June 12, 2012

Chairman Jack Reed  
Interior and Environment Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski  
Interior and Environment Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As you and your colleagues consider FY 2013 funding levels for the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) urges you and your colleagues to adequately invest in these federal agencies that, with adequate funding, could support high-quality undergraduate student-faculty collaborative research and scholarship. Undergraduate research is an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline. The more than 600 institutions and over 7,000 individuals who belong to CUR believe that the best way to capture student interest and create enthusiasm for a discipline is through research in close collaboration with faculty members.

Federal investments in undergraduate research are more vital than ever, and have a profound impact on local communities across the country. Undergraduate research provides significant opportunities to students and faculty to examine and improve upon artistic disciplines like dance, music, poetry, and literature, as well as education, linguistics, and history. Earlier this year, CUR hosted an event on Capitol Hill featuring the work of undergraduate researchers in the arts and humanities. The well-attended event provided staff an opportunity to learn about the importance of research in the arts and humanities and the potential role of the federal government in supporting the endeavor. Federal spending priorities should recognize undergraduate research’s important role.

When negotiating FY 2013 funding levels, we ask that you and your colleagues adequately invest in both the NEA and NEH. While both Endowments need restoration of funds after the rescissions made in the FY2012 Omnibus, we ask that the Committee at least maintain the FY2012 level provided for these programs of $146 million.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 202.783.4810 ext. 201 or eambos@cur.org, if you or your staff have any questions. Thank you for your attention to these views.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth L. Ambos  
Executive Officer

Cc: Members of the Senate Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee