

***SMU Faculty Senate Resolution on the Proposed Abolition of the NEH
and NEA***

Whereas, the President of the United States has recently proposed abolishing the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and

Whereas, many faculty members at American universities, including SMU, teach and conduct research in the arts and humanities, participate in the creation or exhibition of works of art, and have a deep understanding of their nature and contribution to human civilization, and

Whereas, many of these faculty members have received financial support from the NEH that enabled them to conduct research and publish it, teach their students more effectively, and establish valuable scholarly connections, thereby enhancing the academic stature and global competitiveness of their universities, and

Whereas, many other faculty members have developed and engaged in their creative activity at arts and cultural organizations that have received NEA support, which enabled them to have creative impact, teach their students more effectively, and establish valuable artistic connections, thereby promoting the visibility of their universities, and

Whereas, we the SMU faculty strongly believe that the arts and humanities are centrally important disciplines at SMU and at all institutions seeking to provide both a fine arts and a liberal arts education, and

Whereas, we believe that the study of the arts and humanities deepens a person's understanding of art, religion, literature, ethics, history, politics, human knowledge, and science, and

Whereas, we believe that such understanding is not only valuable in itself, but immensely useful both for citizens of a modern democracy and for participants in a globalized economy, and

Whereas, the abolition of the NEH would mean that SMU and its faculty members would have to try to find alternative sources of funding for the research, teaching, and scholarly networking opportunities described above—which may be difficult or impossible – thus seriously endangering SMU's educational mission in the arts and humanities, and

Whereas, the abolition of the NEH and NEA would mean that similar financial strains would come about for the staff of educational and cultural institutions throughout the US, and

Whereas, the abolition of the NEH and NEA would further perpetuate the myth that the arts and humanities are irrelevant to most Americans, while the facts demonstrate that: 1) arts and cultural organizations are funded and well-distributed across the country, serving communities both poor and affluent, rural and urban; and 2) the NEA's investment in every Congressional District in the country contributes to a \$704 billion arts and culture industry in America, representing 4.2 percent of the annual GDP, and

Whereas, the savings that the abolition of these two agencies would achieve in the federal budget are vanishingly small (\$148 million per agency in a budget of \$3.9 trillion dollars, with a deficit of \$587 billion—or 5/100ths of one percent of the deficit), and

Whereas, in conclusion, there is no reason of any sort to abolish these agencies, which do our university, city and the nation so much good,

Be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate calls upon

- (i) members of Congress to reject the proposed abolition of the NEH and NEA and to continue funding them at their current levels or higher; and
- (ii) all members of the SMU community to express their opposition to this proposal to their members of Congress.