



## President's Message

# A 100-YEAR-OLD COLLABORATION THRIVES

The Huntington's relationship with Caltech goes back to the founding of The Huntington itself, when renowned astronomer George Ellery Hale, then director of the Mount Wilson Observatory, and Henry E. Huntington were deep in discussion about what Huntington ultimately would do with his massive library, art, and botanical collections. In letter after letter, Hale brainstormed with Huntington about creating a humanities institution that would complement Throop Academy (which would later become Caltech) with its intense focus on all things science.

Hale writes on March 28, 1916: "Each of the colleges, observatories, museums, and other associations hitherto established here represents only a limited field. There is now a great need of a strong institution of broad scope, uniting all the intellectual interests of this region in a common focus." He goes on to say: "Your library, with its uniquely valuable contents, would at once afford opportunities for extensive literary work. It would become the center of all advanced intellectual interests in this region, encouraging and stimulating visiting scholars and giving them the facilities they need."

The letters from Hale, written over several years, are wildly enthusiastic, aspirational, and detailed—beseeching Huntington to focus on and plan carefully for the future of his collections, and providing him with advice on the architecture of the new "institute," as he described it—"a Parthenon in Pasadena"—and with thoughts on general collecting criteria, research direction, staffing, and so on.

Huntington, a man of far fewer words in his responses, was grateful for the help. "Regarding the suggestions you so kindly make—I may say, the mode of organization is in line with my ideas and I hope...to develop and formulate some such plan." It's interesting to reminisce about these formative years, especially in the run up to our Centennial, which we'll begin celebrating later this year.

Fast forward to today, and the collaboration between Huntington and Hale is thriving, with a variety of partnership programs in place between The Huntington and Caltech. Perhaps the most obvious connection between the two institutions lies in the *history* of science—the study of how scientific knowledge and endeavors have moved forward over time. The Huntington has long been

a center for the study of the history of science, given the strength of its library collections on the subject—made even stronger when we acquired the remarkable Burndy Library of 67,000 rare books and manuscripts on the history of science in 2006, a gift from the Dibner family. Our permanent gallery in the Library exhibition hall, "Beautiful Science: Ideas that Changed the World," is a showcase of scientific history, presenting works by Newton, Galileo, Einstein, and Darwin, among many others, and spanning the history of astronomy, the natural world, medicine, and light and optics.

Given the strength of our holdings, and the interests of Caltech, we've recently forged an exciting new partnership to create the Caltech-Huntington Advanced Research Institute in the History of Science and Technology.

The idea is to provide a place where historians of science and technology can come together to collaborate on new work. On tap: funding for faculty and opportunities for engagement between humanities scholars, scientists, and engineers, providing for a more interdisciplinary level of intellectual collaboration. A summer residential institute will be held for doctoral students, overseen by well-known historians of science who will help shape new academic projects in the field. At a time when the humanities are being *de-emphasized* and sometimes *defunded*, this collaboration is a reminder of the importance of humanistic inquiry on scientific topics and an investment in the intellectual future. We are deeply indebted to Steve Rogers, Huntington Overseer and donor, for providing the funding and encouragement to make this new institute possible.

The new institute parallels two other research institutes based on collaboration with a Southern California university: the USC-Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute and the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

This is an excellent way to set the stage for our Centennial year. The focus of our year-long celebration will be to reflect back on how far we've come, but to also project into the future, imagining all the cross-pollination that might be possible by creating new opportunities for collaborative work, big thinking, and novel approaches. As Huntington and Hale once did.

*Karen R. Lawrence, President*