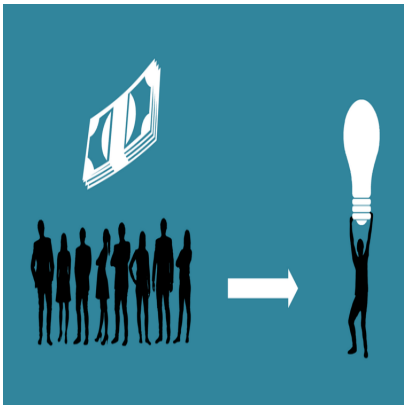


Description

Research funding is an important aspect of academic life. Graduate students, researchers, and professors are always in need of funding for their studies. Recently, there has been a significant development in the distribution of funding. And it is not a good sign for the researchers working in the field of humanities.

Unfortunately, humanities is facing some serious challenges. Enrollment is down. There is a decrease in the number of humanities courses that the universities offer. As a result, allocation of research funding for researchers in humanities is less. This means that researchers have less number of opportunities to pursue research projects and publish their work. Let us check few statistics to know the scenario better.

A Shift Towards the Sciences

At the University of Pennsylvania, the number of humanities majors has dropped significantly over the past decade. This is an example of the shift from the humanities to, for example, majors in the sciences. Bill Gates once said that there is “a severe shortfall of scientists and engineers with expertise to develop the next generation of breakthroughs.” Universities are also prioritizing science as technological advancements continue to develop at a rapid pace. Universities want to be the laboratories for scientific and technological breakthroughs. As a result, there is less focus on the subject humanities.

Changes in Funding Criteria

Distribution of research funding is crucial. Sometimes the application process can be complicated. Also, requirements are continually being tailored to fit subjects in the sciences. For example, we can look at the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK. The goal of the REF is to study trends in research funding and to ensure even distrubution of funding across the full academic spectrum.

Obviously, this is an admirable goal. However, for all of its work to improve research funding, the Research Excellence Framework has some shortcomings. John Marenbon, a senior research fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, highlights one. According to him, the criteria are not designed for humanities subjects, but rather for scientific discoveries or technological advances. In fact, it excludes

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license

important work in art and philosophy.

Some people see the REF as harmful to those studying the humanities. The imbalance of funding and the changes its distribution discourages many in the humanities from pursuing important studies. So, the public is missing out on the research taking place in humanities. In fact, some of the best academics in the humanities are reluctant to share their knowledge and ideas.

Significant Changes in Publishing

There are already plans to change the imbalance of funding opportunities. One significant trend is the move toward open-access-journal publishing (OA). A good example is Open Access Publishing in European Networks (OAPEN). The OAPEN aims to create a sustainable open access model for publishing academic books in the humanities and social sciences. The goal is to promote high-quality academic work that would often go ignored or unpublished in the traditional publishing market.

The main issue that gets lost in the funding debate is the importance of research. Students and professors in all fields should have the opportunity to perform their research freely and to distribute it as well. Open access is a great benefit to researchers in the humanities who find it difficult to find research funding.

What are your experiences with research funding? Have you found the funding application process difficult in your academic career? Please let us know in the comments section below.

Category

1. Career Corner
2. PhDs & Postdocs

Date Created
2018/12/19
Author
eneditor

Copyright: Enago Academy under the CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0 license