NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER

2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT
THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER is a private, nonprofit organization, and the only independent institute of its kind dedicated exclusively to advanced study in all areas of the humanities. Through its residential fellowship program, the Center provides scholars with the resources necessary to generate new knowledge and further understanding of all forms of cultural expression, social interaction, and human thought. Through its education programs, the Center strengthens teaching on the collegiate and pre-collegiate levels. Through public engagement intimately linked to its scholarly and educational programs, the Center promotes understanding of the humanities and advocates for appreciation of their foundational role in a democratic society.

The National Humanities Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation or preference, gender identity, or age in the administration of its selection policies, educational policies, and other Center administered programs.

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7 T.W. Alexander Drive, P.O. Box 12256, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2256

Tel: 919-549-0661
Fax: 919-990-8535
info@nationalhumanitiescenter.org
nationalhumanitiescenter.org
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message from the President and Director</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Programs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Programs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Engagement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Statements</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting the Center</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Giving Summary</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Supporters</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff of the Center</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 1938 poem is a full-throated exhortation of the capacity of literature and art to fulfill the best of human aspirations, a compelling vision of poetry’s mission to connect the earthly to the spiritual and to preserve the history and customs that sustain us individually and culturally. “Under Ben Bulben” is a personal elegy, but also a lament for vanishing practices and beliefs which poetry tries to conserve. Yeats urges a thorough education in the beauty and truth that bolster memory and purpose while condemning disconnected bluster masquerading as consequential:

W.B. Yeats concludes one of his last poems, “Under Ben Bulben,” with his famous epitaph thereafter inscribed on his simple gravestone in modest Drumcliff churchyard in his native Sligo,

Cast a cold Eye  
On life, on Death.  
Horseman, pass by!

The last line was adopted as the title for Larry McMurtry’s 1961 best-selling western novel that became the basis for the film Hud starring Paul Newman and Patricia Neal.
Irish poets learn your trade
Sing whatever is well made,
Scorn the sort now growing up
All out of shape from toe to top,
Their unremembering hearts and heads
Base-born products of base beds.

Recently, at a dinner in Philadelphia hosted by trustees Peter Benoliel and Willo Carey, I was asked by one of the guests to define the humanities. My reply did not include the usual litany of disciplines by which we typically present the taxonomy of humanistic inquiry. Instead I remarked that the humanities study the human condition in all of its complexities, accomplishments, transgressions, and messiness. Such a broad-based definition naturally conjures the question, “well then, what is not included in the humanities?” To which I might answer, “almost nothing.” Such inclusiveness does not in any way dilute the humanities; rather, this reach underscores their breadth, relevance, and endurance.

In a time when the responsibilities of citizenship and concerns about sustaining a coherent citizenry often seem dire, when the moral obligations of leadership embedded in our Constitution appear marginalized, the humanities compel recognition of both higher individual purpose and of what we share in common. Although myopic and erroneous economic messaging promotes their reduction, sometimes their deletion, I am reminded of the great economic theorist John Maynard Keynes’s lament, “We destroy the beauty of the countryside because the unappropriated splendors of nature have no economic value. We are capable of shutting off the sun and the stars because they do not pay a dividend.” Indeed, the humanities expand our notion of what is useful, challenging us to think about what things are worth as well as what they cost.

When thought sometimes seems a form of resistance, the National Humanities Center remains a beacon of context and clarification. Our staff and trustees remain deeply dedicated to this extraordinary responsibility and high purpose.

Robert D. Newman, President and Director
Scholarly Programs

Thirty-eight scholars from a broad array of institutions across the United States and eight foreign countries spent the year in residence at the National Humanities Center in 2018-19.

The hope of the fellowship program is that Fellows don’t just complete their books more quickly than they would if they had not been given a reprieve from the daily demands of their university lives. Although we recognize that time to read, think, and write is the most precious aspect of the fellowship experience, the Center also is a setting in which projects can be transformed in unexpected ways and become qualitatively different as a result of serendipitous conversations across disciplines, special events, and the library’s extraordinary ability to procure rare and difficult-to-find sources (scholars requested over 10,000 items during the 2018–19 year). One Fellow summed up the special alchemy at the Center this way: “You sometimes feel like you learn more at lunch than you do in your office, given the conversations in which one can work out solutions to scholarly problems or find new directions and inspirations when the work is going well.”

The Center hosted thirty-eight Fellows from fifteen U.S. states, as well as Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, South Africa, and the United Kingdom in 2018–19, and, as is usually the case, those scholars were at the heart of the Center’s activities throughout the year. Their projects spanned geographies, time periods, and disciplines, and included a twentieth-century social history of Jamaican music, a study of neurological reading disorders and their implications for literary studies, and a history of the invention of heaven and hell, to name just a few. Six members of the class worked in the environmental humanities, which fit well with the Center’s environmental theme for the year, and three scholars joined us again through our Luce Foundation-funded East Asia Program.
In addition to the kinds of spontaneous encounters that occurred during the year, the Center also held two public Scholar-to-Scholar conversations focused on “Remembering Mussolini: Fascism, Representation and Memory in Post-War Italy” in December and “Environmental Humanities at the Crossroads of Climate Change” in March. The fall event brought Fellows Mia Fuller and Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi into conversation, while the spring conversation on the environment featured environmental humanists Joni Adamson, Tait Keller, and Shawn Van Ausdal.

The Center also convened two conferences that addressed issues and emerging trends in the humanities. In the fall, the Center hosted “Digital Humanities Nuts and Bolts: From Idea to Sustainable Project.” This conference focused on the nexus between scholarly concerns and technical considerations and featured lightning talks by a variety of...
scholars, including Fellows Paul Fyfe and Ted Underwood, and panels on how digital scholarship should be evaluated, curated, and archived. The Center was also pleased to host a delegation of scholars and administrators from Fudan University who are involved in the digital humanities. All sessions were streamed live via the Center’s YouTube channel, and the conference generated one of the Center’s largest social media responses of the year.

Our three-day spring conference, “Beyond Despair: Theory and Practice in the Environmental Humanities,” served as the culmination of year-long seminars and events on the topic. The conference featured humanists, scientists, legal and policy experts, and educators. The wildlife photographer and activist Subhankar Banerjee delivered the opening keynote lecture and participants convened at the Duke Campus Farm the following morning for presentations on the Farm’s efforts to explore the deep history of the soil, to the land’s plantation past, and the staff’s current efforts to remediate the soil and teach small-scale farming. The conference also featured Fellows Joni Adamson, Julie Velásquez Runk, Claudia Leal, Joseph E. Taylor III, Stephanie Foote (2017–18), and Matthew Booker (2016–17). Pre-recorded and live streamed Skype interviews with three scholars in East Asia were led by Fellow Robin Visser (2017–18) and focused on “Teaching the Environment at Fudan University and Nanyang Technological University.”

The year also featured significant public scholarship by past and current Fellows. Six scholars from this year’s class participated in our “Discovery and Inspiration” public conversations series presented in partnership with the Chapel Hill Public Library. For the second year, this forum introduced the Center’s scholars and their work to enthusiastic audiences. Fellows also gave talks across the country and abroad and lent their expertise to broader intellectual conversations through radio interviews, podcasts, and opinion pieces in printed and online publications. Historian of technology Mar Hicks wrote a piece for the Guardian, “From the Birth of Computing to Amazon: Why Tech’s Gender Problem is Nothing New;” James Chappel cowrote a piece on ageism in the forthcoming elections for the Washington Post; and Honor Sachs wrote for the Washington Post, “How Pocahontas—The Myth and the Slur—Props Up White Supremacy.”

This was also the second year that the Center held its highly successful summer residency program, in which institutional sponsor organizations send scholars to spend the month of June at the Center. This year’s summer cohort included 36 scholars from 18 institutions in 10 states. Their time was well spent and productive. “It’s hard to imagine a better place for propelling your scholarly activity,” one scholar noted. “I’ve never been so free to pursue my ideas, nor have I ever made as much progress on my work, even during the summer months or while at other residential fellowships.”

We were also gratified to learn of the many books that were published and prizes that were won by former Fellows for the work they accomplished at the Center, including Jeffrey Stewart (1990–91) who won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Biography for The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke. We continue to fill the shelves of the Robert F. and Margaret S. Goheen Collection with the books that have resulted from the time scholars spend at the Center—as of the writing of this report the count is at 1,673 volumes and steadily growing. In a world where deep and careful thought and expertise seem in desperate need, we take tremendous heart in the fact that we are providing a home for precisely such work.
PICTURED: Fellow Joseph E. Taylor III
Education programs at the National Humanities Center build bridges between the academic world and the working classroom, addressing both classic and contemporary aspects of the humanities. With a focus on the integration of scholarship and content, inquiry-based pedagogy, and emerging technologies, we encourage the growth of education professionals at the K-12 and collegiate levels. Our work is supported by a separate endowment and dedicated staff, and the education team enhances the work of the Center’s scholarly programs by implementing professional development initiatives that translate research and scholarship into pedagogical practice. This project-based approach supports the development of classroom-ready instructional materials, research opportunities, and learning experiences.

Education programs at the Center focus on three key mission goals:

1. to promote knowledge and appreciation for the humanities through educational programs and resources;
2. to pioneer new content understandings, pedagogical approaches, and outreach projects through the use of emerging technologies; and
3. to broaden the national and international reach, impact, and recognition of the NHC.

HOW WE COLLABORATED WITH EDUCATORS AT ALL LEVELS IN 2018–19:

3.7M UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS FOR THE SUITE OF EDUCATION PAGES
NEARLY 8K EDUCATORS ATTENDED OR PARTICIPATED IN LONG DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS
OVER 200 EDUCATORS ATTENDED OR PARTICIPATED IN FACE-TO-FACE WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, OR INSTITUTES
OVER 70 EMINENT HUMANITIES SCHOLARS CONTRIBUTED TO AND PARTICIPATED IN PROGRAMS
Collectively presented as Humanities in Class, the Center provides high quality instructional resources, hosts ongoing virtual trainings and events, and leads on-site workshops and institutes. All current programs reach or exceed capacity and serve a well-balanced audience of educators—40% high school, 25% middle grades, 15% elementary grades, and 20% post-secondary levels.

The implication of the popularity of these programs is clear: educators want up-to-date, rigorous, content-based resources that can anchor instruction. More than a body of knowledge, educators want to make visible the processes used by scholarly experts as they approach their work. So trained, educators can then create meaningful learning experiences that translate research into practice for students at all levels.

Among the highlights of this year’s programs were the variety of face-to-face training sessions and workshops that created meaningful connections in support of humanities education. For example:

- In fall 2018, the Center hosted a one-day symposium for educators that explored the complex landscape of the transatlantic slave trade through archival investigations, titled “Sugar Mill, Sea, and Society in Caribbean History.” Participants worked with the National Archives of the United Kingdom to examine the layers of this global system using artifacts and documents.

- In spring 2019, the Center welcomed a cohort of teachers from Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina, all of whom were military veterans. Teaching, like military service, is a
vocation in which the personal and professional are very closely tied, where the culture reflects a civic-minded call to duty, and where motivations and rewards are often intrinsic. In “Troops to Teachers: Helping Classrooms and Communities Understand the Military Experience,” this cohort worked with literary scholars and writers to explore key elements of the military family experience using literature. In turn, each participant created a project to implement in their home communities and classrooms to make the same connection.

- Also in spring 2019, the NHC partnered with the Digital Humanities Center at San Diego State University to lead a five-day institute for PhD students in the humanities from five West Coast universities. This regional graduate student residency allowed participants to create narrative podcasts on a set of interdisciplinary issues in support of their research and teaching.

Our work continues to be driven by the contributions and consultations of educators at all levels. This year’s 15-person Teacher Advisory Council served the NHC by developing and curating instructional materials, consulting in research and field work, and leading professional development institutes and workshops in districts across the country. Representing thirteen states and all major humanities disciplines, this group grounded our work in a relevant, meaningful way for the working classroom.

The humanities offer a set of powerful tools to help make better sense of the world in which we live, and create opportunities for educators at all levels to practice with and gain expertise in the use of these tools. Through partnerships and service, we will continue to build advocacy in support of the humanities.

PICTURED (BELOW) Members of the Teacher Advisory Council meet at the Center in October. (1st row, l–r): Carolyn Streets, Katie Willett, Kyle Jones, Melissa Tracy, Judy Lindquist; (2nd row, l–r): Karen Carroll Cave, Lauren Boop, Michelle Kaighn, Sara Layton, Skye Shirley, Elizabeth Taylor, Andy Mink; (3rd row, l–r): Carl Rosin, Julie Trotter, Scot Smith, Rick Parker, Bonnie Belshe, Patrick Sprinkle.
PICTURED Members of the Teacher Advisory Council attend a retreat in October
Public Engagement

Providing Audiences with Access to the Work and Thought of Leading Humanists

The Center is dedicated to increasing public awareness and appreciation for the humanities, providing access to the work and thought of leading humanists and highlighting the ways in which humanistic thought enriches the lives of individuals and contributes to a vibrant, pluralistic democracy. Through public lectures and conversations, conferences, podcasts and video recordings, and a variety of digital and social media platforms, the Center offers public audiences opportunities to engage with scholars and their work, consider pressing topics through a humanistic lens, and share their own humanities experiences with others.

Public events at the Center in 2018-19 were curated to engage the interests of a diverse audience. Meanwhile, a series of activities throughout the year considered how the humanities may help us better understand ecological crises and formulate more effective ways to address them. Highlights of the years’ events included two conferences—the first, a daylong conference on “Digital Humanities Nuts and Bolts: From Idea to Sustainable Project,” was held on October 2, 2018; the other, “Beyond Despair: Theory and Practice in Environmental Humanities,” took place April 3-5, 2019. Other special events included public talks by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh and photographer and environmental scholar Subhankar Banerjee, who presented the opening keynote of the “Beyond Despair” conference, and two “Scholar-to-Scholar” panels with NHC Fellows, the first focused on cultural memory and Mussolini and the second on the humanities’ response to climate change. The Center also hosted two visual art exhibits in partnership with the Raleigh-based Visual Art Exchange, on disability aesthetics and on artists’ responses to environmental degradation. Both exhibits were accompanied by fascinating panel discussions involving the exhibits’ scholarly curators and contributing artists.

In addition to those events, the NHC continued its popular “Discovery & Inspiration” series, produced in partnership with the Chapel Hill Public Library, with NHC Fellows talking more intimately about their work as well as what intrigues and inspires them about the subjects they study.
This year’s series, drawing on the Center’s yearlong focus on environmental humanities, featured conversations with Shawn Van Ausdal, Claudia Leal, Joseph Taylor III, Joni Adamson, Tait Keller, and Julie Velásquez Runk.

Podcasts represent another expanding area of public engagement activity at the Center. The Center now has three seasons of one-on-one interviews with Fellows discussing their work in depth. Presented as the *Discovery and Inspiration* podcast series, these conversations are widely available on popular podcasting platforms such as iTunes, Google Play Music, and SoundCloud. A second, longer-format podcast series, *Nerds in the Woods*, was also launched as a pilot this past year. This series, which explores topics with multiple scholarly voices, was released with two initial episodes. The first, which features scholars discussing the Caribbean—its history, slave trade, environment, music—was produced by Claire Bunschoten and Michael Levine from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with support from the Humanities for the Public Good initiative. The second, examining the environmental humanities and notions of “home” was produced by a team of students funded through Duke University’s Story+ project.

In addition to drawing attention to the work of scholars, the Center also actively advocates on behalf of the humanities. The *Humanities in Action* website features news about the humanities and highlights perspectives from leading humanists on compelling issues; provides information about public policies affecting humanities research, education, and public programs; and offers resources and opportunities for members of the public to join our efforts to advocate for the humanities in their communities. Updated regularly, *Humanities in Action* features curated, humanities-focused content about pressing subjects both inside and outside the classroom.
The **Humanities Moments** project continues to grow and expand. The project currently houses over 300 anecdotal accounts contributed by individuals from all walks of life reflecting on the transformative power of the humanities. From well-known musicians, like the E Street Band’s Steven Van Zandt, or writers such as Charles Frazier, author of *Cold Mountain*, as well as dozens of students, teachers, doctors, business leaders, politicians, and others, the Humanities Moments collection is a testament to the fundamental value of the humanities for everyone.

**Drawing attention to the work of scholars, the Center actively advocates on behalf of the humanities.**

Beyond its role in demonstrating the universality of the humanities, the Humanities Moments project has been adopted as a pedagogical tool in a number of high schools and colleges, including Texas A&M University and the University of Utah. In the past year, the [humanitiesmoments.org](http://humanitiesmoments.org) website has also been updated to improve navigation and accessibility. All video contributions in Humanities Moments are now closed captioned and audio contributions are accompanied by written transcripts.
PICTURED Tom Linden and Jeremy Jackson at the “Beyond Despair” conference, April 3–5, 2019
# Financial Statements

**Statement of Financial Position as of June 30, 2019**

## Assets

### Current Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>$1,415,238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants receivable, current portion</td>
<td>215,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promises to give – annual fund</td>
<td>137,010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>11,239</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,779,238</strong></td>
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### Noncurrent Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted cash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
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<td>Grants receivable, net of current portion</td>
<td>125,042</td>
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<td>Promises to give</td>
<td>27,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Endowment Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>72,074,336</strong></td>
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**Total Assets** $75,796,631

## Liabilities

### Current Liabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounts payable and accrued expenses</td>
<td>$203,384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue</td>
<td>111,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current maturity of note payable</td>
<td>164,251</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>479,510</strong></td>
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**Total Liabilities** $479,510

## Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without donor restrictions</td>
<td>$1,527,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With donor restrictions</td>
<td>73,789,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>75,317,121</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets** $75,796,631
## Statement of Activities*

### Without Donor Restrictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2019 Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contributions, gifts, and grants</td>
<td>$1,604,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net investment return</td>
<td>$645,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program income</td>
<td>$2,275,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulting and conference income</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous income</td>
<td>$25,204</td>
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<tr>
<td>Realized loss on fixed asset disposal</td>
<td>($1,251)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>($4,638,393)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$2,502,894</td>
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### With Donor Restrictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>$2,502,894</td>
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### Expenses

#### Program Services

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Fellowship programs</td>
<td>$2,968,886</td>
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<td>Education programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES</strong></td>
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#### Supporting Services

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Management and general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>$705,305</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$5,489,107</td>
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<tr>
<td>Losses from bad debts</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>$5,489,107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Changes in Net Assets

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2019 Totals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65,979</td>
<td>($2,986,213)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS – BEGINNING OF THE YEAR</strong></td>
<td>78,303,334</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,527,370</td>
<td>$75,317,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NET ASSETS – END OF THE YEAR</strong></td>
<td>$75,317,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year ended June 30, 2019
The National Humanities Center is an independent, privately incorporated institute supported by grants and contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, universities, and other institutions, as well as other public and private sources.

The Center also has a permanent endowment, valued at $71 million on June 30, 2019, that provided expendable income covering approximately 67 percent of its annual operating costs.

On the following pages is a summary of giving from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, and a list of individuals, corporations, foundations, and other institutions that provided support during the year.

In addition to the institutions, trustees, Fellows, and other friends noted in this section, the Center is also grateful to Duke University, North Carolina State University, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for their library and technical assistance.

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**ANNUAL GIVING SUMMARY**

- **Corporations, Private Foundations, and Similar Sources**: $317,310
- **Institutional Sponsors**: $415,500
- **Individual Gifts**: $916,982
- **Total**: $1,649,792
PRESIDENT’S COUNCIL ($25,000+)

Barbara Asch and Jonathan Weiss
Peter Benoliel and Willo Carey
  *in memory of John Birkelund*
Jennifer M. Daniels and Daniel L. Daniels
Cees de Bruin
J. Porter and Victoria Durham

J JR Foundation of the Jewish Communal Fund
Courtney Lederer and Mark Thierfelder
Patricia R. and Thruston B. Morton
Jane O. Newman* and John H. Smith*
Carl and Betty Pforzheimer

Lawrence and Lucy Ricciardi
  *in honor of Peter Benoliel*
Tom Seherer and Georgia Nugent
Raymond J. Wiacek
A. Morris Williams, Jr.

SCHOLAR’S COUNCIL ($10,000 – $24,999)

Anonymous
James & Janet Averill Charitable Fund of the Vanguard Charitable Endowment Program
The Barrington Foundation, Inc.
Elizabeth Birkelund

Thomas C. Foley and Leslie Fahrenkopf Foley
Pamela and Doug Hendrickson
Richard and Jane Levy
Nancy Lewis†
Cynthia and John C. O’Hara
Cara W. Robertson*

Sally and Russell Robinson
David Bruce Smith
Bruce VonCannon

DIRECTOR’S COUNCIL ($2,500 – $9,999)

Thomas Brothers* and Tekla Jachimiak
Dennis and Leesa Campbell
William D. Cohan
Kevin M. Guthrie
William Chester Jordan

Karen R. Lawrence
Robert and Vicky Newman
Dr. Vincent E. Price
Carol Quillen
Susan W. and Carl W. Robertson
  *in honor of Cara W. Robertson*

Joan* Hinde and Philip* Stewart
Joseph E. Taylor III*
Ben Vinson III*
Pauline R. Yu

* Fellow † Deceased
PATRONS ($1,000 – $2,499)

Anonymous (2)  
William Banks*  
in support of NHC’s HBCU Fellowships  
Weihong Bao* and Ling Hon Lam  
Professor Edna G. Bay*  
David Blackbourn  
David Bromwich  
Ric Burns  
Heidi N. Camp  
Claire D. Clark  
Carolyn and W. Robert Connor  
Robin Einhorn*  
Frances Daly Fergusson  
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