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Outreach through NEH Seminars and Institutes

Classicists have directed highly successful NEH summer seminars and institutes, but there is a continuing shortage of new directors, hence too few such offerings in our field in most years. NEH, even after 40 years, is still regarded principally as a provider of research fellowships. Also, the academic reward system in the humanities, classics in particular, tends to be too traditional and getting grants for purposes other than individual research, is often unrewarded.

APA's new emphasis on outreach offers hope for change. NEH summer seminars for college and university faculty have been around for some 30 years (I have directed five); seminars for school teachers were instituted in 1983 (I taught the first such seminar in classics that year on the Homeric epics and the *Aeneid*, with a repeat in 1984). In addition, I've directed two experimental seminars, one for college juniors and a year-long residential seminar for college faculty, and a major, 3-year long collaborative project between the local school district and my university for some 100 high school teachers on world literature. I will stress the urgency of such activity.

My point is very simple: opportunities abound and funding is eminently obtainable. All my projects were so designed as to be of interest to the broader world of humanities scholars and educators. My seminars, for instance, have always included classicists, historians, art historians, teachers of religious and cultural studies, and sometimes anthropologists and philosophers. I have learned as much from these "students" as they have from me. At the same time, this kind of interdisciplinary outreach--easy to do because classics is inherently interdisciplinary--is vital to secure the future of classical studies in America as more than an insular project.

NEH has offered the possibility of a foreign location for a good number of years, and my two most recent seminars have been located in Rome. The essential component here is the integration of the material culture that is relevant to the topic of the seminar. It is again worth pointing out that this sort of emphasis is paralleled by developments in the profession: an increasing number of job searches now combine literature or history with "material culture," however defined.

I would strongly urge, therefore, more members of our profession, and especially established scholars and teachers, to be more active and submit proposals to NEH. There is a lot of flexibility and a lot of opportunity as well as need. Throughout my presentation, I will use specific examples from my experience with these seminars and institutes to illustrate my general points.