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The American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1874. Its objects are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress.

Needs of the Humanities

The improvement of scholarship in the humanities has been the focus of the Ford Humanities Project at Princeton University. Richard Schlatter, provost of Rutgers University and director of the Humanities Project, has recently summarized the findings in a list of eight needs for improved scholarship in the humanities.

1) Better libraries, particularly in the younger and poorer universities. There is also need for improved methods of reproducing manuscripts and rare or out-of-print items.

2) Financial help in printing some works that will not pay for themselves, especially such expensive books as those in art history or musicology.

3) A good weekly magazine of critical reviews.

4) Grants to provide free time for intensive work.

5) Small grants for travel to special libraries or other resources, purchase of books, secretarial help, or whatever else will enable the scholar to make better use of his knowledge and talents.

6) More graduate fellowships.

7) One or more new centers of humanistic learning, comparable to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton or the Center for the Study of the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto.

8) Better coordination and organization within a university to foster humanistic learning.

This is indeed a modest list. There are several reasons why scientists should step forward and offer to help see that the needs are met. One is the matter of balance. It has sometimes been comforting, but is usually erroneous, to believe that government grants for science have enabled universities to use a larger fraction of their general funds in support of the humanities. We cannot believe this and also believe that the overhead on government grants fails to meet true costs. In many a university the rapid expansion of science has been partly at the expense of other areas of university responsibility.

The better education of future scientists is also involved. There is good reason for having some scientists broadly acquainted with areas of scholarship other than science, and for giving those who later become most highly specialized a more general education in their earlier years. We cannot expect either group to be educated in the best way possible if scholarship in the humanities is starved out of existence.

Of national import are the facts that only a few universities support much high-quality work in the arts and humanities and that they draw their students largely from a rather narrow geographic region and social base. The Ivy League colleges and universities have become the prime breeding ground for humanists, and the higher the quality (as measured by fellowships and other awards) the more concentrated the base from which they come. This dangerous narrowness leaves large numbers of future scientists, teachers, and leaders in all fields of national endeavor without stimulation by humanistic scholarship, which, like scientific scholarship, must be spread widely among universities and colleges if its purposes are to the maximally achieved.

It is for the humanists to take the lead in seeking to meet the needs they have identified. As they do so, scientists can join ranks with them, lending encouragement and support. The improvement of scholarship in all its branches is our common cause.—D.W.