



Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

Why Do Artists Create?

Featuring Deborah Rutter, Jason Moran, and Viet Thanh Nguyen

SUMMER 2026

SELECT

UPCOMING EVENTS



October 9-11, 2026

Cambridge, MA

Induction Weekend

All current members are warmly invited to attend the Friday evening Opening Celebration, Saturday afternoon Induction Ceremony, and Sunday morning Closing Program with a guest.
Registration will open in the summer.

Visit amacad.org/events for more information about Induction and other upcoming events.



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Bill of Diseases
in Charleston from the year 1785 to 1797 both in

Diseases	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	Total
Apoplexy		1			1			1	1	5
Atrophy	1		1							2
Cancer	1	1			1			2		5
Canker	2	3	1	1	3	1	4	9	3	27
Cerebra Defluxion					4					4
Consumption	5	7	4	3	1	3	9	10	7	47
Convulsions	1	1	1	1	2	2	2		1	11
Crotchitis	1	1								2
Dysenteria				2						2
Dysentery			1		2	1	3	2		9
Erysip	1			1	1	2	1	1		8
Erysipelas			1							1
Flo							5	4		9
Hydrocephalus	1		1				2			4
Inflammation				1		2				3
Intestinal	1				2	1	3	3		12
Jaundice		1	4		1	1	1	2		11
Leucorrhoea								1		1
Lymph	1		1		1					3
Malignant				1						1
Melancholia	1					4			1	6
Nervous										1
Phlegm			4					1		5
Rheumatism		2					1	2		5
Scrophulous	1									1
Scurvy										1
Syphilis										1
Tubercles				1						1
Varicella	1									1
Worms										1
Yellow Fever		4								4
Old age		3		4	3	2	2	5	5	24
Palsy	1	1		1			4		1	9
Pneumonia	3	3	4	5	4	1		4	5	29
Quintessence										1
Small pox	1	1	2	4	2	2	2	5	3	22
Stomachic							4	2		6
Small Pox	1									1
Cholera			9							9

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From the President and from the Chair of the Board of Directors

LAURIE L. PATTON AND GOODWIN LIU

There are many reasons to celebrate our nation's 250th year. Among the most important is the prosperity that is deeply rooted in the free pursuit of knowledge in America.

When John Adams and his colleagues wrote that “wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people” were “necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties,” they could not have foreseen the political, cultural, economic, scientific, artistic, educational, and military achievements that such a deep commitment to learning would produce. The resilience to meet generational challenges and adapt to change and the power of our example to the world are the fruits of that commitment.

When our forebears penned the Declaration of Independence, they understood learning and the free pursuit of knowledge to undergird all three of the inalienable rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Learning provides the very conditions for thriving – as powerfully today as it did at the heroic moment our nation came into being.

Our founders understood that a strong nation depends on a government willing to lead – recognizing that investment in both basic and applied research is a true public good, one the private sector cannot shoulder alone. The freedom of our colleges and universities to shape teaching and curricula has created a wide range of educational choices for people from all backgrounds and helped make the American higher education system the strongest in the world.

When conditions that support the free pursuit of knowledge are threatened, citizens have a responsibility to speak out. Today, as part of honoring the dignity and power of our nation, we call attention to those risks and urge a renewed commitment to the free conditions that form the basis of research and teaching in America. We embrace the importance of ongoing efforts to reform



public funding mechanisms. These and other reform efforts in institutions of learning are essential to the thriving of knowledge in a democracy. Such efforts should strengthen, not undermine, the very foundations upon which knowledge is produced.

We affirm three principles here.

- Public investment in the free pursuit of knowledge should include *all* branches of knowledge. The sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts all contribute to human flourishing and national strength; no branch of knowledge should be singled out for exclusion from support. The deprioritization of entire sectors of research hobbles the advancement of learning and innovation that sustain a thriving democracy.
- American citizens deserve the assurance of steady, reliable leadership and a predictable rhythm in public funding. When funding cycles are abruptly disrupted or oversight is reshuffled without warning, instability takes root – and long-term projects, which are essential to basic research and paradigm-shifting discoveries, cannot flourish.
- The free pursuit of knowledge must rest in the hands of those who exercise it, not in the chambers of political office. When state or national legislatures adjudicate the merits of education or scholarship on political grounds – whether left, right, or center – they cast a shadow of censorship and stifle the open exchange of ideas across difference, the very spirit that animates the Declaration of Independence.

The free pursuit of knowledge is at the heart of our power to serve and to lead, and has been one of the greatest sources of America's strength over the past 250 years. It should remain a polestar for the centuries ahead.

Laurie L. Patton and Goodwin Liu



A UMAP sculpture visualizing three *Dædalus* volumes on artificial intelligence.
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Recent *Dædalus* Issue AI & Science: What Is the Future of Discovery?

By *Dædalus* Editorial

Continued progress in artificial intelligence, its expanding usefulness in science, and its contributions to landmark advances suggest that we may have entered a new era of AI for science.

The breakthroughs so far – such as predicting the structure of practically every known protein,

with profound implications for our understanding of biology, health, and the treatment of disease – are notable not only for *what* was achieved but also *how* it was achieved and what that suggests for scientific progress.

This special double issue of *Dædalus*, edited by James Manyika (SVP at Google-Alphabet and also

President for Research, Labs, Tech & Society), poses the question: What is the future of scientific discovery in this new age of AI?

Thirty-three scientists responded. Bringing perspectives from life sciences and medicine, cognitive science and neuroscience, the physical and earth sciences, chemistry and materials science, computer

Mapping Four Decades of AI Research: A UMAP Sculpture across Three *Dædalus* Issues

What does it look like when you compress nearly forty years of humanity's most rigorous thinking about artificial intelligence into a single form?

This work is a UMAP (Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection) rendering of every word across three landmark issues of *Dædalus* – winter 1988, “Artificial Intelligence”; spring 2022, “AI & Society”; and winter/spring 2026, “AI & Science” – based on similarity clustering (six-dimensional: x, y, z and red, green, blue colorizing).

Three distinct moments when the Academy convened leading minds to take stock of where AI stands and where it's heading. The resulting image is not an illustration. It is a sculpture, shaped not by chisel or clay, but by the geometry of language itself, compressed through machine intelligence into visible form.

In 1988, the conversation was intimate and philosophical. Seymour Papert, Daniel Dennett, and Sherry Turkle debated whether machines could ever truly think. The vocabulary orbited the body: brains, neurons, perception, consciousness.

By 2022, the language had exploded outward. Fei-Fei Li, James Manyika, and Erik Brynjolfsson confronted what deep learning's success meant for justice, labor, and democracy.

The 2026 issue reaches further still. Demis Hassabis describes AI as an instrument for understanding reality itself – from protein folding to the laws of physics. Yann

LeCun argues for world models that move beyond language into abstract representation.

The UMAP reveals the filaments between these eras. Words like intelligence, learning, and human appear in all three, but their neighbors shift – from neuron in 1988, to equity in 2022, to prediction in 2026. The dense clusters are shared concerns; the long tendrils reaching into darkness are ideas unique to each moment.

When Brunelleschi carved perspective into architecture, or when Michelangelo released figures from marble, they were not simply making objects – they were making visible the invisible structures of their age. The Renaissance sculptors gave form to human proportion, divine geometry, and anatomical truth. Today, a parallel undertaking is quietly emerging: the sculpting of data itself into physical and immersive form, using machine intelligence as both material and collaborator.

This is what I have tried to pursue in my own practice – humbly, and with deep respect for what came before – treating vast archives of information not as abstract numbers but as raw matter waiting to reveal its hidden shape. It is, I believe, the beginning of a new sculptural movement: one in which the artist's hand is guided by algorithms, in which the block of marble is replaced by multidimensional space, and in which what emerges is not a representation of the world but the actual structure of collective knowledge made tangible.

Three issues. Four decades. One continuous, expanding form.

– Refik Anadol

<https://refikanadol.com>

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science, mathematics and the social sciences – they draw on their work at the frontier of AI and science.

The authors write with an eye to the future, not just the present. They explore what is being achieved and what possibilities lie ahead; examine AI's limitations and efforts to move forward; and investigate the larger implications

of AI-assisted science – on how science is done, the role of the scientist, and the scientific method, as well as the challenges and complexities involved.

The authors together exemplify a long-standing bidirectional relationship: AI advancing science, while science advances AI. Where that relationship will take

us – A golden age of discovery? New scientist-machine collaborations? Autonomous labs? Discoveries without human understanding? – is a future we are only beginning to imagine, and one we must also shape if the beneficial possibilities are to be realized.

Contents of “AI & Science: What Is the Future of Discovery?”

Introductory Notes: On AI, Science & the Future of Discovery

James Manyika

IN DIALOGUE: AI PIONEERS ON AI & SCIENCE

AI as the Ultimate Tool for Science: A Conversation with Demis Hassabis

Demis Hassabis & James Manyika

Learning Abstractions:

A Conversation with Yann LeCun

Yann LeCun & James Manyika

AI IN THE LIFE SCIENCES & PHYSICAL SCIENCES

From Alchemy to AIchemy:

On Matter, Minds & Tools

Alán Aspuru-Guzik

Unlocking Scientific Intuition &

Reasoning at Digital Speed

Pushmeet Kohli

Beyond Representation:

AI in Cellular Discovery

Charlotte Bunne & Aviv Regev

Building the Drug Discovery Engine

of the Future with AI-Empowered

Nodal Biology

Anna Greka

From Pixels to Minds: Mapping &

Understanding the Brain with AI

Viren Jain & Jeff Lichtman

The Algorithmic Planet

Anna M. Michalak & John C. Platt

AI Reaches for the Stars

Stella S. R. Offner

THE SCIENCE OF AI & DEVELOPING AI FOR SCIENCE

Language Is Not All You Need . . . but Language, Probabilistic Programs & Bayesian Models of Cognition Will Get You Pretty Far

Joshua B. Tenenbaum

Knowledge-Centric AI for Scientific Discovery

Carla P. Gomes

Building an AI Polymath

Shirley Ho

How Do We Build AI to Push the Frontiers of Scientific Discovery?

Anima Anandkumar

Toward a Science of Intelligence: Unifying Physics, Neuroscience & AI

Surya Ganguli

Quantum + AI = Quantum AI

Maria Spiropulu & Hartmut Neven

THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF AI FOR SCIENCE

The Future of AI-Facilitated Medicine

Eric J. Topol

The Role of AI in Drug Discovery in Africa

Kelly Chibale

Physics Is Different: Context, Culture & Craft in Effective AI for Physics

Tess Smidt

Thinking & Doing Science in the Age of AI

Alison Noble

Field Theory: AI as Social Science Question, Object & Tool

Alondra Nelson

Philosophy of Autonomous Science: Ten Questions for the Coming Age of Artificial Scientists

Mario Krenn & Heather Champion

PERSONAL BRIEFS

Geometry-Informed AI for Scientific Discovery

Melanie Weber

Are Current AI Systems Unlocking Knowledge Discovery in Genomics?

Antonio Orvieto

AI & the Discovery of Molecules through Autonomous Laboratories

Connor Coley

Scaling Physics Intelligence for the Earth's Subsurface

Gege Wen

AI & Ecology: From Tool to Transformation

Sara Beery

Making Automation Work for Social Scientists

M. J. Crockett

When AI Meets Art at the Scales of Science

Refik Anadol



“AI & Science: What Is the Future of Discovery?” is available on the Academy’s website at www.amacad.org/daedalus/ai-science-what-is-the-future-of-discovery. *Dædalus* is an open access publication. We invite you to share links to essays and to entire *Dædalus* volumes with friends, colleagues, and students.



What Do Young People Think about College?

By **Sara Mohr**, *Pforzheimer Foundation Fellow*, and
Robert B. Townsend, *Director of Humanities, Arts, and Culture Programs*

High school and college students often view college as a stepping stone on the path to a future career. But according to findings from recent interviews with high school and college students sponsored by the Academy's Humanities Indicators, students also recognize the role college can play in preparing them to be better citizens and lead more fulfilling lives. The study also found that most of the students interviewed felt more comfortable with STEM subjects than subjects that are more text based.

For this study, NORC at the University of Chicago conducted two phases of research with stu-

dents in 2025. First, in April and May of 2025, NORC held four focus groups with high school students – two in person and two virtually. Then, between September and November of 2025, NORC conducted twenty-five in-depth virtual interviews with college students, primarily recruiting students who were either undecided about their major or were majoring in the humanities. The participants in both phases represented a variety of demographic backgrounds, including gender, race, urbanicity, and parent education level. The students were asked about their decision-making processes about attending college, how their

academic interests are developing, and what goals they hope to pursue beyond college.

WHY ATTEND COLLEGE?

Despite recent discussions in the media and policies from the Trump administration emphasizing the return on investment for a college degree, the interviews for this study found that high school and college students view college as valuable for reasons beyond careers and earnings. While all of the students described college as important for career preparation, most did not see that as its sole purpose. Instead, the vast majority of students viewed

college as an opportunity for both personal and professional growth, and thought of their futures not only in terms of work but also of who they want to become as whole people.

Although career preparation was the most common reason high schoolers gave for attending college, many connected their future careers to the independence and opportunities they hoped a successful career

twelfth-grade students, however, college was more often understood as an opportunity for personal growth. These students described college as a place to build social connections and gain a deeper understanding of the world. As one upperclassman explained, if you have the opportunity to go to college, you should take it because “it’s your responsibility to be a good citizen of society and to be able to contribute.”

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would provide. For example, one high school student talked about their interest in sports cars and looked forward to earning enough money to pursue that passion. Another high school student hoped to work in environmental science in part because it would allow them to travel both throughout the United States and internationally, including to places like the Congo. A third also described wanting to travel, experience different cultures, and “do something that I love or . . . I’m satisfied with but while also making money off of it.” While earning a good salary was important to the high schoolers – especially given concerns about the cost of attending college – they also emphasized the value of intellectual enrichment and personal fulfillment and growth when thinking about their futures.

A few ninth- and tenth-grade students said that increasing their general knowledge was the primary reason why they wanted to attend college. Among eleventh- and

Reasons for attending college remained largely consistent among college students, who often viewed not going to college as limiting their options for the future. Nearly all college students saw earning a degree as a path to more career choices, higher-paying jobs, and more structured routes to professional success. One student, who did not want to reduce the value of college solely to career choices, conceded, “I feel like since I’m paying so much for college, I don’t want to just leave here and get nothing out of it.” Socioeconomic factors also influenced how college students understood the value of attending college. Nearly all of the first-generation students saw college as a stepping stone to a good career and healthy income, though only one student noted earning a high salary as the primary reason for pursuing a future career. Another first-generation student said, “I feel like I would be miserable if it was really just for a career in the future.”

College students also pointed to personal development as an important reason for attending college. Like the high school students, college students were especially excited about the opportunities college could create for travel. One college student shared, “I’ve always said this since I was in middle school that I . . . want to live outside of the U.S. and I want to travel. One of the big things I want to do is travel more just to see what country I would fit in.” Regardless of the fields of study or career interests, students consistently described college as preparation for a life that would give them the freedom and resources to travel and explore.

College students also described college as an opportunity to gain independence and develop an identity separate from that of their family and the influence of their hometown. One college student shared that what they most wanted to get out of their college experience is “just finding out who I am and not having my parents’ influence, like, just kind of putting them to the side and really finding out who I am as a person.” Other college students viewed college as a place for social growth, where they could meet new people and interact with people from different backgrounds. As one college student said, “If I were just looking for the degree, I could have done online college or community college. So, I think the people aspect is really important to me as well.” For these students, the opportunity to meet and learn from others in college was not only socially valuable, but also part of becoming a more informed and engaged citizen. Though most of them feel they are taking the necessary steps toward a fruitful career, they emphasized that the value of college extends beyond professional preparation. One

college student shared that they are also “hoping to get lifelong friendships, a better outlook on the world, I guess the tools to be, I mean, I hate the term, but, like, a global citizen, just being more aware of what’s going on and understanding what you could do to help change for the better.” Overall, both high school and college students saw the benefits of attending college as reaching far beyond career prospects alone.

The high school focus group participants were asked about who they consulted for advice when deciding whether to attend college. The students reported speaking with both family and friends, though most did not feel pressured to pursue a particular path. One of the younger high school students shared that “my parents have always been supportive of what I chose to do and never really told me to do something.” Another student echoed this sentiment, saying, “I’ve never been told ‘Don’t do this.’ I never really changed my idea of what I want to do growing up.” Eleventh- and twelfth-grade students reported similar experiences. While many of them had at least one person in their life who had followed the path they hoped to pursue, like the ninth and tenth graders, they did not feel pressured to choose one path over another.

FAVORITE SUBJECTS AND CHOOSING A MAJOR

Beyond the broader questions about why students would (or should) attend college, the study found a substantial preference for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects. Three-quarters of the high school students identified a STEM subject as their favorite, citing both a natural aptitude and an interest in problem-solving. One student noted a preference for science subjects “because I don’t have to memorize as much. I can intuitively figure out sort of what’s going

on, like in physics,” while another student indicated an interest “because of the different branches that there are and the different ways of science that you can learn.”

Conversely, when students were asked about their *least* favorite subjects, their responses were more evenly split between STEM and humanities subjects. Their reasons varied from general difficulties with the content or necessary skills, to a more generalized complaint that they found the material uninteresting. A high school student who expressed a dislike for geometry said, “Math hasn’t really been my strong suit, but I think the class

requirements, or a perceived lack of practical use or value for the subject matter. Nearly every college student who said that history was their least favorite subject mentioned that they struggled with memorization, echoing what some of their peers expressed as a reason for disliking science. However, while high school students spoke more often about the benefits of humanistic skills, college students frequently questioned the practical usefulness of these subjects. One college student explained their distaste for English and history by saying, “A lot of the things in those classes, I didn’t see how I will ever use [them] in my life.”

Three-quarters of the high school students identified a STEM subject as their favorite, citing both a natural aptitude and an interest in problem-solving. . . . When students were asked about their *least* favorite subjects, their responses were more evenly split between STEM and humanities subjects.

itself is fun, but just the struggling part is really one thing.” High school students who reported English or history as their least favorite subject frequently mentioned not liking or struggling with aspects of reading and writing. Other students expressed discomfort with what they perceived as the subjectivity of English and history, preferring the clearer right and wrong answers characteristic of their STEM courses.

The transition from high school to college did not appear to significantly affect which subjects students identified as their favorites or least favorites. College students reported disliking a particular area of study because of the complexity of the material, memorization

While most of the college students shared that their favorite and least favorite subjects remained largely consistent from high school into college, students who developed new interests or changed their opinions about previously disliked subjects often credited exceptional teachers or professors for that change. When asked about what drew them to their favorite subject, one college student emphasized the role of engaging teachers: “Definitely the professor and how well I’m able to connect with the professor. Because I do enjoy learning, but if it feels more so like you’re being talked at rather than just we’re in a process of learning together, then it’s hard to really connect with the coursework.” Another college

student shared that although they found their economics class difficult, good professors “helped [me] enjoy it more than I would have with another professor that’s less excited.”

Highly engaged college professors were also able to help students develop a new appreciation for subjects they had previously disliked in high school. One student described this shift while discussing a literature course on the Vietnam War: “I didn’t really like history as much in high school, but the professor made it super interesting . . . I think that’s maybe changed my mind, and I really appreciate history a little bit more.” Students also pointed out instances when a negative experience with a teacher could turn them off to a subject they had previously enjoyed. One college student shared, “I like all of my classes, except if the

were more evenly divided between STEM, professional, and humanities majors. High school students in general paid particular attention to the possible career opportunities associated with different college majors – though they rarely focused on financial considerations alone in their decision-making. For example, one upperclassman shared that when considering what to study, they weighed not only the likelihood of steady employment but also the possibility of using their career to make a positive impact on the world. Uncertainty about career opportunities was a common reason students gave for avoiding a major in the humanities. They associated degrees in English or history with teaching careers and struggled to identify other professional pathways connected to these disciplines.

their decision-making process. Many also considered their passions and the personal impact of an area of study. One college student, referencing a potential English and literature major, said, “I just want to have a better understanding of the things I enjoy, and about being alive.” Another college student noted that their choice of major “definitely came down to what I was passionate about.”

Job security and potential careers were also a common reason college students reported second guessing their chosen major. Some students looked at the fruitful careers of their peers and wondered if they would be able to achieve the same in their current field of study. For instance, one student majoring in graphic design expressed concern about the role of generative AI in creating graphics.

This research was undertaken as part of the development of a new survey instrument for young people. In September, the project will release a more detailed set of findings from the interviews, focused primarily on the concerns of humanities faculty and administrators. That report will explore in greater detail how students perceive the humanities, and how their own reading and writing abilities fit into their thinking about the field. The project will administer the survey to a much larger sample of students over the coming year, allowing for a more granular analysis of the differences and attitudes across various demographic categories, and generating findings that will be relevant to faculty and administrators across a wide range of academic disciplines.

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professor sucks. I think I’ve only had 3 classes that I didn’t like, and 2 of them were not because of the subject [but] because [of] the professor, and then the other one was math.”

When deciding which paths to pursue when picking a college major, both high school and college students viewed whether a subject was enjoyable or not as just one piece of the puzzle. Their choices of potential college majors often reflected a combination of variables described above, though these factors varied from student to student. Among ninth and tenth graders, most expressed interest in studying a STEM-related subject, while eleventh and twelfth graders

College students also described choosing a major based on a combination of factors, though they prioritized engagement, aptitude with the material, and long-term satisfaction over purely financial or practical considerations. Similar to the high school students, the college students tended to imagine only direct career paths, such as nursing and education, in which specific majors clearly corresponded to a profession. Some of them expressed hesitation about pursuing certain fields of study that did not seem to offer clear employment opportunities. At the same time, college students were also clear that career considerations were only part of



If you have questions about the research, please contact Program Director Robert Townsend at rtownsend@amacad.org.



Faculty Governance: Does Restoring Trust in Higher Education Start with Us?

By **Molly Kent**, *Program Coordinator for Education*

Public trust in higher education has declined significantly over the past decade, as headlines such as “Growing share of Americans say the U.S. higher education system is headed in the wrong direction” and “Presidents Puzzled on Rebuilding Public Trust in Higher Ed” have become all too familiar.¹

1. Jeffrey M. Jones, “U.S. Confidence in Higher Education Now Closely Divided,” Gallup, July 8, 2024, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/646880/confidence-higher-education-closely-divided.aspx>; and Colleen Flaherty, “Presidents Puzzled on Rebuilding Public Trust in Higher Ed,” *Inside Higher Ed*, April 9, 2026, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/governance/executive-leadership/2026/04/09/presidents-puzzled-rebuilding-public-trust-higher>.

The American public’s growing mistrust of higher education is not surprising, given the increased politicization of the classroom, rising college costs, and cuts to federal funding. At this critical moment for higher education, the Academy, together with the American Association of Colleges and Universities’ Advancing Public Trust in Higher Education Initiative, convened faculty governance leaders from across the country at the House of the Academy in March 2026.² Participants discussed how

2. American Association of Colleges and Universities’ Advancing Public Trust in Higher Education Initiative, <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/advancing-public-trust-in-higher-education>.

rebuilding public trust in higher education needs to begin with restoring trust within institutions themselves, particularly between faculty and administrators.

The convening laid the groundwork for building a durable coalition of faculty governance leaders focused on information sharing, mutual support, and collaboration while also developing actionable ideas and strategies for how faculty governance bodies can help their campuses navigate the challenges of the current environment.

The meeting began with participants sharing one word or phrase to describe the relationship between faculty and administration on their campus. Many responses reflected a broken sense of trust between the

two groups: *skeptical, cryptic, mistrustful, rollercoaster, personality dependent*. Others were more optimistic about the future: *cautiously collaborative, promising, recovering*. The discussion raised an important question: How can this optimism help restore confidence and strengthen trust in the higher education sector?

PROMOTE SHARED GOVERNANCE

One of the central questions that the participants explored, “What will it take to mend the broken social contract between faculty and administration?” sparked a robust discussion about the importance of authentic shared governance structures on campus. Academy President Laurie L. Patton defined shared governance as “regular and meaningful occasions for consequential input.” Other participants described shared governance more broadly, such as sharing the decision-making power between faculty and administrators and empowering faculty’s voice.

Faculty governance structures vary widely. Some institutions have large faculty senates with multiple leadership roles; others allow faculty senate leaders to serve on the board of trustees; and some institutions don’t have a faculty senate at all. These differences in the decision-making power granted to faculty demonstrate that shared governance is rarely a one-size-fits-all concept. Participants highlighted the importance of faculty and administrators working in partnership to determine how best to involve faculty in the shared governance process.

For institutions struggling to maintain trust and collaboration between faculty and administrators, participants discussed several ways

to strengthen these relationships, such as engaging smaller groups of faculty in discussions about major priorities for the university (i.e., strategic planning), encouraging presidents and provosts to communicate more openly about institutional challenges, particularly budgetary issues and constraints, and focusing on efforts that clearly align with the institutional mission.

Shared governance provides a framework for faculty and administrators to work together to restore trust, but what can individual faculty members do to help restore trust both on and off campus?

SHIFT CULTURE

One of the major themes discussed at the convening was the importance of faculty returning to their “why.” One participant suggested that faculty can lead with passion, generosity, and curiosity by refocusing on the broader purpose of their role: showing up for students.

Faculty can begin to restore trust both on and off campus by discussing the ways in which they can shift the culture of higher education toward a more mission-oriented culture. Faculty need to consider how their personal values align with their institution’s mission and how their personal commitments can be reflected in their everyday work.

How can faculty bring this cultural shift into their partnership with administrators? One participant recommended that faculty should take on a larger role of responsibility by considering how faculty can defend the institution and support the broader higher education sector. This requires moving beyond defending the status quo and instead engaging constructively with the

administration. At this pivotal moment for the sector, faculty should also consider which elements of faculty monoculture may no longer serve their purpose. Faculty and administrators can work together to build a shared culture centered on supporting students and strengthening education.

WORK WITH THE BOARD

Just as faculty governance structures vary widely, board structures, whether boards of trustees or regents, also differ across institutions. Regardless of the board structure, it’s important for the faculty to understand how to work effectively with the board.

One concrete way in which faculty can better interact with the board is through *ex officio* faculty positions. Faculty senate leaders in these roles noted that a faculty presence on the board makes a “huge difference” in building strong relationships among faculty, board members, and campus administrators, and ensures that board members regularly hear faculty concerns. This kind of participation helps support effective partnership because even when faculty are not members of the board, they still need to be aligned with institutional decisions. When faculty are not included early in the decision-making process, it can exacerbate existing tensions, such as mistrust on campus, and hinder institutional progress.

Panelists who have worked with a variety of boards noted that some board members may not be familiar with how a higher education institution is run, particularly if they have not been on a college or university campus since they were students. Many of them may have prior experience on industry

or nonprofit boards, where shared governance is not a common practice. In higher education, effective governance depends on a sense of shared responsibility among the board, campus leadership, and faculty. Thus, it's important for faculty and administrators to create opportunities to inform and educate board members. One approach is to invite faculty members to board meetings to share research on relevant academic topics or provide insight into the larger academic community.

Many participants shared some strategies they have used successfully to build strong relationships with their boards. One example is for faculty and the board to clearly define their respective roles within the shared governance structure, maximizing efficient decision-making. Another way is to recognize that trustees are often most engaged when discussions focus on the student experience and how faculty contribute to student learning. Participants noted that board members want to improve the institution and be seen as institutional stewards, much like the faculty.

RESTORE PUBLIC TRUST

At the conclusion of the convening, participants were asked, "What should faculty do next to restore public trust in higher education?" They identified several actionable things to bring back to their institutions, such as using shared governance as an instrument to strengthen alignment around the institution's mission and creating more meaningful partnerships with their board.

However, the most prominent answer that emerged from the conversation was the need for faculty to engage more frequently and more intentionally with the institutional community. Nearly every participant referenced "community" or "students" in their responses, underscoring the urgency faculty feel to keep students and the community at the center of their decision-making. One participant even noted that they would be willing to stand in town halls and "get yelled at" if it meant more involvement with the student community. Another participant emphasized the importance of committing to genuine community engagement, not just a "PR thing,

but really thinking about providing incentives for community engagement" and dedicating positions to researching community culture.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As the convening concluded, one participant observed that the higher education sector has struggled to connect with the public because "we have lost the ability to explain what it is we do well." At a time when the public is reassessing its trust in higher education alongside other American institutions, colleges and universities need a new vision for the future of the higher education sector. Developing this new vision will require not only administrators and boards but also faculty who can work alongside institutional leaders to build a shared sense of purpose.



For more information about the Academy's work on higher education, visit www.amacad.org/topic/education.



Participants at the Academy's faculty governance convening in March 2026.



The Higher Education Forum 2026: Is Higher Education Built to Last?

By **Molly Kent**, Program Coordinator for Education

Freeman Hrabowski (University of Maryland, Baltimore County)

The Academy's fifth annual convening of the Higher Education Forum in Aspen, CO, from June 15–18, 2026, brought together higher education leaders, researchers, journalists, and philanthropists to tackle this year's central question: Is Higher Education Built to Last? The serene setting of the Aspen mountains coupled with the intimacy of fewer than one hundred attendees meeting under Chatham House Rule allowed for robust conversation, networking, and intellectual repose.

The attendees included Academy members as well as presidents, provosts, deans, and professors from institutions in the Academy's Affiliate program. Panel topics ranged from "Will We Succeed in Making College More Affordable?" to "Is the United States Losing Its Edge as a Global Education Leader?"

Panelists and attendees engaged deeply with each topic through the lens of resistance, resilience, and reform, exploring how institutions can continue working together during this time of uncertainty. As one speaker noted, we are stronger

when we come together as a sector and uplift one another, from selective Ivy League institutions to community colleges.

A dinner conversation about the work of the Academy's Commission on Opportunities After High School, led by Commission Cochair Harrison Keller and Commissioner Bobby Pace, explored "What Do Learners Need to Thrive in School, Work, and Community?" The conversation highlighted how educators and employers can collaborate more closely and how the higher education sector can play a



Upper left: **Mary B. Marcy** (Dominican University of California), **Dayna L. Cunningham** (Tufts University), and **Christina Alexis** (Reinvestment Fund)

Upper right: **Andrew Delbanco** (Columbia University)

Left: **Dan Lothian** (GBH News), **William Inboden** (University of Texas at Austin), **Danielle Allen** (Harvard University), and **David V. Rosowsky** (Arizona State University)

role in shaping a stronger future for students.

The Forum was also forward-thinking with one panel considering the question, “Is Future-Proofing Our Institutions a Sisyphean Exercise?” The discussion focused on two central questions, posed by the moderator: “How do we uphold both mission and margin at the same time?” and “How do we build a sustainable future?” While there were no easy answers, panelists offered a range of suggestions, from developing an enterprise mindset to shifting

board dynamics to prioritizing student success.

We extend our gratitude to all the speakers, moderators, and attendees for their candor, insights, and engagement. University presidents and journalists alike remarked on the importance of the questions addressed during the panels and the thoughtful dialogue and ideas they inspired. As one attendee noted, “the meeting is one of the best on higher education, year after year.”

We are grateful to our sponsors – Lumina Foundation, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, TIAA, Spencer

Foundation, Barclays, Kaplan, Bank of America Private Bank, and EdConic – for their continued investment, guidance, commitment, and engagement in the Forum. We are also grateful to David C. Weinstein, whose generosity supports the Academy’s work in Education.



For more information about The Higher Education Forum, visit www.amacad.org/project/higher-education-forum.





Why Do Artists Create?

A Morton Mandel Conversation

By **Sara Mohr**, Pforzheimer Foundation Fellow

As part of a series of virtual discussions, the Academy hosted a conversation on May 11, 2026, that explored why artists create and how today's political climate may be changing their motivations and artistic practices.

Deborah Rutter, Vice Provost for the Arts at Duke University, moderated the conversation, which featured **Jason Moran**, jazz pianist and faculty in jazz studies at the New England Conservatory of Music, and **Viet Thanh Nguyen**, author and Aerol Arnold Chair of English at the University of Southern California. They discussed the challenges of producing art in the United States today and the power the arts have in helping us imagine and connect to our past, present, and future.



Deborah Rutter



Jason Moran



Viet Thanh Nguyen

Deborah Rutter opened the conversation by asking the panelists when they first realized they would be artists and when they began to identify as such. She shared that she began playing violin in school and realized early on that art was what she wanted to dedicate her life to, often asking herself, “How can I live around art and be a part of it?”

Jason Moran recalled that music had always been a part of his schooling and upbringing. He viewed the arts as something accessible to everyone, and he simply kept saying “yes” to opportunities to create music. But he didn’t fully think of himself as an artist until much later in his career, while recording his third album. Reflecting on his journey, he acknowledged that art became both his passion and his livelihood, and he cherished having “the ignorance to go forward” and pursue music without fully knowing how it would shape his life.

Viet Thanh Nguyen described a very different experience. He grew up as a Vietnamese refugee in a household without books, raised by parents who ran a grocery store, so his love of literature was a deliberate choice. Although he won an award in the third grade for a story he wrote as a class assignment, Nguyen didn’t take writing seriously until college. He also emphasized that writing is both an art and a trade. In his view, it is not possible to escape the commodification of what we put into the world. He spoke about resisting the literary world’s emphasis

“Reflecting on his journey, Moran acknowledged that art became both his passion and his livelihood, and he cherished having “the ignorance to go forward” and pursue music without fully knowing how it would shape his life.

on “craft,” to detach it from the notion of labor, while still acknowledging that writing is labor and art is work. Writers produce art, but they are also embedded in an industry shaped by issues such as commodification and inequality.

Nguyen also reflected on the relationship between work and play in his writing process. He described writing *The Sympathizer* as playful and with a sense of improvisation that allowed him to trust the instincts he had developed over seventeen years of writing. At the same time, he noted that the demands of the work outside of the writing itself can pull a writer away from those moments of play. Some of that work, he later explained, involves confronting parts of himself he would rather avoid, along with all of the joy and love he has experienced. Nguyen said that when he has achieved success with

Nguyen said that when he has achieved success with his work, it is because he has been honest with himself, which motivates him to remain true to that in his future work. ”

his work, it is because he has been honest with himself, which motivates him to remain true to that in his future work.

The panelists also discussed how art helps people build connections, develop empathy, and see our world through different lenses and from different perspectives. Rutter described artists as the storytellers of our time, who give voice to what is happening in our world right now, rather than waiting for history to tell the story later. Moran agreed, saying that musicians capture attention in a way that feels like telling a story. He shared that his song about his family, “Gentle Shifts South,” which features the voices of his family members from recorded interviews, was a way of making space for his family story and ancestry, something that is part of every song he performs. Nguyen added that readers turn to stories to make connections to their lives, even when those stories are not about the here and now. Thinking about his experience writing *The Sympathizer*, he recalled thinking about the Iraq War while he wrote about the Vietnam War. When readers make those kinds of connections, the stories can offer some instruction or catharsis that can meaningfully shape their lives.

Rutter asked the panelists if current events make it especially challenging to be an artist today. Nguyen and Moran both agreed that there has never been a good time to be an artist because there are always challenges that come with creating art. Rutter added that there are often patterns to these challenges, and artists’ responses to them often repeat over time. Speaking about working in the United States today, Nguyen described the difficulty of creating art in what he sees as an anti-intellectual society and culture. He discussed his decision to leave his position at the University of Southern California and work outside of the support of the higher education system, which makes him more vulnerable to the ebbs and flows of our capitalist economy. Moran shared similar concerns about our country, stating that he believes the United States does not reward deep research, while he also acknowledged that the country is still young and continuing to grow and evolve. As a faculty member at the New England Conservatory of Music, Moran also reflected on the challenges of teaching art in the

current moment. He wants his students to have the tools they need to produce art despite what’s going on in the world, but he also recognizes that current events should meaningfully influence their work.

So, what can we do? How can we better support artists and the arts? Moran recalled meeting visual artist Adrian Piper, who encouraged him to think more intentionally about assigning meaning to music and argued that “artists ought to be writing about what they do.” By sharing more about their creative process and the meaning behind their work, artists can help break down barriers between themselves and the public. Moran also emphasized the importance of supporting the artists we know, noting that small, personal acts of support can have a significant impact. Nguyen addressed the skepticism people sometimes express about the value of art by asking, what would the world look like without art? So much of what we take for granted – movies, clothing, music – is art. In the same way that book bans highlight the power of literature, skepticism about art often proves how important art really is.

Rutter closed the conversation by quoting President John F. Kennedy, who offered these words in 1962 on behalf of the National Cultural Center, which was later renamed the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in his honor: “I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.”¹ Despite the challenges posed by current events, there is still reason to be hopeful that the arts will endure and will continue to thrive.



For more information about the Academy’s work on the arts, visit <https://www.amacad.org/topic/arts-humanities>.

1. John F. Kennedy, Remarks at a Close & Circuit Television Broadcast on Behalf of the National Cultural Center, November 29, 1962, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-close-circuit-television-broadcast-behalf-the-national-cultural-center>.



What Does Cultivating Useful Knowledge Look Like in America Today?

Honoring Excellence with Three Awards from Three Historic Organizations

2143rd Stated Meeting | April 16, 2026 | Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr. Auditorium,
American Academy of Arts and Sciences

The April 16, 2026, event on “Honoring Excellence” marked the first joint convening of three of the nation’s oldest honorary societies: the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences**, the **Phi Beta Kappa Society (PBK)**, and the **American Philosophical Society (APS)**. Inspired by the semiquincentennial of the United States of America, the event celebrated the three organizations’ shared and long-standing commitment to democracy and the pursuit of knowledge. At the event, each society conferred a prize on an individual whose scholarly contributions embody those ideals.

This historic collaboration began with a welcome and call to order from Chair of the Academy’s Board of Directors **Goodwin Liu** (Supreme Court of California), who congratulated the Academy, PBK, and APS for “making history while celebrating history” and called on the members of all three societies to heed the call of service and engagement.

American Academy member **Stefanie Stantcheva** (Harvard University) presented the Academy’s Talcott Parsons Prize to **Claudia Goldin** (Harvard University) for her transformative scholarship

illuminating the economic lives of women and the historical roots of gender inequality. Stantcheva offered a warm portrait of her Nobel Prize – winning mentor and friend, describing her as a model Academy member who “through her intellect and commitment to the common good . . . has transformed both scholarship and the world it seeks to understand.”

Phi Beta Kappa Secretary and CEO **Frederick Lawrence** introduced **Greg Grandin** (Yale University) as the recipient of PBK’s 2026 Ralph Waldo Emerson Book Award. Lawrence highlighted

Grandin's scholarship, particularly his new book *America, América: A New History of the New World*, describing it as a testament to exploration, intellectual inquiry, and deep understanding – the same values that inspired the founding of PBK in 1776.

Finally, Roger Bagnall, president of the American Philosophical Society, honored Jan Ziolkowski (Harvard University) with the Society's Henry Allen Moe Prize in the Humanities in recognition of his paper "The Juggler of Notre Dame and the Medievalizing of Modernity." Bagnall praised Ziolkowski's scholarship as "an impressive and

approachable multidisciplinary case study" that, much like the awards event itself, illuminates the enduring and important connections between the past and the present.

Following the presentations, the award recipients participated in a panel discussion moderated by Academy President Laurie L. Patton that explored the role of useful knowledge and the importance of free inquiry to a democracy. The awardees' acceptance remarks as well as an edited transcript of the discussion follow.

Acceptance Remarks by Claudia Goldin

on receiving the American Academy's Talcott Parsons Prize



Claudia Goldin, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics in 2023, is the Samuel W. Morris University Professor at Harvard University. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1992.

Thank you. I'm deeply honored and would like to explain why the Talcott Parsons Prize has special meaning for me. First, and most important, is that it's awarded for contributions in the social sciences. I am proud to be included in a group of thinkers who have deeply influenced me. When I visited the Institute for Advanced Study a long time ago, Albert Hirschman and Clifford Geertz were there. They each made their own sense of a complicated world of people and social relations, and that fascinated me. Albert did it in his work on *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, and Cliff did it in his work on bazaar economies and his micro-study of cockfighting. Closer to home, I was greatly influenced by Robert Putnam's work on social capital, and he inspired me to do work on that topic myself. Much nearer to my own research is Joan Wallach Scott's work and books that encouraged me to think deeper historically on the topic of women's labor.

Before I came to Harvard, I was on the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, where I was a member of the economics department, but I was also a member of graduate groups in history, demography, sociology, and, of course, economics. It was a university without walls, with few disciplinary boundaries. Harvard is more siloed. Although

I pride myself on being a social scientist, at Harvard I am an economist. Therefore, I'm even more honored that the Talcott Parsons Prize recognizes my identity as a social scientist.

The second reason why this prize is so special to me is that I've received other prizes, and all of them require that I travel, that I stay in a hotel, which

I don't like, and that I remain away from home for many days. This prize required that I cross Scott Street. I've lived in the shadow of the home of the American Academy for years and benefit from its Norton's Woods every day. So a double thank you to the Academy for this honor.

Acceptance Remarks by Greg Grandin

on receiving The Phi Beta Kappa Society's Ralph Waldo Emerson Book Award



Greg Grandin is Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History at Yale University. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010.

Thank you. It's a privilege and a wonderful experience to receive this award. Ralph Waldo Emerson makes a small cameo in my book, *America, América: A New History of the New World*. José Martí, the Cuban revolutionary, was deeply influenced by Emerson. What's interesting is that Martí saw in Emerson something beyond self-reliance and individualism. He saw Emerson's self-reliance as the necessary precondition for a broader sociality. For Martí, sovereignty, whether personal or national, and for which he fought for in Cuba, was the basis for entering into a community of nations or a social republic.

One of the central arguments of the book is that there exists a fundamental tension between the United States' fixation on individual rights and Latin America's commitment to economic and social rights. The book traces this divergence back

to the conquest itself, examining both the horrors of the conquest and the critiques of that violence. I follow that history through the tensions between the United States and Latin America, and, even earlier, between the British Empire and the Spanish Empire, to argue that these conflicts helped to create the conditions and terms of the modern world. What used to be called the rules-based order, or the liberal international order, is now either under threat or already gone.

The book came out in a very timely moment. I started writing it during the last months of the first Trump administration, and I finished it around the time of Trump's second election. The book was published shortly before his inauguration. It was uncanny to watch the events that unfolded afterward: renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America"; the series of extrajudicial killings

of speedboat operators; renewed regime-change efforts in Venezuela; laying siege to Cuba, to go back to José Martí; and then turning our attention to Iran.

One of the arguments in the book is that Latin America, through its long conflict with the United States, played a role in bringing about the end of the doctrine of conquest and the rise of a multilateral ethos of sovereignty and arbitration. We're living

in a world today, however, where that's unraveling quite fast. I would like to think that the book arrived at a timely moment.

Let me close by thanking several people who are not here: my family and my editor, Sara Bershtel at Penguin Press. My thanks also to the good people at Phi Beta Kappa and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Acceptance Remarks by Jan M. Ziolkowski

*on receiving the American Philosophical Society's Henry Allen Moe Prize
in the Humanities*



Jan M. Ziolkowski is the Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Medieval Latin at Harvard University. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2010.

For starters, I owe appreciation to the three participating organizations. First, to the American Philosophical Society. Delivering the paper at a meeting of the Society in Philadelphia was an unforgettable experience. Receiving a prize named for the past head of the Guggenheim Foundation and later president of the APS compounded the honor. Second, my gratitude goes to the great educational enterprise almost next door, where I've taught steadily since 1981, and more broadly, to the groups that buttress higher learning and advance research in this nation, in this instance meaning specifically the American Academy, Phi Beta Kappa, and the APS. Over the decades, the backing of such academies and societies has bolstered among us the strength of conviction to follow our interest. Along the way, they did not press for results that would further any agenda of present-day preoccupations. Rather, they facilitated the pursuit of personal passions and of knowledge. In other words, I was not expected to be a political activist or a community organizer. Instead, I was given the opportunity to work steadily and steadfastly, and to do what most of us do, which is learn, teach, read, reflect, and write, and in the process – or so we hope – benefit, even if often only obliquely, the public. And third, and last, the tale itself of “Our Lady’s Tumbler” deserves a shoutout. My mission was to produce a kind of biography, to relate and interpret the story of the

story. Immersion in narrative can be exasperating, but simultaneously exalting and exhilarating. The miracle of *Le Jongleur de Notre Dame* reminded me of old acquaintances from bygone literature and culture whom I never had the pleasure of meeting, but whom I came to know as if still living, including Anatole France, Henry Adams, Mary Garden, and W. H. Auden. At the same time, the tale introduced me to new friends still with us, such as the artists and authors R. O. Blechman, 95 years old,

and David Shannon, 55. Finally, studying the story enabled me to contribute to the delicate and desperately needed fabric of culture that helps hold together people of different languages and literatures, genders and sexualities, nations and ethnic groups, and races and religions, despite the oceans, ideologies, and economics that can separate us. In closing, I thank all of you for bearing with my thankfulness. If I could juggle, I should've done that instead.

Panel Discussion with the Prize Recipients

moderated by Academy President Laurie L. Patton



LAURIE L. PATTON: Congratulations to all three of our prizewinners. To start, I would like to share an interesting story about our beginnings. And while Phi Beta Kappa is not in this story, I am invoking the Society in spirit. When the Academy's charter was granted in 1780, John Adams forwarded a copy of it, together with some publications of the American Philosophical Society, to Jean Luzac, publisher of the *Gazette de Leyde*, a Dutch and European revolutionary magazine. Adams noted that "at a time when the English Emissaries are filling all Europe with their confident assertions of the distress of the Americans, the enclosed papers show that both at Philadelphia and Boston people are so much at their

ease, as to be busily employed in the pursuit of the Arts of Peace." This is a wonderful testimony to our work together.

And that collaboration continued. The Franklin bust on display in our atrium was a gift from the American Philosophical Society in 1803. We had a joint committee with the APS in 1975 on a survey of sources in the history of biochemistry and molecular biology. We had another joint endeavor with the APS in 2007 on "The Public Good: Knowledge as the Foundation for a Democratic Society."

Our work with PBK includes a symposium in 1979 on "Intellect and Imagination: The Limits and Presuppositions of Intellectual Inquiry." The

papers presented at the symposium were published in *Daedalus*, the Academy's journal, in 1980. As these examples show, our three organizations have collaborated and interacted over the years. However, this is the first time in our almost 250-year-old history that the American Academy, the APS, and PBK have hosted an event together.

All three of you personify what it means to think about knowledge and how that looks in America today, and you do so in very different ways. My first question is one that I like to ask accomplished people when I meet them for the first time, which is, What is your question? What is the one question you'll never know the answer to and you'll never get tired of asking? Jan, let's start with you.

JAN ZIOLKOWSKI: I suppose the question for me is one that underlies much of what I do: Why do people crave stories? Why do they need them? What do they get out of them? In some ways, these questions have become more pressing lately, given AI and the potential of LLMs to generate stories. And that leads me to ask, What's the essence of individual stories? What do they mean? How have they changed? Why have they changed? What can we learn from them about people of the past? What can we learn from them about people today? And then, what can we, as individual readers, learn about ourselves?

PATTON: Wonderful, thank you. Claudia?

CLAUDIA GOLDIN: I don't have a single question. I am a historical detective, and detectives are given the question. It may be a question deep in one's mind. There is, of course, the existential question, whose answer is 42.¹ And Earth was created to figure that out.

PATTON: Thank you. Greg?

GREG GRANDIN: When Claudia mentioned that she is a social scientist, it reminded me that the discipline of history isn't a social science, in fact, it's not a science at all. It can't be falsified; it can't be reproduced. For me, the question is the relationship between the present and the past, the degree to which the present always sets the agenda of what

you ask about the past. So what do we actually know about the past that isn't determined by the present? Maybe the answer is 42, I don't know. William Appleman Williams, a diplomatic historian from back in the day, grappled with this. He challenged the very foundations on which we understand the past. One of his great quotes is, "The schizophrenic profession of a historian is a harrowing way to stay sane." I think what he was referring to is that by simultaneously living in the past and the present that all historians do, one's footings are never secure.

“What do we actually know about the past that isn't determined by the present?”

PATTON: I'm struck by the multiplicity in all of your answers, whether it's following a single thread and seeing it repeated over time, or it's being given a question and pursuing it in multiple ways, or it's that doubleness of the historical pursuit. When we think about useful knowledge, which is the reason why our three societies began in some way or other, the discourse around useful knowledge in the eighteenth century was very different from what it is today. I'm obsessed with John Adams's quote, which I'll paraphrase: I can do the hard work of politics so that my grandchildren can be learned in the arts. When you think about useful knowledge, how do you understand the usefulness of your own work? Useful to whom, and in what ways? Greg, why don't we start with you.

GRANDIN: This is a difficult question. It's hard to gauge who you're reaching and who you're speaking to. Who's reading it? Who's using it? And what are they using it for? It is very satisfying to receive emails that say that your book did this and that. You feel that it's at least useful to that person. But it seems like we're living in a world in which the radius of usefulness is getting smaller and smaller, and that scary.

PATTON: And that radius of usefulness is getting smaller and smaller when you are making a really compelling case for hemispheric history.

GRANDIN: Yes.

1. The number 42 is the answer to the "Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything" in Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979).

PATTON: And that in itself is fascinating. If I were to introduce the idea of hemispheric history to my students at Duke, Emory, or Middlebury, they would absolutely love it. And they would have no idea how to pursue it. I wonder if that synthetic capacity has been useful in some way. Has it been useful for your students or for your work?

GRANDIN: I think so. History is very fragmented and territorial. It is broken up by fields and regions, and there isn't a lot of interchange. In terms of usefulness, U.S. politicians, if they wanted, could look at Latin America, for instance, and take lessons from it, and then incorporate those lessons into policy that transforms the fortunes of the United States in terms of its ability to project its power and also consolidate its power during moments of crisis. At the current moment, though, it's hard to imagine that being the case.

**I think of my work, and what I want to do,
as affecting the human condition by
listening to people today and listening
to those in the past.** ”

PATTON: Claudia, you embody the use of expertise in policymaking. How do you think about the usefulness of knowledge, and has your sense of it changed over time?

GOLDIN: I think of my work, and what I want to do, as affecting the human condition by listening to people today and listening to those in the past. What gratified me the most after I received the Nobel Prize were the messages that began with the words, “I cried.” The award meant so much more to me because it meant so much to people who felt forgotten, for whom this award validated, vindicated, and made them feel important. Whether they were doing work on gender, whether they were doing work in economic history, whether they were doing work that was large. Whatever it was, this award made them feel better; it made them feel whole. And for that, it was very meaningful to me. I remember a man from Spain wrote to me about how much the award meant to him. It was as if his team had won the World Cup.

PATTON: Claudia, you have operated in two very different spheres: in a deeply intellectual one

involving economic history, and in your work negotiating for others. Do you use different parts of your brain for your work?

GOLDIN: No, it's all the same. I was essentially a forensic accountant. I dug into the numbers, and I added them up. I wondered why others didn't see the data, since they were sitting on these numbers all this time. I collected as much information as I could. We were given information that was confidential, but there was a lot of stuff out there in the press that I could put together and say, “You see? It's wrong.”

PATTON: Even though you said earlier that you didn't have a question, if I were to be asked what Claudia's question was, it would be, “You've been sitting on these numbers all this time, why didn't you see this?”

GOLDIN: That's right.

PATTON: Jan, what about you? How do you understand the usefulness of your work? As a Sanskritist myself, we live in a world that doesn't think our knowledge is quite useful.

ZIOLKOWSKI: That's definitely true. I don't expect that what I do brings immediate benefit to very many people at all, but I do regard it as forming part of a tissue that helps to hold people together. In many places, the worst conflicts come about not for lack of medicine, or lack of utilities, or lack of any other material goods, but rather because of differences among people that could be defined as cultural. I think that part of the contribution of the order that has now dissolved helped to tie people together so that they were brought together culturally, politically, and economically. About the quotation from John Adams that you paraphrased earlier, he said, “I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, and naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, porcelain.” There's obviously a lot that we would edit to revamp his statement. But at the same time, there's a commodiousness of vision of allowing for this multiplicity of learning, of knowledge, of putting the practical and the theoretical alongside each other. And that's something that I'm afraid will be walked back or dissolved now because

of technology and politics. I hope that those of us who are engaged in education can present an effective case for a breadth of vision about education, because young people need more than ever to be given the hope of transforming the world around them. And I mean transforming by starting with themselves, rather than to be prepared to be cogs in a transaction between business and higher learning. The two are unfortunately often more interlocked than is healthy.

PATTON: I love your “commodiousness of vision,” or “breadth of vision,” phrasing because all three of our scholarly societies are about the relationship between the expert and the world. In order to make that relationship generative in a democracy, you need a commodiousness of vision, or a breadth of vision.

Let me turn to my next question. Do you consider yourselves public intellectuals? Do you think of that obligation to engage with the public as part of your larger vocation? Anyone can jump in.

GOLDIN: I view myself as a reluctant public intellectual.

PATTON: Please say more.

GOLDIN: There’s no more to say. I’m reluctant.

PATTON: Because?

GOLDIN: Because I don’t preach. Because I’m not someone who tells people what to do or how to run their lives. And therefore, I also do not do policy. So I’m not quite certain how to be a public intellectual.

PATTON: Greg, how about you?

GRANDIN: Being a public intellectual is a bit fraught right now. It means a lot of different things. I guess it depends on what the purpose is. If you’re doing it to build a bigger public audience, if that’s the objective, then I don’t know how useful it is to be a public intellectual. As someone who comes at U.S. history from a Latin American perspective, I can see how what passes, say in response to the Trump administration, is very much bounded by a certain kind of nationalist, even chauvinist politics, trapped within a historiography that is more a category of practice than of analysis. Latin

Americans would look at other ways to explain the rise of somebody like Donald Trump, who, like many of these public intellectuals, has an enormous audience. I don’t know if I would consider myself a public intellectual since I write to the moment.

“ I hope that those of us who are engaged in education can present an effective case for a breadth of vision about education, because young people need more than ever to be given the hope of transforming the world around them.

ZIOLKOWSKI: In pulling together thoughts for this evening, I did a number of n-gram searches, and I was struck by the parallels between public-facing public intellectual, on the one hand, and influencer, on the other. It could just be fortuitous, but I also see a certain danger in becoming too responsive to the present, which obviously can lead to politics, and politics can mean being associated with either winners or losers at different times, and that can have consequences. On the other side, I worry a lot about the young people, especially my students, who have enormous potential and are very bright people who can contribute a lot to the world. I think that they just need a chance, as we all do, to escape sometimes from what can be the nightmarishness of the news cycle. I’ve thought about it in terms of a possible relationship between *doomscrolling* and *doom-schooling*, in which the students need to bear the weight of fixing the world, so we push them toward majors that aim to solve the world’s problems. At the same time, they’re digesting tremendous anxiety about whether the majors that they’ve been encouraged to choose are lucrative or will lead to any employment at all. And that’s a pessimistic point of view. Yet I am optimistic because I still believe in the liberal arts model. Even if *liberal* is a word you can’t say, and *art* is a word you can’t say, I still think that flexibility is something that the three organizations believe in deeply. And personally, I would like to celebrate that.

PATTON: All three of our organizations today are feeling the pressure around the freedom of intellectual inquiry. All three of you work in areas in which inquiry could be constrained – politically, institutionally, or methodologically. What does the “free pursuit of inquiry” mean in your field today? And what threatens it most?

GOLDIN: My field is highly dependent on data and on the believability of data, and that has been seriously threatened. How we run the economy is very dependent on data. There are longitudinal datasets that have been stopped and will never be completed. There are data that have been collected, very important census data of businesses, for example, but where are these data? The agency no longer has people, so who’s going to release the data? And then it’s simply the believability of the data. Small companies can put out their own CPIs (Consumer Price Index). All you have to do is have a market basket and price it. This wouldn’t be the first time in American history that a President and administration have tried to hide the fact that there’s unemployment. During Hoover’s administration, he did not want the special census of unemployment to be released. So we’ve been there. And that’s what I fear the most: the improper collection of the data, and the honesty of the data.

All three of our organizations today are feeling the pressure around the freedom of intellectual inquiry. ”

GRANDIN: There are so many things that threaten the free pursuit of inquiry today. Hampshire College is closing. Museums are closing. There are threats to liberal arts schools. Large schools are focusing on certain disciplines to the expense of others. And, of course, there’s the threat posed by unregulated AI, which weakens trust. How would we imagine free speech if there’s no trust? You don’t even know if the images you’re seeing are real or not. We’re going to need a different paradigm. The closing of so many venues that would support speech and allow free inquiry is chilling. It’s hard to process what all of this means.

PATTON: I love the idea and the call to think about a new paradigm around freedom of expression. Jan?

ZIOLKOWSKI: I worry, on the one hand, about how much people edit themselves out of fear of misspeaking, and then on the other hand, about how freely many other people seem to feel in speaking uncivilly, vulgarly, rudely, with an utter lack of empathy. As far as the pursuit of truth, it becomes easier and easier to get access to about 80 percent of the facts, but the remaining 20 percent can contain falsehoods and fraudulences that are shared with great freedom. I see more urgency now than ever for people who are scholars, who can verify what is likely to be true and what is not. That’s becoming harder as we shift away from a book culture to whatever we have now, which seems to be a kind of shoveling-up of what is available on the web, which includes a certain amount of falsehood or fabrication. And I don’t understand why we don’t question it more. I’m not damning the whole enterprise, but I do worry with the ill effects of social media that many of the same people who played a role in that are now taking care of the next generation, and woe betide us if we cannot figure out ways to check the untruthfulness of it.

PATTON: “Hallucination” itself as a descriptor is a falsehood. A friend of mine put it the following way: falsehood is increasingly unconstrained while truth is increasingly constrained. All three of our organizations have been asked in various ways to stand up for freedom of inquiry, and we will have various responses. And we will invoke the history of our nation to support that. We all carry our histories constantly. We’re telling the history of the founding of the nation through the founding of our societies. I think we are being called to offer hope, to each other, to our world, and to the next generation.

On to our last question. What is one part of your work that still genuinely excites you and gives you hope that you might pass on to the next generation? Let’s start with Jan.

ZIOLKOWSKI: To the detriment of the world, I have a million projects that fire me up that I love working on. But I also know that the more that I am able to learn, the more aware I am of the insufficiency of my own knowledge. And the more I feel dependent on the future, hoping to hand on a baton that’s not oily but sturdy enough so that it can be taken. Also knowing that the next stages need to be carried on by other people and hoping that they’ll be there. And hoping that it will be international, cross-national, and transnational. One of the painful aspects of the past months has been the rupture of ties to other countries. I’m in favor of increasing ties to as many countries as possible.

“ Nearly 200 years ago, Goethe wrote about the hope that America would be regarded as something admirable. I still find that vision compelling.

In preparing for this evening, I thought about a poem written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1827 called, “To the United States,” that has in it the line, “Amerika, du hast es besser”: “America, you have it better.” Out of love for this country, which is exceeded by my love for humanity, I would want us to be a place deeply connected to as many others as possible. Nearly 200 years ago, Goethe wrote about the hope that America would be regarded as something admirable. I still find that vision compelling.

PATTON: Jan, you invoked America, so I’m going to go to Greg next. What gives you hope that you might pass on to the next generation?

GRANDIN: If you study history honestly, you see that hope and persistence often emerge in the harshest conditions. People endure repression and hardship, circumstances which many of us fortunately never have to face, and continue to fight for a better future. Speaking as someone who’s worked on Latin America for a long time, I see a continent shaped by repression and political violence, yet still deeply committed to promises of the Enlightenment. They believe that sovereignty and nationalism are stepping stones to universalism. And when I say “they,” I’m talking about a vast majority of the population, the political left and the center-left, who still have a vision of politics rooted in the best traditions of the Enlightenment. Take Colombia, for example, where environmental activists face staggering levels of violence and murder, yet they continue fighting for clean water and the protection of the forests. Or Brazil, where labor unions persist despite severe repression. What’s remarkable is the determination of people to continue fighting for justice.

PATTON: Thank you. That’s very powerful. Claudia?

GOLDIN: What I would tell my students is, follow your curiosity. And there’s no better time to do that than now. I’m going to be optimistic and say something that’s very different from what others have said, which is that AI is my friend. AI lets me follow my curiosity, because at 2:00 in the morning, I have my friend Chat. If I want to know what’s in

the *Congressional Record*, I can go to Widener Library at Harvard, though not at 2:00 in the morning, and find it. It would take me an enormous amount of time. With AI, it takes me a nanosecond and costs me nothing to do. I know that this means that I have disemployed an army of research assistants. But, honestly, they wouldn’t be gaining that much from doing this work for me. And I can do it very quickly. And my students can also do it very quickly. Harnessing AI correctly means that you can follow your curiosity ad infinitum.

PATTON: Thank you. Before we adjourn, let me turn to Paula Giddings, Chair of the Council at the American Academy, who will offer some concluding remarks.

Paula J. Giddings

Paula J. Giddings is the Elizabeth A. Woodson 1922 Professor Emerita of Africana Studies at Smith College. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2017 and serves as Chair of the Academy’s Council and Vice Chair of the Academy’s Board of Directors.

Good evening everyone! Please join me in congratulating Claudia, Greg, and Jan, and thanking them for a wonderful discussion.

For this historic occasion, I wanted, in my closing remarks, to find a way to look to the past and the present of our organizations at the same time. So I imagined a conversation with our founders – and it went something like this.

“Sirs, you must be surprised to see someone like me standing before you today. It should be your first indication that things are changing. In fact, so much so that I will be attending a Legacy Recognition Committee meeting next week at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences – to which you are invited.”

“What does such a committee do?” you ask.

“Well, it recognizes individuals whose accomplishments have been overlooked or undervalued due to their race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.”



“Hmm,” you say. “We can’t think of anyone we could’ve missed. You know, we have pretty high standards around here. Our members must be rational, intelligent, enlightened, and be full of useful knowledge.”

“Sirs, one of our first honorees was Phillis Wheatley. I think you may have heard of her. She was captured from West Africa at the age of seven, enslaved here in Boston, where she published poems as a teenager, learned Latin and Greek, published a reinterpretation of Ovid, and published a volume of poetry during the Revolution that reflected the themes of liberty, tyranny, and virtue through the lens of her circumstances. Her very life is a testament to the flaws in your Enlightenment model, don’t you think?”

“Well. There’s always an exception.”

“Oh, no, no, no, no. Wheatley’s biographer says that there were lots of Black Bostonians who were extraordinarily talented.”

“Look, back in our day, we didn’t have that DEI stuff. And we sure as hell didn’t feel as if we had to do things to apologize or redeem ourselves.”

“Sirs. You are making a mistake. And not the first one, I might add, if you think that that is what the Legacy Program represents.”

“Go on. . .”

“Part of it, as you infer, is to make this august organization live up to the ideals you all are always talking about. You know, the common good, upholding democratic ideals, and so on. But think of this. The intellectual journey of those on that legacy list, from being the *objects* of knowledge in your day to the *producers* of knowledge in ours, has also given us new revelations and intellectual traditions.”

“Such as . . .?”

“Such as the idea that lived experience, along with structural analysis, should be counted as useful knowledge. And that the complexity of that experience cannot be defined through a single silo of study. That realization, sirs, gave us the present model of interdisciplinarity, something we talk a lot about in the Academy. It allows engagement with real-world problems, creates new questions, methods, and domains of inquiry. Did you know, sirs, that it was the formalization of Black studies in the late 1960s that gave us that model in higher education? And that Black studies paved the way for other interdisciplinary fields, such as women’s studies, ethnic studies, Indigenous studies, Jewish studies. These are often thought of as being isolated and single dimensional when, in fact, these disciplines are the most capacious and require mastery of multiple fields.”

“If they’re so great, why are people trying to get rid of them?”

“Well, as Toni Morrison would say, it’s because they reveal hidden structures of power.”

“Hmmm. So where does this leave us?”

“Our present circumstances, in the 250th year of the Declaration of Independence, remind us, as the legendary journalist Ida B. Wells would say, that progress is not inevitable. But the realities embedded in the recognition of our legacy is a cause for not only hope, but pride. . . . That is if ‘we can keep it.’”

Oh, and one last thing. I hereby adjourn the 2143rd Stated Meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

© 2026 by Claudia Goldin, Greg Grandin, Jan M. Ziolkowski, and Paula J. Giddings, respectively



To view or listen to the presentation, visit www.amacad.org/events/awards-event-academy.

Select Prizes and Awards to Members

James P. Allison (The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center) is the recipient of the 2026 AACR Award for Lifetime Achievement in Cancer Research, given by the American Association for Cancer Research.

Eva Y. Andrei (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey) received the 2026 Kavli Prize in Nanoscience.

Brenda Bass (University of Utah) was named the 2026 recipient of the Rosenblatt Prize for Excellence, given by the University of Utah. Professor Bass also received the RNA Society Lifetime Achievement in Science Award.

Frank R. Baumgartner (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) received a 2026 Faculty Award for Excellence in Doctoral Mentoring from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Charles H. Bennett (IBM Research) was named a co-recipient of the 2025 A.M. Turing Award, given by the Association for Computing Machinery. He shares the award with Gilles Brassard (University of Montreal).

Lars Bildsten (Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics) was awarded The Ohio State University's 2026 Joseph Sullivant Medal.

André Bishop (Lincoln Center Theater) received a 2026 Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre.

Cynthia Coburn (Northwestern University) received the 2026 Martin E. and Gertrude G. Walder Award for Research Excellence, given by Northwestern University.

Justin Driver (Yale Law School) was awarded the 2026 Lux et Veritas Faculty Prize from the Buckley Institute.

Elazer Edelman (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) is the recipient of the 2026–2027 James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award from MIT.

Michael Elowitz (California Institute of Technology) was named a Foreign Member of the Royal Society.

Ezekiel J. Emanuel (University of Pennsylvania) received the 2026 Bioethics Founders' Award, given by the Hastings Center for Bioethics. Dr. Emanuel shares the award with Christine Grady (Georgetown University).

Alexei V. Filippenko (University of California, Berkeley) was awarded the 2026 Gruber Cosmology Prize.

Stephen Forrest (University of Michigan) was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Laura Gagliardi (University of Chicago) was awarded the 2026 Schrödinger Medal from the World Association of Theoretical and Computational Chemists.

María Cristina García (Cornell University) received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Immigration and Ethnic History Society.

Mariano A. Garcia-Blanco (University of Virginia) was elected to the Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.

M. Gessen (*The New York Times*) was awarded a 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Opinion Writing.

Leonidas Guibas (Stanford University) received a Distinguished Alumni Award from Caltech.

Eric Jacobsen (Harvard University) received the Ojima Distinguished Lectureship Award in Chemistry, given by Stony Brook University. Professor Jacobsen also received the 2026 F.A. Cotton Medal for Excellence in Chemical Research, awarded by the Texas A&M Department of Chemistry and the Texas A&M Section of the American Chemical Society.

Pablo Jarillo-Herrero (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) received the 2026 Kavli Prize in Nanoscience.

Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. (University of Notre Dame) is the 2026 recipient of *Commonweal's* Centennial Award.

Judith Kimble (University of Wisconsin–Madison) is the recipient of the 2026 Thomas Hunt Morgan Medal from the Genetics Society of America.

Lewis Lanier (University of California, San Francisco) was elected a Fellow of the American Association for Cancer Research.

Cato T. Laurencin (University of Connecticut) was awarded the 2026 Othmer Gold Medal by the Science History Institute.

Edward Lazowska (University of Washington) received a 2026 Distinguished Teaching Legacy Award from the University of Washington.

Jill Lepore (Harvard University) was awarded a 2026 Pulitzer Prize in History for her book *We the People: A History of the U.S. Constitution*.

Yiyun Li (Princeton University) was awarded a 2026 Pulitzer Prize for Memoir or Autobiography for her book *Things in Nature Merely Grow*.

John Lithgow (Los Angeles, CA) won the 2026 Tony Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role for his performance in "Giant."

Allan H. MacDonald (University of Texas at Austin) received the 2026 Kavli Prize in Nanoscience.

Tod Machover (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) received the George Peabody Medal for Outstanding Contributions to Music and Dance in America, given by the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University.

Kelsey C. Martin (Simons Foundation) received the 2026 Kavli Prize in Neuroscience.

Margaret Murnane (University of Colorado Boulder) was elected an Honorary Member of Optica.

Whitney K. Newey (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was awarded the 2026 Erwin Plein Nemmers Prize in Economics.

Andrei Okounkov (Columbia University) was awarded the 2026 Frederic Esser Nemmers Prize in Mathematics.

Stuart H. Orkin (Harvard Medical School; Dana-Farber Cancer Institute; Boston Children's Hospital) was awarded the 2026 Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences. Dr. Orkin shares the prize with Swee Lay Thein (National Institutes of Health).

Eboo Patel (Interfaith America) was awarded the 2026 George W. Bush Institute Citation.

Judea Pearl (University of California, Los Angeles) was named a 2026 NAAI Academy Award laureate by the National Academy of Artificial Intelligence.

Robert D. Putnam (Harvard Kennedy School) was awarded the 2026 Thomas Jefferson Medal by the American Philosophical Society.

Erin Schuman (Max Planck Institute for Brain Research) received the 2026 Kavli Prize in Neuroscience.

Helmut Schwarz (Technische Universität Berlin) was elected an Honorary Member of the International Engineering and Technology Institute.

Moshe Y. Vardi (Rice University) was named a 2026 NAAI Academy Award laureate by the National Academy of Artificial Intelligence.

Deborah Willis (New York University) is the recipient of the 2026 AIPAD Award, given by the Association of International Photography Art Dealers.

Stanford Woosley (University of California, Santa Cruz) was awarded the 2026 Gruber Cosmology Prize.

Jin-Quan Yu (Scripps Research) was named a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Francesca Zambello (Washington National Opera) was inducted into the Opera America Hall of Fame. She also received the Denyce Graves Foundation's Leadership Award.

Xiaowei Zhuang (Harvard University) was awarded the 2026 Dickson Prize in Medicine.

New Appointments

Moungi Bawendi (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) was appointed to the Advisory Board of Mojo Vision.

Ronald Breaker (Yale University) was named Dean of Science in Yale University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Mung Chiang (Purdue University) was named President of Northwestern University. He was also elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Energy Security & Innovation.

Lizabeth A. Cohen (Harvard University) was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Council of Learned Societies.

Dalee Sambo Dorough (University of Alaska Anchorage) was appointed Arctic member of the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Jennifer Gandhi (Yale University) was named the Phyllis A. Wallace Dean of Faculty Development in Yale University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Mariano A. Garcia-Blanco (University of Virginia) was elected President of the RNA Society.

Julia Hirschberg (Columbia University) was appointed to the Board of Directors of Fusemachines Inc.

Hopi Hoekstra (Harvard University) was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the Simons Foundation.

Ayanna Howard (The Ohio State University) was appointed President of Spelman College.

Mark Lundstrom (Purdue University) was appointed the John A. Edwardson Dean of the College of Engineering at Purdue University.

Arthur Sze (Institute of American Indian Arts) was reappointed to a second term as the 25th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for the United States by the Library of Congress.

Ayanna Thompson (Arizona State University) was elected to the Board of Directors of the American Council of Learned Societies.

Katherine Yelick (University of California, Berkeley) was appointed Director of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Select Publications

FICTION

Walter E. Mosley (New York, NY). *Ghalen: A Romance in Black*. Amistad, May 2026

Sigrid Nunez (New York, NY). *It Will Come Back to You: Collected Stories*. Riverhead Books, July 2026

Francine Prose (Bard College). *Five Weeks in the Country: A Novel*. Harper, May 2026

Colson Whitehead (New York, NY). *Cool Machine: A Novel*. Doubleday, July 2026

NONFICTION

Peter Ackroyd (London Times). *Auden*. Reaktion Books, June 2026

Danielle Allen (Harvard University). *Radical Duke: How One Aristocrat—and the American Revolution—Transformed Britain*. Liveright, June 2026

James A. Banks (University of Washington), ed. *Standing Strong in Undemocratic Times: Supporting Diversity and Enhancing Democracy in Education*. Teachers College Press, April 2026

Larry M. Bartels (Vanderbilt University) and **Katherine J. Cramer** (University of Wisconsin–Madison). *The Politics of Social Change: From the Sixties to the Present Through the Eyes of a Generation*. University of Chicago Press, March 2026

Mary Beard (University of Cambridge). *Talking Classics: The Shock of the Old*. University of Chicago Press, May 2026

Katherine J. Cramer (University of Wisconsin–Madison) and **Larry M. Bartels** (Vanderbilt University). *The Politics of Social Change: From the Sixties to the Present Through the Eyes of a Generation*. University of Chicago Press, March 2026

Michael Cunningham (Yale University). *Unsayable: A Life in Writing*. Random House, July 2026

Antonio Damasio (University of Southern California). *Natural Intelligence & the Logic of Consciousness*. Pantheon, September 2026

Nancy Foner (Hunter College; CUNY Graduate Center). *Immigration: How the Past Shapes the Present*. Polity, May 2026

Loren Ghiglione (Northwestern University). *At 80, A Schoolboy on Martha's Vineyard: Learning from Grandkids, a Golden Pond, Good Folks & A Glimpse of Life's End*. Plaidswede Publishing, March 2026

Vijay Gupta (Street Symphony Project). *Restrung: A Memoir of Music and Transformation*. Da Capo, June 2026

Thomas W. Laqueur (University of California, Berkeley). *The Dog's Gaze: A Visual History*. Penguin Press, June 2026

Jill Lepore (Harvard University; *The New Yorker*). *The Rise and Fall of the Artificial State*. Liveright, August 2026

Claudia Rankine (New York University). *Triage*. Graywolf Press, August 2026

Alvin E. Roth (Stanford University). *Moral Economics: From Prostitution to Organ Sales, What Controversial Transactions Reveal About How Markets Work*. Basic Venture, May 2026

Louis Michael Seidman (Georgetown University). *The Constitution Cannot Save Us: Why We Can No Longer Rely on Our Founding Document*. The New Press, July 2026

Ian Shapiro (Yale University). *After the Fall: From the End of History to the Crisis of Democracy, How Politicians Broke Our World*. Basic Books, May 2026

Gloria Steinem (New York, NY). *An Unexpected Life: A Memoir*. Random House, September 2026

Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Yale University). *Vermeer's Afterlives*. Princeton University Press, June 2026

Marlene Zuk (University of Minnesota). *Outsider Animals: How the Creatures at the Margins of Our Lives Have the Most to Teach Us*. Princeton University Press, March 2026

We invite all Fellows and International Honorary Members to send notices about their recent and forthcoming publications, new appointments, exhibitions and performances, films and documentaries, and honors and prizes to bulletin@amacad.org.

MEMBER EVENTS

The Audrey Geisel University House at the University of California, San Diego, site of the April 30, 2026, members' reception.



Newly elected member **Vlad Vicol** and **Juan de Pablo** (New York University) enjoy the June 3, 2026, New York new members' reception and Morton L. Mandel Conversation featuring **Elizabeth Hillman** (National 9/11 Memorial and Museum).



Christine Borgman (University of California, Los Angeles), **Michael Lens** (University of California, Los Angeles), and **George Mood** (attorney) at the UCLA Luskin Center on April 26, 2026, for a reception and conversation about "What Can We Learn about Rebuilding from Los Angeles?"



John Carethers (University of California, San Diego) with newly elected members **Erica Ollmann Saphire** and **Mitchell Kronenberg** (both La Jolla Institute for Immunology) at the University of California, San Diego Audrey Geisel University House for a members' reception on April 30, 2026.



Glenn Shafer (Rutgers, The State University of New York) and **Nell Painter** (Princeton University) enjoy the June 3, 2026, New York new members' reception and Morton L. Mandel Conversation.

Jedediah Morse, "A Bill of Mortality, and of the Births, Marriages and Baptisms, for the Town of Charlestown, (Massachusetts) for the years 1789 to 1797, both inclusive; to which is prefixed a description of the town," February 9, 1798, page 1.

Life and Death in the Republic

By **Maggie Boyd**, *Archivist*

In 1785, the Academy undertook one of the earliest large-scale, systematic public health surveys in the United States. At its 22nd meeting, held on August 24, 1785, members voted “that a Committee be appointed to devise a plan for a Bill of mortality, to be dispersed through the several towns in this Commonwealth, to be reported at the next Meeting.” With origins in sixteenth-century plague tallies and demographer John Graunt’s seventeenth-century system for tracking demographic statistics, Bills of Mortality recorded basic vital statistics, but sometimes also unusual phenomena, such as cosmological and meteorological events. The committee drafted a “Formula,” or form approved by the Academy, to be printed and distributed to ministers, doctors, and town clerks throughout New England.

The Bills of Mortality received by the Academy document patterns of life, death, and population growth in the early American Republic. One Bill, submitted by geographer Jedediah Morse in 1798, includes a table of causes of death in Charlestown between 1789 and 1797. Among the recorded causes were “Worms” (4 deaths), “Dentition” (2 deaths), and “Overlaid” (1 death), referring to a fatal accident. Another table shows a growing community in Charlestown, with nearly twice as many births in 1797 as in 1789.

&

To learn more, visit our website at www.amacad.org/news/bills-of-mortality.

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Bulletin

of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences

136 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA 02138
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Bulletin Summer 2026 • Volume LXXIX, No. 4
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The Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences (ISSN 0002-712X) is published quarterly by the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 136 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Periodicals rate postage paid at Boston, MA, and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Bulletin*, American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 136 Irving Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

The views expressed in the *Bulletin* are those held by each contributor and are not necessarily those of the Board of Directors and members of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.



Eric Liu (Citizen University) shared this selfie with **Danielle Allen** (Harvard University) and **Stephen Heintz** (Rockefeller Brothers Fund) and reflected on the conclusion of Our Common Purpose, the Academy initiative they cochaired.

He described the work as “one of the most meaningful endeavors I’ve ever been part of” and highlighted accomplishments achieved by the cross-ideological commission and its network of champions.

“Shared leadership among three friends who love their country is a microcosm of how a democracy can regenerate contagiously,” he wrote. “I am so grateful to have had this experience. And excited for it to seed new forms of contribution.”

Eric Liu shared his reflections on LinkedIn, and the Academy reshared them.

Follow the Academy on social media to keep current with news and events.



www.linkedin.com/company/american-academy-of-arts-and-sciences



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