

Halfway Home for the Humanities

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The arts and the humanities, like everything else, are going to have to do with a lot less Government money. But the recent report to the Reagan Administration from the Presidential Task Force on the Arts and Humanities should quiet fears for the National Endowments. The task force generally praises their subsidies and urges that the programs be retained in their present form.

Their combined \$311 million budget was, originally, to be cut by 50 percent. The reductions now are likely to be considerably less; it is encouraging that President Reagan accepts the recommendation of a continuing strong Federal role in both fields. And the new chairman of the arts endowment, Francis Hod-

soll, is said to combine an interest in the arts with skill at fund-raising. That would make him a man for these times.

But the failure, so far, to find a new chairman for the humanities agency is troubling. The appointment is bogged down in politics, apparently because the "new" conservatives want an ideologue who is unacceptable even to "old" conservatives, not to mention moderates.

The nation is not exactly poor in managers of intellectual enterprises. A President who eloquently quoted Henry James in his response to the task force report should have no difficulty in finding one and ending the stalemate.

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