

April 13, 1927

Dear Mr. Stokes:

Thank you very much for your very helpful note of April ninth. I hope very much that you will discuss the subject freely when it comes up at the May meeting. May I make one comment at this time, namely, that for our purposes I should regard humanities as including everything in the broad field generally denoted by the term, except such activities as are otherwise cared for. For example, art is being looked after by the Carnegie Corporation, music by the Juilliard Foundation, sociology by the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, English literature and art history in the sense in which it is being cultivated in Princeton would, I think, on this basis fall to us.

With much appreciation,

Sincerely yours,

ABRAHAM FLEXNER

Mr. Anson Phelps Stokes  
2408 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

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			2408 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
			Washington, D. C.

Humanities  
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April 9, 1927

Dr. Abraham Flexner  
General Education Board  
61 Broadway  
New York City

Dear Mr. Flexner:

I received this morning your letter of April 7th with its memorandum on the Humanities. This I have read through with care and interest. I would make the following comments:

(1) The emphasis throughout the memorandum seems to be mainly on Ancient History, Ancient languages, and Archaeology. These are very important but the word "Humanities" should be understood to include a very broad field, including Art, Music, Education, Literature, Sociology, etc. Now the interest in different portions of this field differ greatly. For instance, there is a very keen interest in the field of English Literature almost everywhere, and there is a growing interest in Art and Art History.

(2) I heartily approve of your recommendations (1), (2), and (4). As to (3), I approve of it if you feel that the "Handbook of Learned Societies" published by the Carnegie institution in June, 1908, which is an admirable publication, is out of date; or if you feel that it needs supplementing by a more philosophical and less detailed study.

(3) I would suggest your consideration of a fifth recommendation, namely, the assistance in purchasing books on the Humanities in University Libraries. This represents in many places one of the greatest difficulties. And this might be connected with a sixth suggestion, that encouragement should be given to a movement which would help the Universities to apportion among themselves those humanitarian fields where research is highly specialized. This would have a special bearing on the library problem. I have in mind that just as the College libraries at Oxford and Cambridge have agreed among themselves as to certain delimitations of their fields to certain fields in which they specialize, so the same procedure is possible here.

(4) I am particularly interested in your emphasis on Fellowships for Humanistic study in this country or abroad, and especially abroad. I believe that this comes strictly within our charter rights, and that it represents one of the most important fields in which the General Education Board could enter. I also liked particularly your idea of giving to Universities for advanced work in the Humanities and leaving it to them to determine the exact means.

(5) I am inclined to think that I would lay emphasis on graduate work. Consequently the assistance should generally go to the graduate schools of Universities.

P.S. I have made a few comments on the margin of the document.

Always, sincerely yours,

Wm. Phelps Stokes