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**Report to the Council**

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**Pauline Yu  
President, American Council of Learned Societies**

Bonjour, chers collègues, et bienvenue à Montréal! It is a pleasure to address this, the first Annual Meeting of the ACLS to take place outside of the United States. I want to thank Tourisme Montréal for all they have done to make this meeting possible. We feel very welcome, not the least because so many Canadian colleagues, including especially the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, have been so warmly encouraging of our plans to meet here. I know you join me in looking forward to hearing from Noreen Golfman, the Federation's president, later today.

We can hope that meeting outside the US will give us a different vantage point, a more synoptic view of the situation of ACLS and of the academic humanities in our own nation and in the world. We might even aspire to gain the perspective of Montréal resident and former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who is said to have observed, "My life is one long curve, full of turning points." While his statement is something of a geometrical mind-bender, it does suggest some value to seeing both the long arc and the points within it.

Since we are meeting in the Cartier Room, perhaps explorer Jacques Cartier can help us take this long view. In the year 1536, he sailed up the St. Lawrence River as far as Montréal, but was stopped by a cataract of rapids near where we meet. The Europeans named these rapids "La Chine," in the firm expectation that China, with all its silken wealth, lay not far beyond. The oncoming winter obliged Monsieur Cartier to turn back, but he planned the next summer to sail through to Cathay.

Although he never made it, this story should remind us that the acceleration of economic, cultural and political connectedness across world regions—what we loosely call "globalization"—is by no means a new phenomenon, whether you are looking at Asia in the eighth century or Europe in the eighteenth. But there is no question, of course, that both the pace of these changes and their center of gravity have shifted. We find ourselves in an era when the three most common words in American retailing are no longer "new and improved" but instead "made in China." Even Major League Baseball is being transformed: who would have imagined, a decade or so ago, that when the New York Yankees faced their arch-rival Boston Red Sox, the pitching match-up could well be Daisuke Matsuzaka from Japan vs. Chien-ming Wang from Taiwan, or that their opening series might take place next year in Japan?

This afternoon, our panel will discuss the global academy. This morning I want to touch on how the policy currents surrounding the American academy are being shaped by reactions to the global economy. Here, I think it is not an overstatement to say that Jacques Cartier's dream has become something of a specter haunting American higher education.

A report issued last year by the National Academies, ominously titled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, notes that "Americans are feeling the gradual and subtle effects of globalization that challenge the economic and strategic leadership of the United States." Those effects include not just "direct competition for jobs with lower-wage workers around the globe" but competitors in high-wage fields "who live just a mouse-click away in Ireland, Finland, China, India. . . There is the concern that, in general, our undergraduates are not keeping up with those in other nations."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Commission on the Future of Higher Education appointed by US Education Secretary Spellings warned last fall that "a lot of other countries . . . are passing us by at a time when education is more important to our collective prosperity than ever. . . Post-secondary institutions," the Commission demands, must "adapt to a world altered . . . by globalization."<sup>2</sup>

If globalization is the specter, then what is to be done? These reports reinforce the public perception that the changing nature of the global economy is a threat requiring increased national and individual "competitiveness," giving power thereby to metaphors drawn from the market and their application to education. What should be the position of ACLS and of the academic humanities in these discussions?

I do not think that as educators we can dismiss the very real anxiety many feel about the economic future of our country and our children. We can, however, make the case that there is no better preparation for an ever-changing workplace than a genuinely liberal education, one that mandates a culture of continuous self-reflection and innovation. We can vindicate both liberal education and the humanistic study that is essential to it without diluting their complexity and rigor. We can assert that as the world becomes more complicated, the premium on the analytical, expressive and conceptual skills of liberally educated individuals will only increase. Education, knowledge of global cultures, and innovation are both our practice and our values.

Ironically enough, these values may in fact be more widely shared in Asia than in certain Washington circles. When Duke University's president Richard Brodhead took the now obligatory presidential trip to see alumni, potential donors and students in East Asia last summer, he heard a somewhat different concern from the one articulated in the reports I just mentioned. He encountered "another widespread worry, most loudly voiced in China. This is the fear that Asian higher education is long on discipline but short on creativity and that the very strengths of their system may prevent the fostering of a ver-

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1. Commission on Science, Engineering and Public Policy, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Economic Future* (Washington: National Academies Press, 2007) 1-2, 163. May 23, 2007. <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309100399/html>.

2. Report of the Commission Appointed by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, "A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education," September 2006, x, xi. May 18, 2007 <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/hiedfuture/reports/final-report.pdf>.

satire, innovative style of intelligence that may be the key to future economic advancement.”<sup>3</sup>

“Here is the paradox,” Brodhead wrote in *The Washington Post*: “The things that Americans tend to look to as Asia’s overwhelming educational strengths—a deeply ingrained work ethic and disciplined training in the elements of knowledge—are linked in Asian minds with secret weakness. They, too, look to higher education to create the mysterious ingredient that will guarantee success for their society. But they worry that we, not they, have the secret advantage.”<sup>4</sup> The cover story of *The New York Times Magazine* a month ago lends support to President Brodhead’s observation. Journalist Ann Hulbert profiled Chinese individuals and institutions who are convinced that “There is something in the American educational system that helps America hold its position in the world.” These reformers seek to cast off China’s “long tradition of rigidly hierarchical talent selection” and develop “global citizens” who exhibit “creativity, flexibility, initiative [and] leadership.”<sup>5</sup> And the magazine’s cover was festooned with facsimiles of handwritten slogans in the style of wall posters straight out of the Cultural Revolution: “Up with Fun and Freedom!” “Liberal-Arts Education Now!”

The humanities are an essential element of liberal education: education, let me repeat, not mere training. And genuine education depends on a teaching force that is itself continually educated. It depends, in other words, on faculty who are engaged in research. This theme is the focus of a White Paper completed this month by the ACLS Teagle Working Group. Titled “Student Learning and Faculty Research: Connecting Teaching and Scholarship,” it will soon be available on the websites of both the Teagle Foundation and the ACLS.

Our Working Group was one of several sponsored by the Teagle Foundation, which takes seriously both the ideals of liberal education and the tides of policy debate that may either erode or reinforce those ideals. The impetus for “assessment” is a wave that many, including the Spellings Commission, are riding. Blunt high-stakes testing—“no undergraduate left behind”—is one possible result of this approach. But how best to design assessments of educational effectiveness is a serious question, one which the Foundation invited a number of organizations to consider. The ACLS Working Group, which included liberal arts college faculty and leaders—like Ruth Solie, Delegate of the American Musicological Society, and Alison Byerly, Vice President for Academic Affairs at Middlebury College—as well as noted educational researchers, such as George Kuh of Indiana University, sought to combine a focus on student achievement with equal attention to the necessity of an intellectually active faculty. The Paper has essentially two components. The first part is a “manifesto” on the importance of the teacher-scholar as the engine of effective education. The second focuses on what education research does and does not tell us about the assertions of the manifesto.

The White Paper stakes an important claim about how to promote effective undergraduate learning. It posits that the teacher-scholar model of faculty professional activity brings benefits of great import to individual student learners, to the institutions where that model flourishes, and to society more broadly. There is good reason to think, the

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3. Richard H. Brodhead, “The U.S. Edge in Education,” *The Washington Post*, September 4, 2006, A19.

4. Brodhead, A19.

5. Ann Hulbert, “Re-Education,” *The New York Times Magazine*, April 1, 2007, 38-39.

Paper argues, that faculty will have the greatest impact on students when their teaching maintains lively connections with their role as expert scholars, and that they will perform better when their understanding of student learning outcomes feeds back into curriculum design and teaching strategies.

The authors regard the promotion of scholarship as a crucial part of the *teaching* mission of all institutions of higher learning, not as the province of research universities alone. And they argue that the model of critical inquiry presented by engaged scholars encourages students to begin the essential journey of knowing themselves and their world. Some of you might wonder why these arguments needed to be spelled out: aren't these truths all self-evident? Drawing from their own experience, our Working Group felt very strongly that a clear articulation of the case needed to be made, as emphatically as possible.

Many of you will recall John D'Arms's analysis of ACLS's roles as funder, convener, advocate and collaborator. The White Paper of our Teagle Working Group advocates for the support of faculty research as crucial to effective pedagogy and learning. As a funder, as you well know, ACLS seek to support the scholarly research career through an articulated and growing panoply of fellowships.

Saul Fisher's presentation earlier this morning sketched the significant increase in the scale and range of our programs. In 2003-04, my first year at ACLS, we awarded \$4.9 million in fellowship stipends to US-based scholars. This year that amount exceeds \$8.3 million. But that figure is only the most visible and quantifiable outcome of this process. Three other dimensions are equally important: the mobilization of the scholarly community as peer-reviewers, our partnership with the colleges and universities that are the professional homes of almost all fellows, and the acquisition of information—"data"—that can inform both ACLS and institutional policies.

Each year in my report to the Council, I salute the importance of peer-review, and this year will be no exception. (Why disappoint you?!) Peer-review is the keystone of the arch of scholarly self-governance and the foundation of academic freedom. That is the glory, but there is also of course the drudgery: peer-review is hard work. As Saul noted, the sum of all pages of all applications this year was more than 74,000. But that sum must be multiplied by eight, for almost all applications are read by that number of first and second-stage reviewers. In other words, the ACLS peer-review process required the dedication of more than 425 reviewers, who collectively read about 600,000 application pages. I do not know what we would do without this extraordinary and essentially voluntary labor on the part of our colleagues, or what the world's forests would do if we hadn't put the entire process online.

Just as our fellowship programs depend upon the active good citizenship of individual scholars serving as reviewers, we rely on a partnership with colleges and universities in a shared investment in the research enterprise that produces teacher-scholars. We must remember that the greatest financial support for humanities research in the United States in fact comes from those institutions. Almost all ACLS Fellows are receiving some support from them in addition to their stipends, such as sabbatical leave or tuition remission. In addition, the institutional Associates of ACLS—many represented here in Montréal—provide annual subscriptions to the Council. The 32-member research university consortium has helped us increase our fellowship endowment and, therefore, the

stipends we pay from it. When we convened the biennial meeting of representatives of the consortium institutions last February, the day's discussions were especially heartening to me, not only because of the wealth of experience generously shared, but particularly because the consortium representatives were clearly concerned with the health of the academic humanities as a whole, not just with the condition of their relatively prosperous institutions.

The growing scale of our fellowship programs should help grow our collective understanding of the dynamics of the scholarly career today. Those 74,000 application pages gathered in our fellowship competitions include an extraordinary amount of data that can help us understand more clearly and concisely such issues as time-to-degree, sequences of promotion and tenure, the frequency of scholarly publication, the patterns of membership in learned societies, and the distribution of institutional and extra-institutional financial support. To this end, Saul and his colleagues have developed survey instruments asking applicants to volunteer additional information that will be used (only in the aggregate) to analyze the context of our work.

As we develop this capacity, we will share its results with other funders of the academic humanities. When I met with the Board of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies earlier this year, they urged ACLS to help identify and publicize best practices in research support, especially as provided by universities and colleges. I would be interested to hear what you think of this idea.

I would like to pay tribute to our small but very robust Fellowships Office—Saul, Ann Gaylin, Cindy Mueller, Karen Matthews and Stephanie Feldman—who have carried out this expansion of our programs with efficiency and remarkably good cheer. And the expansion is not yet complete. Next year, our offerings will include the first competition for fellowships for Recent Recipients of the Ph.D., a postdoctoral competition open to those who completed their dissertations within the time specified in their applications to the first round of the Early Career Fellowships. These awards will be fully portable, but we are especially interested in exploring with the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes—whose incoming president is Srinivas Aravamudan, a speaker later this morning—how we might establish a clearing house of residential opportunities for Fellows at their centers.

Now, let me turn to the role of the humanities and ACLS in a transnational frame. Another recent report issued by the National Academies, entitled *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*, has addressed an important dimension of this topic at considerable length. While I cannot claim to have digested the entirety of this 300-plus-page document, I do know that it takes a laudably reasoned and long-term view on the question. It de-couples the necessity for building sustainable capacities for international and intercultural study from immediate policy concerns, stating that categorically long-term academic development cannot be driven by immediate strategic needs. As one of the authors of this report, Kenneth Prewitt, who will be speaking to us this afternoon, wisely put it at a press conference: 'You don't know what the critical language is going to be 20 years from now, and you need a reservoir.'<sup>6</sup>

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6. Sierra Millman, "Education Department Should Have High-Ranking Official to Oversee Foreign-Language Study, Report Says," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 28, 2007. May 18, 2007 <http://chronicle.com/daily/2007/03/2007032801n.htm?pg=dji>.

I would like to think that ACLS has understood the importance of both the international framework of scholarship and a sustained commitment to it, the building of reservoirs, from its very beginnings. When discussing our global role, I regularly point out that the founding purpose of ACLS in 1919 was to represent the United States in the Union Académique Internationale, many of whose own sponsored projects have required investments of several decades. I am very pleased, incidentally, that Jean-Luc De Paepe, the Secretary-General of the UAI, has joined us in Montréal today.

Soon after its founding, ACLS began to promote American understanding of global languages and cultures through the development of what later came to be known as area studies. The complex and compelling history of that work remains to be written, but this morning I would highlight one indicator of its success: engagement with the study of the world's civilizations is an integral and inextricable element of the humanities in America. If you review the titles of the research projects of those awarded ACLS fellowships—lists are included in your agenda books—you will see that at least one-quarter of the awards in the central and dissertation competitions are for subjects that lie outside of North America, Europe and the Mediterranean. And, as Ryskamp Fellow Amy Borovoy may tell us in the following panel, these lines of research are often reflexive: they aim not only to understand and interpret other cultures, but to transform our self-understanding through that new knowledge.

Our work would be only half-done, however, if it were limited to the support of American research on other cultures and societies. We can therefore be proud of the long ACLS involvement with formal mechanisms of international scholarly exchange. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our attention increasingly turns to building scholarly networks either alongside or through institutionalized structures.

We hope to reproduce or reenact what makes ACLS and its constituent societies so effective—the development of trans-institutional networks of intellectually active scholars, the formation of what are sometimes called “epistemic communities.” This has been the work of the Humanities Program in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine, led by Andrzej Tymowski. Since it began in 1998, the program has made over 600 awards totaling \$2.153 million, and has helped inspire the formation of a Regional Association of Humanists. I am very pleased to report that the evident success of this effort has prompted the Carnegie Corporation to ask ACLS to explore the possibility of developing a cognate program for Africa. I look forward to reporting on the progress of that initiative next year.

Before concluding, I want to touch on the theme of “innovation,” which is so much a part of the “competitiveness” I mentioned at the outset. One transformative innovation in the humanities in the wider culture and in the economy is, of course, digitization. In the next session you will hear from Daniel Cohen of George Mason University, who is an ACLS Digital Innovation Fellow. That program, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, aims to identify particularly promising scholars whose research can be of exemplary value to the humanities as a whole. Organizing and representing knowledge in accessible and useful forms such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, authoritative editions, and concordances has always been the work of the humanities. It must be so in the digital age as well.

Last December, the ACLS Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences issued its report, entitled *Our Cultural Commonwealth*, which sought to

provide a framework for discussions and decisions concerning investments in the digital humanities. The report has received considerable notice. It is often cited by the NEH as one guide in its development of the Endowment's Digital Humanities Initiative, a development I am sure Chairman Bruce Cole will speak about at lunch. And, a recent report to the Hewlett Foundation called *Our Cultural Commonwealth* "required reading" for all considering investments in education.

In my foreword to the Commission's findings, I sought to take the long view, noting that the convergence of advances in digital technology and humanistic scholarship is not new. Indeed, issued in 2006, this ACLS report was not the first major publication focused on technology and scholarship in the humanities and interpretive social sciences issued by our Council—it is the sixth.

*Our Cultural Commonwealth* is therefore primarily concerned not with the technological innovations that now suffuse academia, but rather with institutional innovations that will allow digital scholarship to be cumulative, collaborative, and synergistic. While the work of the Commission has ended, fostering this climate of innovation will be a focus of ACLS activities as we go forward. Among its many recommendations, the Commission called for sustained leadership in developing new capacities. Together with our member societies, research libraries, university presses, and humanities funders, we hope to address that need. Last November, Program Officer Donald Waters of the Mellon Foundation participated in the Kansas City meeting of the ACLS Conference of Administrative Officers. In the past months, we have also had discussions with the Council on Library and Information Resources, the Association of Research Libraries, and Ithaka about the emerging agenda of the digital humanities. We can be sure that NEH will also be a force in moving that agenda forward.

That our own History E-Book Project has now become Humanities E-Book marks how digital innovations can be sustained and broadened. More than 4.5 million readers in 28 countries have access to the collection, which includes both born-digital titles and republished works of enduring value, either through individual subscriptions as part of their society membership or through their libraries. The demand for the materials in the collection is one indicator of changing curricular dynamics. Eileen Gardiner and Ronald Musto, the co-directors of this effort, report, for example, that the title receiving the most hits over the last several years continues to be Marshall G. S. Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History of a World Civilization*.

I should note that we are attending also to the cyberinfrastructure of ACLS itself. In early fall, we will bring online a new website that will expand our ability to represent the work done by our member societies, our fellows, and colleague institutions to the ever-widening digital public. Your badge and other meeting materials bear the renovated version of our logo; that renewal is part of our broader effort to communicate more effectively. I want to thank Candace Frede, Ann Gaylin, and Stephanie Feldman for their continuing work on this initiative.

One theme that has come to the fore in the past year is the importance of collaborative research and work in the humanities. Digital work, of course, both relies upon and facilitates collective action, but the impulse for collaboration is far broader. The report issued this year by the Task Force for Evaluating Scholarship for Promotion and Tenure of the Modern Language Association states that "We need to devise a system of evalua-

tion for collaborative work that is appropriate to research in the humanities and that resolves questions of credit in our discipline as in others. The guiding rule, once again, should be to evaluate the quality of the results.”<sup>7</sup> The whole MLA report, I would note, illustrates how a learned society can deploy its authority and collective judgment on one of the most critical processes that sustain our enterprise: the evaluation of scholarship and reproduction of the scholarly community. Indeed, the question of how learned societies affect and effect the intellectual development of the humanities is to be focus of the retreat of the Conference of Administrative Officers this November.

Is collaborative research an innovation in the practice of the humanities? I think you all know the answer to that question. As Board member Marjorie Garber has observed, “Collaborative work is an idea whose time has already come. In fact it came many centuries ago . . .” She urges the recovery of this tradition, “as a matter of intellectual ethics as well as of institutional change.”<sup>8</sup>

Our Board wishes to explore how the convening, advocacy, and perhaps funding roles of ACLS can help to recover the best aspects of that tradition and provide the whole academic humanities with examples of best practices and the institutional innovations that can help sustain a collaborative ethos and, perhaps, thereby reframe research questions in important new ways. The discussion Ann Gaylin conducted with the Delegates earlier today is only one of several we have been undertaking. I hope you will communicate to her and to me your own thoughts and experiences on this subject as we explore how ACLS can most effectively work in this area.

I want to conclude by returning to my opening metaphors and by marking an important anniversary. The arc of ACLS’s history is nearing 90 years in length, and it is easy to identify one critical turning point in our collective journey. July 1, 2007 is the fiftieth anniversary of Frederick Burkhardt’s becoming the first president of ACLS. Our Council was founded in 1919, but its chief executive was styled “Director” before Fred took over. Fred—who at the age of 94, I am happy to report, is still active and editing *The Correspondence of Charles Darwin*—renamed and essentially re-founded ACLS, which was on the edge of fiscal insolvency and institutional liquidation in the mid-1950s.

Fred’s partner in this process was Howard Mumford Jones, who recalled the “gloomy afternoon” in 1955 when he was asked to chair the Board of Directors of what looked to be a moribund Council. The need was clear, he later wrote: “[ACLS] would have year after year to present to the nation a public program, or else stand idly by as an antiquarian curiosity.”<sup>9</sup>

With the help of a few foundations and leading members of the Board, Fred re-located the Council’s offices from Washington to New York, began the program of enlisting colleges and universities as “associate” institutions supporting ACLS, and undertook building an endowment to assure that ACLS would continue to advance the humanities and interpretive social sciences in good times and bad. As you heard from Charlotte Kuh and Herbert Mann this morning, we have been able to build on Fred’s achievements in

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7. MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion, 62. May 18, 2007 [http://www.mla.org/pdf/task\\_force\\_tenure\\_promotio.pdf](http://www.mla.org/pdf/task_force_tenure_promotio.pdf).

8. Marjorie Garber, “After the Humanities,” unpublished talk, cited with permission, 26.

9. Howard Mumford Jones, *One Great Society: Humane Learning in the United States* (New York: Harcourt; Brace, 1959) 248, 250.

sustaining ACLS, and it is our responsibility to augment that endowment further when times are good—as they are now—and bad, as they certainly someday will be. Our public program of support for and representation of the humanities is indeed a noble mission, with both a venerable history and continued salience in the future. It is true, of course, that the future lasts a very long time. We can hope that in the next fifty years, at least, we will be able to stay fixed on that mission as we negotiate the rapids that—whether or not they take us to China—we will surely encounter in our continued voyage of discovery.

Thank you.