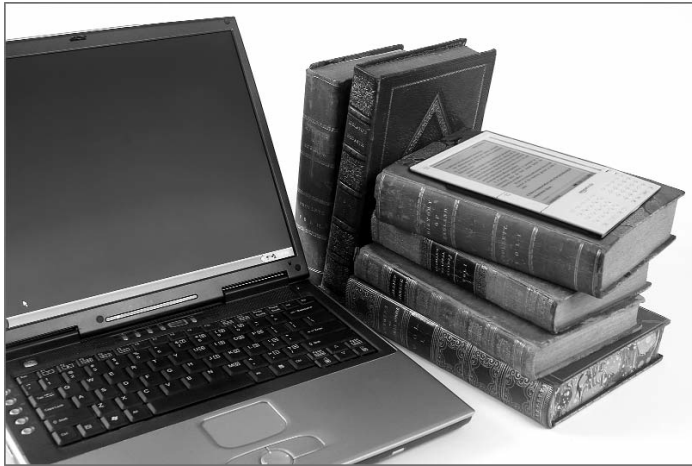


# Humanities Indicators Prototype Launched



In 2002, the Academy's Initiative on Humanities and Culture issued its first Occasional Paper, *Making the Humanities Count* – a study of the need for a systematic and sustained effort to collect data on the state of the humanities in the United States. The Academy took up the challenge, and on January 7, 2009, it launched a prototype set of statistics, the Humanities Indicators, available at [www.HumanitiesIndicators.org](http://www.HumanitiesIndicators.org). The website has already attracted over 325,000 visits from 38 countries.

In announcing the new online resource, Leslie Berlowitz, Chief Executive Officer of the Academy, said, “this nation needs more reliable empirical data about what is being taught in the humanities, how they are funded, the size of the workforce, and public attitudes about the field. The Humanities Indicators is an important step in closing that fundamental knowledge gap. It will help researchers and policy-makers as well as universities, foundations, museums, libraries, humanities councils, and others to answer basic questions about the humanities, track trends, diagnose problems, and formulate appropriate interventions.” She also expressed her appreciation to Norman Bradburn (National Opinion Research Council) and Steven Marcus (Columbia University), cochairs of the Humanities Indicators Advisory Committee, and to John Brademas (New York University), Jonathan Cole (Columbia University), Gerald Holton (Harvard University), Robert Solow (MIT), and Judith Tanur (State University of New York at Stony Brook), who suggested and encouraged this collection of data.

Modeled after the National Science Board's *Science and Engineering Indicators*, the data set contains 74 indicators and more than 200 tables and charts, providing broad-based quantitative information about areas of concern to the humanities community. The current prototype is based on existing data; in the coming years, the Indicators will expand to incorporate new data from an Academy-sponsored survey of 1,500 colleges and university humanities departments.

In addition to the data, the Humanities Indicators includes essays that reflect on its five parts: primary and secondary humanities education, undergraduate and graduate education in the humanities, the humanities workforce, humanities funding and research, and the humanities in American life. These commentaries by William J. Reese (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Roger L. Geiger (Pennsylvania State University), David Laurence (Modern Language Association), Alan Brinkley (Columbia University), and Julie Ellison (University of Michigan) suggest the significance of the data collected and point to areas where additional information is needed.

The Humanities Indicators Prototype was developed in collaboration with the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Academy of Religion, the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, Association of American Universities, the College Art Association, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the Linguistic Society of America, the Modern Language Association, and the National Humanities Alliance.

The Indicators is one result of a decade-long Academy Initiative on Humanities and Culture, which was developed to understand and advance the humanities. Other activities include a scholarly publication on the post-World War II social forces that transformed

## The Humanities Indicators Reveal...

- Adult literacy in the United States is polarized. Among Western industrialized nations, the United States ranks near the top in the percentage of highly literate adults but it is also near the top in the proportion who have very low literacy.
- K-12 humanities fields are suffering a dearth of well-prepared teachers, even more so than math and science. In 2000, the number of middle and high school students taught by a highly qualified history teacher was lower than any other major subject area.
- Postsecondary humanities faculty are more poorly paid than those in any other field. They are also among the fields with the highest proportion of part-time faculty. In 2004, only 53 percent of humanities faculty were employed full-time, and half of all part-time teachers are available for full-time positions.

the humanities as well as two issues of *Dædalus*, the first on the evolution of the humanities disciplines (Spring 2006) and the second on challenges facing the humanities within and beyond academia (Winter 2009).

The Academy is indebted to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for supporting the Initiative on Humanities and Culture and to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for enabling us to create the Indicators.

The Academy gratefully acknowledges the individuals who helped to launch the Initiative for Humanities and Culture:

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Stephen Greenblatt	Rosanna Warren
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† Deceased

## Selected Statements of Support for the Humanities Indicators Prototype

The humanities are an invaluable source of enrichment in all our lives. The study of history, philosophy, languages, and literature deepens our understanding of the world as it was, as it is in our own day, and what it may become for future generations. I commend the Academy for its important contribution to the nation in documenting the extent and quality of research and instruction in the humanities available in today's society. It will encourage schools and colleges in communities across the nation to improve their curricula and enhance the education of all our students, and the nation will reap the benefit in the years to come.

**Edward M. Kennedy**  
United States Senate

College and university presidents, provosts, and deans, who have long hoped for concise and accessible data on the humanities, will welcome the American Academy of Arts and Sciences's Humanities Indicators Prototype. Not only does the prototype offer tremendous insight into the undergraduate and graduate experience of students and faculty, it also offers key datasets on the entire span of the educational experience, as well as the work our students will one day undertake. Among other things, these data will greatly enhance our ability both to understand and anticipate the needs of incoming students and to prepare our students for work in the humanities.

**Lee C. Bollinger**  
President, Columbia University

Now for the first time we have a full, reliable set of data relating to some of the most important indices of behavior in the humanities fields. The website is clearly organized and easily accessible to users, and it should help us to understand the academic field of the humanities in ways that have previously been impossible to accomplish. It will help administrators across the humanities, and in the schools and higher education generally. It will also be of service to individual teacher-scholars and students. And best, from my point of view, it will facilitate the work of those of us who try to understand and influence humanities policy.

**Stanley N. Katz**  
Director, Center for Arts and Cultural  
Policy Studies, Princeton University

The Humanities Indicators Prototype is an important investment in the future. Until we have a clear picture of the state of the humanities and the extent of humanities activity in this country, we will be seriously handicapped in our efforts to make a case for the impact of that activity. This report is a vital first step in helping us to overcome that challenge.

**Esther Mackintosh**  
President, Federation of State  
Humanities Councils