



STATEMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL COMMITMENTS

November 21, 2016

To the ACLS Community:

Three days after the presidential election, I attended the National Humanities Conference, organized in Salt Lake City by the National Humanities Alliance and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. The formal agenda of that meeting was set many months ago, but, unsurprisingly, there were many lively discussions of the state of our nation, its place in the world, and our hopes for its future.

Now is an appropriate moment to remind ourselves of our fundamental commitments and to reassert some of the essential premises of the humanities. These include:

- Maintaining the pursuit of free inquiry with scholarly rigor.
- Offering the greatest possible opportunity for students and the public to participate in and benefit from that inquiry.
- Engaging the many communities that make up our nation and the world in studying and valuing the cultural diversity of all of humanity.

For 97 years, the American Council of Learned Societies has worked to advance those humanistic values so important to a democracy. These are principles that have been broadly shared in our country: a framed copy of our Congressional Charter, signed by Ronald Reagan, Strom Thurmond, and Tip O'Neill, graces my office wall. I want to assure you that we will continue to strive to advance knowledge in the humanities and to broaden their public presence, vital as they are to the lives and well-being of all our fellow citizens. ACLS will continue to speak forcefully in advocating for the humanities and the institutions that support them.

Some of our member societies have presented thoughtful statements reaffirming their commitment to humanistic values. We have collected these statements [here](#), and I encourage you to read them.

I look forward to working with all of you toward our shared goals.

Sincerely,

Pauline Yu