



ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

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STATEMENT ON AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS & SCIENCES REPORT:

“THE HEART OF THE MATTER: THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES”

Following is a statement by Hunter Rawlings, President of the [Association of American Universities](#), on the report issued today by the [American Academy of Arts & Sciences](#): “The Heart of the Matter: The Humanities and Social Sciences.” Rawlings served as a member of the Academy’s [Commission on the Humanities & Social Sciences](#), which wrote the report. The study was requested by Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Mark Warner (D-VA) and Representatives Tom Petri (R-WI) and David Price (D-NC).

This report is a call to action for our nation, the states, and the philanthropic community to invest greater time, resources, and energy in research and education in the humanities and social sciences.

The role of these disciplines in education at all levels is critical. In particular, the rich tradition of an American postsecondary education, which so many other countries are seeking to replicate, is predicated on the notion that the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences collectively produce well-rounded graduates capable of being active citizens of their communities and country, of understanding diverse cultures, and of contributing to the 21st century workforce.

The humanities and social sciences strengthen our society, but they are increasingly undervalued and underfunded. In the long run, this trend will weaken our culture, economy, and quality of life. This report invites stakeholders across all sectors to collaborate in meaningful ways to advance these fields and to create new opportunities for their development. Philanthropists, states, and the federal government should not only increase funding for education and research in these areas but also encourage scholars in these disciplines to address many of the “Grand Challenges” facing our nation.

Research universities play a vital role in these efforts. AAU institutions graduate nearly 62% of all doctorates in the humanities and 60% in the social sciences. Our universities must do more to communicate the importance of their innovative research in these fields. Equally important is our role in educating our undergraduates to be global citizens. As universities we must defend the value of a broad-based and integrative model of higher education. Students, parents, governors, and legislators alike need to be reminded that broad-based critical thinking and education are important attributes valued by most employers.

We agree with the three overarching goals of the report – a citizenry educated for the 21st century; a stronger, more innovative and competitive society; and a nation equipped for leadership in an interconnected world. We look forward to working with the Commission to share its recommendations with our institutions, policymakers, and other important stakeholders.

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