrate passion around creating and supporting inclusive and welcoming environments for all individuals;
- Communicate, verbally and in writing, in an articulate, inspiring, and transparent manner with all constituencies;
- Believe in the robustness of the humanities and its essential place in our civic life;
- Be actively involved in a professional society or multiple societies; and,
- Demonstrate deep intellectual curiosity, exquisite interpersonal skills, and an energizing, inclusive disposition.

For additional information, please visit ACLS's homepage at <https://www.acls.org>. Candidates should anticipate a July 1, 2019 start date. For best consideration, please send all nominations and applications, electronically and in confidence, to:

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ACLS is an equal opportunity employer.