

Position and Candidate Specification



National Humanities Center

President

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The National Humanities Center is one of the world's leading institutes for advanced study and the only one dedicated exclusively to the humanities. It provides a national focus for the best work in the liberal arts, drawing attention to the enduring value of ancient and modern history, language and literature, ethical and moral reflection, artistic and cultural traditions, and critical thought in every area of humanistic investigation. By encouraging excellence in scholarship and teaching, the Center seeks to ensure the continuing strength of the liberal arts and to affirm the importance of the humanities in American life.

The National Humanities Center was formed in the mid-1970s by classicist Gregory Vlastos of Princeton University, medievalist Morton Bloomfield of Harvard University, and literary scholar M. H. Abrams of Cornell University. All three had been in residence at the Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Sciences in Stanford, CA, in the mid-1960s, where they became convinced that the humanities needed a similar center dedicated to the needs of humanists. They persuaded the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to become involved as well as the American Council of Learned Societies, then under the leadership of Frederick Burkhardt. Planning groups were formed including, at one time or another, such notable figures as Robert Goheen, Daniel Bell, Lionel Trilling, Henry Nash Smith, Hannah Arendt, and Steven Marcus.

The Center opened for its first group of Fellows in the fall of 1978 under the leadership of philosopher Charles Frankel, the Center's founding director. Frankel was succeeded by William Bennett, who served briefly before becoming the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the Reagan administration; Charles Blitzer, who went on to lead the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; W. Robert Connor, who subsequently led the Teagle Foundation for many years; Mr. Connor was followed by literary scholar Geoffrey Harpham; and most recently, Robert D. Newman, a past dean of humanities and former AVP for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Utah.

For over 40 years, the National Humanities Center has sparked humanistic scholarship by providing a cohort of 35 to 40 Fellows a year with optimal conditions for free and creative inquiry. Those fellows have:

- Produced over 1,600 books as well as countless essays, articles, and other works.
- Won or been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the MacArthur Fellowship, the Pulitzer Prize, the Bancroft Prize, and many others.
- Over 100 former Fellows have been made members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, many have become presidents of major learned societies in the United States and other nations, and many more are recognized as leading scholars in their fields.

The National Humanities Center is distinctive in its commitment to linking scholarship to improved teaching. Every year, millions of visitors access the Center's free, online primary source archives and teaching guides, which include hundreds of historical documents, literary texts, works of art and classroom resources. The Center also offers teachers a variety of opportunities for professional development focused on increasing content knowledge and learning about best pedagogical practices through active engagement with distinguished scholars and other educators.

The Center acts as a forum for increasing public understanding and appreciation for the humanities. This work includes a variety of digital initiatives such as Humanities Moments (an effort to gather and disseminate personal accounts of the humanities' impact) and Humanities in Action (a website focused on contextualizing current issues through a humanistic lens). The Center also produces two podcast series, Discovery & Inspiration and Nerds in the Woods, highlighting the work of Center scholars and the ways the humanities deepen our understanding of the world.

The Center also hosts a rich schedule of community-engaged outreach. For example, the Being Human Humanities Festival, and the National Humanities Leadership Council for undergraduate students. The Center also regularly welcomes leading figures from the arts, humanities and sciences for public talks and hosts conferences and symposia on a variety of important topics.

The National Humanities Center is located in Research Triangle Park (RTP) situated between Raleigh, Durham, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Center is governed by a distinguished board of trustees from academic, professional, and public life. It is a privately incorporated nonprofit institute with an annual budget of approximately \$5.4 million. The Center is supported through a combination of grants and contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, universities, and other institutions, as well as income from the Center's endowment.

For more information on the National Humanities Center, please visit: <https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/>.

The President is the chief executive of the Center and is responsible for all of its programs, facilities, and initiatives. Working in partnership with the Board of Trustees, the President provides the intellectual leadership and vision for advancing the Center's scholarly mission, programming, and educational outreach, as well as encouraging vibrant public engagement with, and national advocacy for, the humanities. As the chief spokesperson and advocate for the Center, the President must be a talented and capable fundraiser with the capacity to meaningfully expand the organization's base of philanthropic support. The Center has approximately 30 professional staff and an endowment exceeding \$80 million.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to	Board of Trustees
Direct reports	Vice President for Institutional Advancement Vice President for Library and Digital Services Vice President for Operations and Chief Financial Officer Vice President for Scholarly Programs Executive Assistant to the President and Director
Other key relationships	Current and prospective donors, supporters, and partners Current and former Fellows National Humanities Leadership Council Teacher Advisory Council

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- A bold, expansive vision for the future of the National Humanities Center that promotes understanding of the humanities and advocates for their foundational role in a democratic society.
- Sustained commitment to rigorous scholarship and an exceptional Fellowship program that attracts and supports a diverse, global cohort of scholars.
- Continued investment in an entrepreneurial and innovative public engagement program, broadening the reach of the Center and its capacity to advance the humanities.
- Engaged and aligned Board leadership with broad, sector-wide representation.
- Motivated and inspired staff at all levels, working in collaborative pursuit of the organization's inspiring and relevant mission.
- Strong financial position with diversified and long-term means of raising support for specific initiatives and the Center's endowment.
- Increased recognition and visibility of the Center's standing as a leader in addressing contemporary concerns through humanistic thinking.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Organizational Leadership

Has provided visionary and executive leadership to support an organization's progress, raise its profile and elevate its impact.

Inspiring Advocate and Spokesperson

A compelling advocate for the Center with exceptional written and verbal communication skills and the ability to work across traditional and new media to connect effectively with a wide range of audiences (staff, donors, community partners, current and prospective Fellows, etc.).

Subject Matter Expertise

The President will have deep experience with the humanities and humanistic study, with expertise and commitment to curiosity and engaging in the public discourse. Ph.D. or comparable training preferred.

Commitment to Inclusivity and Excellence

Has had meaningful impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion within a complex organization serving a large and varied set of stakeholders.

Fundraising Record

A background in philanthropy with significant experience soliciting major gifts and the ability to diversify a funding base.

CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

Strategic and Visionary Leadership

The President will partner with the Board to create and execute a strategy that:

- Articulates a vision and direction for the Center that engages and energizes current and potential supporters, partners, and audiences.
- Defines the opportunities for increased impact in the public discourse on the current and future state of the humanities.
- Ensures the continued rigor of the Fellowship program and its relevance as a destination for public humanists.
- Builds on an exceptionally strong and stable foundation to take the organization to the next level of influence and distinction.
- Provides clear direction for the changes necessary to execute the strategy, including actionable and measurable goals for individuals and departments.

Leading People

The President will have demonstrated the ability to develop, support, and maintain a strong and cohesive staff as well as an inclusive institutional culture by:

- Being visible and accessible to staff members at all levels of the organization, creating a sense of engagement and presence.
- Systematically building support and ongoing partnerships at multiple levels, including between the Board and staff.
- Engaging the team in discussions around the longer-term strategy and encouraging their ideas and active contribution.
- Reinforcing systems and structures to promote frequent and open communication and collaboration among internal team members.

Collaborating and Influencing

The President will establish clear priorities to drive continued impact for the Center by:

- Serving as an intellectual thought leader and advocate, persuasively making the case for the humanities and their relevance for society today.
- Creatively and strategically forging new partnerships and collaboration to achieve the organization's mission.
- Expanding the base of philanthropic supporters and champions of the Center to increase endowment and its capacity to invest in current and future initiatives.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

The National Humanities Center has retained Spencer Stuart to support this national search. If you wish to submit your own application materials or nominate someone to serve as the next President, please send an e-mail message with supporting materials to NHCPresident@SpencerStuart.com.

The National Humanities Center is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, disability status, protected veteran status or any other basis protected by law.