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Editor's Letter

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Dear Readers,

Regular readers of *Maine Policy Review* might think that the journal seems heftier than usual, and they are correct: it is the second longest issue we have ever published. This special issue on “humanities and policy” has been two years in the making. During that time, we have collaborated closely with guest editor Liam Riordan, professor of history and director of the University of Maine Humanities Center. Liam is owed full credit, and our debt of thanks, for assembling and working with the 38 authors who have contributed 34 essays and articles that comprise the issue. Authors come from a large number of institutions that offer varied perspectives, from elected officials and state agencies to public and private schools with varied missions, and a host of non-profit cultural organizations. We are honored to feature two Margaret Chase Smith essays written by national leaders in the humanities: William D. Adams, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities (and former president of Colby College) and Jonathan F. Fanton, president of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

As the guest editor notes in his introductory article, the “humanities” and “policy” are often seen as very different endeavors. At the most, we might read something about how particular policies do or do not support the humanities, or about how funding for the humanities in schools or in the public sector is being cut. These are important topics and are certainly addressed in a number of the articles. However, this issue also provides a broader perspective on the role of the humanities in our lives: How can the humanities enhance both our quality of life and our responsibilities as engaged citizens in a democratic society? Together these essays remind us that the humanities are not just subjects to be taught in academic settings, but should infuse everyday life and play a role in policy making.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution from the University of Maine Humanities Center as a major sponsor of this issue, and the contributions from the Colby College Center for the Arts and Humanities and the Maine Humanities Council as benefactors. Their support has played a crucial role supporting the production of this special issue. The Maine Memory Network, a statewide collaboration led by the Maine Historical Society, kindly provided many of the images that appear throughout the journal.

We hope this themed issue provides new insights about the importance of the humanities, the significant ways that policy and humanities intersect, and how much is to be gained by deepening their connections with one another.

Best,

