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Harriet Zuckerman
Columbia University

Ronald G. Ehrenberg
Cornell University, rge2@cornell.edu

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Recent Trends in Funding for the Academic Humanities and Their Implications

Abstract
[Excerpt] Never abundant, financial support for the "academic humanities" is now scarce. How scarce it is, both in absolute and relative terms, and whether the humanities now confront particularly hard times, are the pressing questions. To piece together an answer, we ask first how much the government, foundations, and private donors provide for the humanities now compared to estimates John D'Arms made in 1995, when he completed his important review of "funding trends."

Then we probe expenditures universities and colleges make on the humanities.

Is there evidence, for example, in institutional budget allocations that the humanities are holding their own, or have rising costs of other academic activities, such as scientific research, been accompanied by reduced support for the humanities? And last, because public universities are so large and numerous,

and because many operate on conspicuously tight budgets, we ask how well the humanities in this class of institutions have fared in comparison with their counterparts at private universities. The answers to such questions are not mere matters of financial accounting. Although much can be achieved in the humanities with quite small investments, the pursuit of excellence in scholarship and teaching in these fields is not cost-free. For relevant evidence, we draw on the American Academy of Arts and Sciences's useful Humanities Indicators Prototype, as well as a variety of other available (but often imperfect) data sources.

Keywords
higher education, humanities, funding, public universities, private universities

Comments

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Harriet Zuckerman & Ronald G. Ehrenberg

Recent trends in funding for the academic humanities & their implications

Never abundant, financial support for the "academic humanities"[1] is now scarce. How scarce it is, both in absolute and relative terms, and whether the humanities now confront particularly hard times, are the pressing questions. To piece together an answer, we ask first how much the government, foundations, and private donors provide for the humanities now compared to estimates John D'Arms made in 1995, when he completed his important review of "funding trends."

Then we probe expenditures universities and colleges make on the humanities. Is there evidence, for example, in institutional budget allocations that the humanities are holding their own, or have rising costs of other academic activities, such as scientific research, been accompanied by reduced support for the humanities? And last, because public universities are so large and numerous, and because many operate on conspicuously tight budgets, we ask

Harriet Zuckerman, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1985, is senior vice president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and professor of sociology emerita at Columbia University. She is the author of "Scientific Elite: Nobel Laureates in the United States" (1996). She edited "The Outer Circle: Women in the Scientific Community" (with Jonathan R. Cole and John T. Bruer, 1991).

Ronald G. Ehrenberg is the Irving M. Ives Professor of Industrial and Labor Relations and Economics at Cornell University and director of the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute. He is the author of "Tuition Rising: Why College Costs So Much" (2000) and the editor of "Doctoral Education and the Faculty of the Future" (with Charlotte V. Kuh, 2008).

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1 John D'Arms, "Funding Trends in the Academic Humanities, 1970 – 1995: Reflections on the Stability of the System," in *What's Happened to the Humanities?* ed. Alvin Kernan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 32. The "academic humanities" are "all fields of study normally grouped together . . . that are identified as departments and programs in humanities, and in which the Ph.D. is the highest earned degree." They also include history (sometimes classified with the social sciences) and aspects of anthropology, ethnology, and archaeology. On the academic humanities more generally, see also Eric S. Rabkin, "Ways of Knowing in the Humanities," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 12 (1) (1978): 105, and Gerald Graff, "The Future of the Profession," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 27 (1) (Spring 1994): 65 – 69.

how well the humanities in this class of institutions have fared in comparison with their counterparts at private universities. The answers to such questions are not mere matters of financial accounting. Although much can be achieved in the humanities with quite small investments, the pursuit of excellence in scholarship and teaching in these fields is not cost-free. For relevant evidence, we draw on the American Academy of Arts and Sciences's useful Humanities Indicators Prototype, as well as a variety of other available (but often imperfect) data sources.[2]

The D'Arms report, covering the quarter century between 1970 and 1995, showed that financial support for the academic humanities fluctuated and was, to say the least, unevenly distributed. Some parts of the enterprise clearly did better than others. He observed that the federal government's contribution via the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) declined only slightly in real terms between 1982 and 1995. However, despite this small overall reduction, the share of NEH funding going to academic researchers and academic institutions decreased far more sharply than it did for other activities, such as support of the "public humanities," while an "astonishing" (D'Arms's word) increase in NEH expenditures went to preserving library collections and increasing access to them.

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At the same time, private funders also decreased their support for humanistic inquiry. The major private sources of fellowships in these years, such as the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the National History Council, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, cut back their expenditures and in some instances reduced the number of awards they made. More generally, the share of all foundation funding that was directed to the humanities also declined.[3] These trends led D'Arms to conclude that "the costs of the [humanities] enterprise . . . [were] being transferred away from the foundations and from the federal sector and back to the colleges and universities themselves – the very institutions that, of course, are already providing the major funding for the scholarly activities of faculty."[4] In response, some academic institutions increased their investments in the humanities, for example by creating interdisciplinary centers and institutes on their campuses, and some added chairs and graduate student support in the humanities to their fund-raising campaigns. But university administra-

2 The data presented in this essay have necessarily been chosen opportunistically. It has not always been possible to locate "current" data; we therefore report the latest information available. No comprehensive dataset on the finances and institutional characteristics of the humanities in comparison with other fields in the arts and sciences is available. The views expressed here are solely our own. Much appreciation goes to Mirinda Martin, a PhD student in economics at Cornell, for her research assistance and to Sharon Brucker, the data manager for the Mellon Graduate Education Initiative. We also extend thanks to Carolyn (Biddy) Martin, Philip E. Lewis, and Joseph S. Meisel for careful readings and astute comments.

3 In the early 1980s, D'Arms notes, the NEH and a small number of private foundations played a disproportionately large role in supporting scholarly work. By the 1990s, however, only the NEH and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation "maintained [their] record of substantial grant making." D'Arms, "Funding Trends in the Academic Humanities," 38. At the 2008 meeting of the ACLS, the Mellon Foundation was dryly labeled "Glinda the good witch" of the humanities.

4 D'Arms, "Funding Trends in the Academic Humanities," 47.

tors report that these efforts have been neither easy nor uniformly successful.[5]

Two important developments of the last twenty years provide context for funding for the academic humanities. The first is the rapid rise in the cost of scientific research, and the second is the decline in the resource base on which public (as against private) institutions can draw.[6] The federal government's retreat from supporting a substantial share of academic science has had much the same effect as its retreat from supporting the academic humanities – although its scale is vastly larger. The costs of science have been shifted increasingly to universities and colleges despite the fact that academic research is responsible for a major share of the nation's scientific advances. Making these advances has been associated with escalating the costs of conducting scientific research and providing the infrastructure it requires. To take just one parochial example, a new life sciences technology research building at Cornell University is budgeted to cost over $160 million,[7] and this is just the beginning: the building is part of a $500 million "genomics initiative" that includes recruitment of new faculty. At the same time, an additional $310 million are being spent on new buildings for the physical sciences and engineering, all financed by funds the university itself will have to provide – and provide all at once.[8]

Cornell is but one of many universities making such expenditures.[9] Academic research in the sciences has also become more expensive because the costs of research have risen, because federal policies relating to indirect cost recoveries and requirements for the provision of matching funds have imposed further expenses on universities, and because competition for new faculty members in the sciences and engineer-

5 This continues to be the case. For one example, the University of California, Berkeley, was recently the beneficiary of a generous grant of $150 million from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for professorships that included the requirement that the University also raise funds for the same purpose. Robert Birgeneau, chancellor at UC Berkeley, acknowledges that it has been far easier to raise such funds for the sciences than for the humanities; see "Frontiers of Knowledge, Frontiers of Education," April 15, 2005; available at http://cio.chance.berkeley.edu/chancellor/birgeneau/remarks/4-15-2005-frontiers.htm.

6 Paula E. Stephan and Ronald G. Ehrenberg, eds., *Science and the University* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

7 By way of comparison, Cornell has budgeted $17 million for an addition to its art museum. Another somewhat ambiguous indicator of expenditures on the humanities is Cornell's spending $42.2 million on its library in 2005 – 2006. Part of this total, of course, is for scientific serials and is not for the humanities alone. See *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 31, 2007.

8 As Philip E. Lewis, former dean of the arts and sciences at Cornell observed, the scale of institutional expenditures on the sciences cannot be understood without putting together the costs of the diverse projects under way at a given time, all of which must be paid for simultaneously.

9 The drive to invest in science research is conspicuously evident in decisions universities have made to build new campuses to accommodate growth in scientific activity. Consider Harvard's construction of a new campus across the Charles River in Allston (to be used for a variety of academic purposes, including the sciences) and Yale's recent purchase of the Bayer Healthcare complex nearby to enlarge its scientific facilities while providing space for other academic activities. See *The Boston Globe*, January 12, 2007, and Yale University News Release, "Yale University to Expand Medical and Scientific Programs with Acquisition of Bayer Complex," April 30, 2008.

ing has intensified, leading to dramatic increases in the size of start-up packages being offered in recruiting new faculty members.

Such increases in the costs of academic science inevitably lead, as we suggested, to questions about how they are being paid for and whether reductions in spending on the academic humanities have helped pay the bills. This leaves open of course the thorny question of how well current expenditures on academic science and the academic humanities permit research and scholarship to be pursued at a high level of distinction.[10]

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Like the rising costs of science, the shrinking resource base of public colleges and universities has potentially significant implications for the academic humanities.[11] Financial problems state governments have faced since the late 1980s have kept average appropriations per full-time student in public institutions in line with the rate of inflation but have not permitted them to grow. At the same time, new demographic and political pressures call for enlarging enrollments and building new campuses. The University of California system, for example, is in the midst of a major expansion in which new campuses, such as the one at Merced, are being built while the enrollments at a number of the older established ones are also rising: during the decade that ended in 2006 – 2007, full-time equivalent enrollment at the California system as a whole increased by about 40 percent.

The low rate of growth in appropriations per student combined with increasing enrollments has strained the budgets of public colleges and universities and has not been compensated for by increases in tuition income, which has grown at no more than 2 – 3 percent above inflation. As it happens, the same rate of increase has occurred in tuition at private institutions, but simple arithmetic shows the highly unequal absolute effects of equal rates of increase because tuition levels are much higher at private than at public institutions. Thus similar percentage increases in tuition generate many more dollars per student at the former institutions than at the latter.

10 In recent years, federal support for academic science has increased in some areas but not in others. Although funding by the National Science Foundation (NSF) rose between 2000 and 2008 for mathematics and the physical sciences and to a lesser degree for the geosciences, expenditures on computer and information science, engineering, polar science, and those parts of the biological and social sciences that the NSF supports have been flat. *AAAS Funding Update on NSF R&D in FY2008*; available at http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd/nsf08s.htm. Budgets for the biological sciences supported through the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have been larger in absolute size but have been essentially flat since 2005. They have lagged well behind inflation and even farther behind the price index the NIH has developed for biological research. From a high in 2001, when approximately one out of three applications was funded, the success rate dropped in 2008 to one in five. This has occurred because of an increase in applications and despite a larger number of grants being funded. See *National Institutes of Health in the FY2008 Budget. AAAS Report XXXII, Research and Development FY2008*; available at http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd/08pch7.htm.

When adjusted for inflation, federal funds for academic science and engineering actually declined in the last two years, an "unprecedented" development in the thirty-six years such data have been collected by the National Science Foundation. Doug Lederman, "'Unprecedented' 2-Year Decline for U.S. Science Funds"; available at http://www.Insidehighered.com/news/2008/08/25/r-d.

11 Ronald G. Ehrenberg, ed., *What's Happening to Public Higher Education?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Soaring endowments and high rates of return that a number of selective private colleges and universities have enjoyed in the last decade also contributed to differences in spending between public and private institutions – at least up to fall 2008.[12] To be sure, certain large public universities, such as the University of Michigan and the California and Texas systems, also benefited from endowment growth. However, taking into account the number of students these institutions enroll, the resources that are available per student are on average far smaller than those of private institutions.

Taken together, these trends have reduced the resources of public relative to private institutions and have led to significant disparities developing between them in spending on instruction, in average faculty salaries, and in student-faculty ratios. Recent data show that median spending on instruction per full-time enrolled student at private research universities was almost twice as high ($14.1 thousand) than at public research universities ($7.3 thousand).[13]

D'Arms, on completing his review of funding trends in 1995, described himself as "uneasy yet cautiously optimistic" about the future.[14] We know from events that have occurred since then even cautious optimism was not in order. The very next year (FY 1996), Congressional appropriations to the NEH were cut by 38 percent – a very significant reduction and surely not a cause for optimism. Owing to the way the NEH budget is structured (a legislatively mandated formula has driven allocations to State Humanities Councils since 1987 and has since kept them roughly constant), it was discretionary grant programs, which include funds for fellowships and research, that were hit hardest by the 1996 reduction in funding. That year, the funding of discretionary programs was cut by about 47 percent, and it has yet to recover. Congressional appropriations to the NEH since then (FY 1997 – FY 2007) have remained roughly constant in real terms,[15] as has the overall funding level of its discretionary grant program.[16] By 2006, changes in the distribution of expenditures within that program left only 18.4 percent of discretionary funds available

12 See *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 1, 2008. The disastrous state of financial markets in 2008 has already brought endowment growth to a halt. See Geraldine Fabrikant, "Harvard's Endowment Falls $8 Billion," *The New York Times*, December 4, 2008.

13 Scott Jaschik, "The Spending Side of the Equation," *Inside Higher Education*; available at www.insidehighered.com/news/2008/05.01/spending. While per student spending on instruction increased at about 2.2 percent in private universities between 1987 and 1996, it has increased only 1 percent between 1998 and 2005. Per student spending on instruction at public universities grew even more slowly in the same periods, at 0.5 and 0.4 percent, respectively. This has had the effect of maintaining, and even slightly increasing, the gap between private and public institutions.

14 D'Arms, "Funding Trends in the Academic Humanities," 55.

15 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV1a.jpg&o=hrcoIVA.aspx__topIV1: Part IV. *Figure IV-1a: NEH Budget Request versus Final Appropriation (Adjusted for Inflation), Fiscal Years 1966 – 2007* (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2008). Research universities also benefit from the National Defense Education Act/Title VI, which supports foreign language teaching and area-studies centers.

16 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-1c.jpg&o=hrcoIVA

for research by humanists and for scholarly projects. At the same time, funding for preservation and access activities in libraries, including digitization projects, took over a quarter of these funds (28.3 percent).[17]

The latest NEH budgets contain appropriations for FY 2008 and requests for FY 2009; these are much the same, totaling $144,707 million and $144,350 million, respectively. However, budgetary allocations have changed once again. A major increase was requested for the "We the People" program, which is largely focused on secondary schools, although it provides some help to historically black colleges and universities, and Hispanic-serving and tribal colleges.[18] Requests for preservation and access were reduced by 25 percent in the 2009 budget while those for challenge grants were reduced by 24 percent. Thus the share of support available for the academic humanities from the NEH shrank considerably while the overall NEH budget has remained more or less constant since the large reduction in FY 1996. Based on requests for the coming year, support for the academic humanities is likely to be an even smaller fraction of the total.

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The academic humanities did little better in securing support from private foundations. Although foundations substantially increased their expenditures on "the humanities," between 1992 and 2002, and especially after 1995, the academic humanities received a very small share of the benefits. Instead, additional funds went to other grant recipients in the Foundation Center's "humanities" category: museums, historical societies, and historical projects. Almost half of all private foundation spending in this period on the "humanities" went to museums and historical societies,[19] while the share of the "humanities and related social sciences" was 2.1 percent, down from the earlier figure of 2.5 percent.[20] Even so, in terms of absolute expenditures, private foundations have awarded far more support to "the humanities" than the NEH has. In 2002, foundations

.aspx__topIV1: Part IV. *Figure IV-1c: NEH Program Funding (Adjusted for Inflation), by Type, Fiscal Years 1987 – 2007*.

17 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-2.jpg&o=hrcoIVA.aspx__topIV2: Part IV. *Figure IV-2: Distribution of NEH Program Funding among Activity Types, Fiscal Year 2006*.

18 *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 15, 2008. The We the People website reports, "[O]n Constitution Day 2002, President George W. Bush announced We the People, an NEH initiative to explore significant events and themes in our nation's history, and to share these lessons with all Americans." A large number of grants have been made to preserve historic sites and support an initiative that brings reproductions of important American paintings, sculptures, and photographs to all secondary schools.

19 See Loren Renz and Steven Lawrence, *Foundation Funding for the Humanities: An Overview of Current and Historical Trends* (New York: The Foundation Center, June 2004), 3; available at http://www.fdncenter.org/gainknowledge/research/pdf/human.pdf. These increases on spending for the humanities were especially marked after 1995. Apart from the practice of aggregating a variety of arts and humanities-related institutions in one omnibus category, there is reason to think, based on spending on the academic humanities by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, that the Center's database underestimates grant expenditures in this area.

20 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-8c.jpg&o=hrcoIVC.aspx__topIV8: Part IV. *Figure IV-8c: Share of All Foundation Giving Going to Humanities Activities, 2002*.

spent approximately $335 million,[21] more than double the level of funding the NEH provided that same year. But foundation spending is now increasingly directed toward initiatives solving "real world problems" and on activities having measurable social and economic impact, with the result that the humanities are likely to receive less attention than they once did.

As D'Arms observed, the costs of humanistic inquiry and related activities, once borne by the federal government, are being shifted to colleges and universities. How well then have the humanities fared relative to other fields of inquiry in recent budget allocations by colleges and universities? Three classes of data shed some light on this question: how much humanists are paid compared to faculty members in other fields and the extent of relative growth or decline in their salaries; the number of jobs available in the humanities and changes therein; and expenditures on academic libraries and opportunities for publication provided by university presses. These are far from comprehensive gauges of institutional support for the humanities, but, limited as they are, they are instructive not because they reveal clear-cut answers about the well-being of the humanities, but because they show how complicated current circumstances are and how difficult it is to draw simple conclusions from them.

The most detailed data available on average salaries of full-time faculty in various disciplines are shown in Table 1.[22] While the data permit comparison of the average salaries of professors and assistant professors in sixteen disciplines relative to those paid to faculty members of comparable rank in English language and literature, they are limited primarily to a set of public land grant universities and state colleges and cover only the decades between 1985 – 1986 and 2005 – 2006. As a consequence, they are, at best, indicators of salary differences existing mainly in public institutions, rather than in the full range of colleges and universities.

The first column of Table 1 shows that the salaries of full professors of English were lower in 2005 – 2006 than those of professors in eleven of the sixteen disciplines and fields on which data were available. Not surprisingly, disparities are greatest relative to professors of business, economics, and law. Furthermore, compared to two decades earlier, salary gaps have widened for professors of English relative to those in thirteen other disciplines.[23] Yet in fields such as communications and education, in which salaries have remained lower than

21 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-8a.jpg&o=hrcoIVC.aspx__topIV8: Part IV. *Figure IV-8a: Distribution of Foundation Grant Monies (Millions of 2007 Dollars), by Humanities Activity Type,* 2002.

22 These data are collected annually by the Office of Institutional Research and Information Management at Oklahoma State University. The widely used annual reports on academic salaries published by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) show differences by rank and among colleges and universities, but they do not report salaries according to discipline. The most recent report of the AAUP for 2007 – 2008 confirms earlier findings that professors in private institutions routinely earn more than those in public institutions and that the gap between them has been widening; see http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/newsroom/2008prs/zreport.htm.

23 Within the humanities, the salaries earned in philosophy have increased somewhat more quickly than those in English while those in

Table 1
The Ratios of Average Salaries of Professors and Assistant Professors in English Language and Literature Compared to Average Salaries of Faculty Members in Other Disciplines, in 1985 – 1986 and 2005 – 2006

Discipline	Professor (1985 – 1986/2005 – 2006)	Assistant Professor (1985 – 1986/2005 – 2006)
Business	115.2/146.5	148.5/201.9
Communications	93.3/96.7	109.0/104.8
Computer/Info. Science	117.6/127.5	149.8/159.5
Economics	111.3/132.4	124.8/151.4
Education	92.0/96.2	105.3/104.3
Engineering	114.3/124.3	144.0/144.2
Fine Arts	90.4/88.9[a]	98.9/96.4
Foreign Language	98.2/95.5	101.3/98.5
Health Professions	119.8/118.1	133.5/139.4
Law and Legal Studies	141.0/154.0	164.6/165.9
Library Science	99.4/97.9	108.9/109.1
Mathematics	104.4/106.8	113.0/116.2
Philosophy	101.6/109.0	98.7/97.7
Physical Sciences	108.0/112.1	116.6/118.4
Psychology	101.6/109.0	103.5/110.0
Social Sciences	103.3/114.1	108.2/118.0
All Discipline Average	105.1/112.0	119.8/125.5

a The average reported for professors of fine arts in the second year is for 2001 – 2002.
Source: "Financial Inequality in Higher Education," *Academe*, March/April 2007, Tables D and E.

those in English, the gaps between them have narrowed. The second column shows that the magnitude of the decline has been greater for starting assistant professors than it has been for full professors. For example, in 2005 – 2006, assistant professors in business earned more than twice as much as those in English (2.019 times), as compared to their earning about one-and-a-half times more (1.485 times) two decades earlier. Thus humanists not only earn less now relative to faculty in most other fields, but their pay has also grown more slowly. However, humanists are not the most poorly paid members of the professoriate: full professors in communications, education, fine arts, and library science earn even less than those in English and philosophy. Each of these four fields has a history of comparatively low status in universities and colleges and also relatively low compensation in the non-academic sector.

The magnitude of salary differences among fields has fluctuated over time and among types of institutions. Data from successive iterations of the *National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF)*

foreign languages have decreased, indicating internal variation in the humanities within an overall pattern of comparatively lower pay than pertains in other academic fields.

Table 2
Average Salaries of Full-Time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions According to Field, Relative to the Average Salary of Full-Time Instructional Faculty in Degree-Granting Institutions in the Humanities

	Business	Engineering	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Fine Arts
Overall					
1987 – 1988	1.07	1.23	1.13	1.09	0.89
2003 – 2004	1.35	1.40	1.29	1.18	0.98
All Public					
1987 – 1988	1.04	1.17	1.10	1.05	0.90
2003 – 2004	1.35	1.37	1.27	1.19	1.02
All Private					
1987 – 1988	1.11	1.38	1.17	1.15	0.86
2003 – 2004	1.38	1.55	1.35	1.17	0.91
Research University Public					
1987 – 1988	1.26	1.32	1.25	1.14	0.87
2003 – 2004	1.61	1.49	1.41	1.28	1.04
Research University Private					
1987 – 1988	nr	nr	1.26	1.25	nr
2003 – 2004	1.75	1.55	1.43	1.38	0.92
Liberal Arts Colleges					
1987 – 1988	nr	nr	0.99	0.94	0.90
2003 – 2004	1.09	nr	1.01	1.07	0.89

"nr" indicates that sample sizes were too small to permit average salary in the field/category to be published.
Source: Authors' calculations from data reported from the *National Study of Postsecondary Faculty*, in *Digest of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 2006), Table 239.

that we have tabulated in Table 2 show how average salaries in fields other than the humanities changed relative to average salaries in the humanities between 1987 – 1988 and 2003 – 2004 in a much broader set of institutions than those Table 1 describes. *NSOPF*'s relatively small sample sizes do not allow for computing average salary by rank or by specific disciplines; thus the comparisons from *NSOPF* cover all ranks for broad disciplinary groups.

Table 2 shows first that average salaries in the humanities in this large sample of institutions have fallen in the period indicated relative to average salaries in all other fields (except for the fine arts); second, that salary differences between the humanities and other fields are larger in private than in public institutions; and third, that the extent of such differences has grown. Salaries are also much larger at research universities than at other academic institutions and

larger yet at private research universities. Thus the data in both Tables 1 and 2 indicate that faculty members in English and in humanities generally are paid less than their counterparts in other fields (with the exceptions we have noted). But it is not salaries paid to scientists or engineers that have grown the most, rather those paid to faculty in business, law, and economics. Growing salary differentials between the humanities and other fields may undermine faculty cohesion, but so far, public expressions of resentment about compensation differentials have surfaced more often among graduate students in the humanities than they have among faculty members.[24]

Salary differentials among fields are much smaller at liberal arts colleges and, over time, have not increased by much. This is the likely outcome of lower rates of faculty turnover in the colleges as compared with universities, the colleges' more limited resources, and the lower incidence of competitive recruitment of faculty members. However, since the emphasis on research at liberal arts colleges has been increasing, this may in the future raise top professorial salaries and increase the span between the highest and the lowest salaries that colleges pay.

Predicting the future supply of faculty members in the humanities is also complicated. Until recently, the production of PhDs in the humanities seems not to be in line with conventional assumptions about labor markets. These assumptions suggest that the declining relative salaries of faculty members in the relevant disciplines will lead to reductions in the number of students enrolling in PhD programs in these fields and ultimately to fewer degree recipients, over time, thus reducing the supply of new faculty. But this seems not to be the case at least in the recent past. Reliable data are not available on graduate student enrollments, but judging from the number of new recipients of doctoral degrees in the humanities (a fraction, of course, of enrollees), the supply of humanists has not been declining, despite the difficult job market. Indeed, it has grown since 1990, when 3,822 degrees were awarded; by 2000 this number grew to 5,634, and in 2006 it leveled off more or less at 5,576.[25] Humanists may

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24 Relations between academic institutions and teaching assistants seeking improved pay and conditions of work have often been contentious, but they seem not to be focused on differences in pay between assistants in different fields but on overall compensation and benefits. See, for example, "A Call to Arms for Academic Labor," 1–10; available at www.insidehighered.com/2008/01/10.

25 Thomas B. Hoffer, Mary Hess, Vincent Welch, Jr., and Kimberly Williams, *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2006* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 2007). Thomas B. Hoffer, Vincent Welch, Jr., Kristy Webber, Kimberly Williams, Brian Lisek, Mary Hess, Daniel Loew, and Isabel Guzman-Barron, *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities: Summary Report 2005* (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 2006). See also Doug Steward, "Report on the Survey of Earned Doctorates 2006 NORC 2007," January 7, 2008; available at www.norc.org/projects/survey+of+earned+doctorates.htm. The most recent data available from the *Survey of Earned Doctorates* shows that doctoral production in the humanities fell by 4.6 percent between 2006 and 2007, but since the absolute numbers reported for both years are not consistent with earlier reports, the validity of these data is still unclear. Doug Lederman, "Doctorate Production Continues to Grow"; available at www.insidehighered.com/news.2008/11/24/doctorates. Since degree recipients began graduate school somewhere between six to eleven years earlier (given the long time-to-degree in the humanities), their plans may have been influenced by the condition of labor markets at that time. But we also know that current labor markets affect the timing of completion and, thus, completion rates.

or may not abide by the tenets of Mills's *homo economicus*, but there is reason to expect that the number of PhDs may contract soon if only because leading universities, especially those with a history of admitting larger numbers of graduate students in the humanities, have reduced the size of entering cohorts so as to improve the financial support they offer and in some measure to improve the chances their graduates have of getting jobs after graduation.[26]

A second part of the employment story is the availability of jobs in the humanities relative to the number of job seekers, while a third part is the nature of the kinds of jobs that are available – particularly whether they are tenure-track appointments or not and whether they are full- or part-time. To a large extent, employment opportunities in the academy and in various fields are driven by student demand,[27] which, in turn, is reflected in course enrollments. Course enrollment data are not available for a large sample of institutions, but data on the number of degrees granted in the full array of academic majors are routinely reported by the U.S. Department of Education and are an indirect proxy for student demand.[28]

Judging from this measure, students' interest in the humanities has neither been in ascent nor in retreat. During the period between 1990 – 2004, the share of bachelor's degrees that were granted in the humanities overall increased and then decreased, ending the period at about the same level as it was at the beginning[29] while the share of bachelor's degrees granted in the arts grew somewhat and those in the sciences by only a single percentage point.[30]

If the number of majors is a reasonable proxy for employment opportunities for faculty members, the shares of faculty employed in the humanities, arts, and natural sciences should have changed little or not at all since no significant changes in the distribution of student majors occurred during the period. In fact, the *NSOPF* data in Table 3a

26 Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Harriet Zuckerman, Jeffrey Groen, and Sharon M. Brucker, "Changing the Education of Scholars: An Introduction to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Graduate Education Initiative," in *Doctoral Education and the Faculty of the Future*, ed. Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Charlotte V. Kuh (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

27 Although course enrollments are strong determinants of employment, adjustments attributable to changes in demand are not instantaneous, and other factors such as graduate student enrollment and the "prestige" graduate departments also are important. See Sarah Turner and William R. Johnson, "Resource Allocation in Higher Education: Why Don't Administrators Satisfy Student Demand?" (University of Virginia, Department of Economics, 2007).

28 Using the major fields of graduates as a substitute for enrollments is obviously problematic. Some fields have large numbers of enrollees but few majors as the result of students being required to take courses as part of distribution requirements: the sciences come readily to mind as an instance. Even when requirements are not the sources of enrollments, large numbers of students interested in taking particular courses, for example in foreign languages, do not necessarily result in increasing numbers of foreign language majors.

29 As a share of total degrees granted, the humanities remain popular majors. The humanities' share of degrees is only lower than the shares of business and the social sciences.

30 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=II-1b.jpg&o=hrcoIIA.aspx__topII1: Part II. *Figure II-1b: Shares of All Bachelor's Degrees Awarded in Selected Academic Fields, 1987 – 2004*.

Table 3a
Percentages of Instructional Faculty and Staff in Degree-Granting Institutions in Various Fields of the Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering, Nationwide

	1992	1998	2003
Full-Time			
Business	7.6	6.9	6.3
Engineering	4.6	4.5	4.9
Natural Sciences	19.2	19.9	22.2
Social Sciences	11.0	10.4	10.3
Fine Arts	6.0	5.9	6.3
Humanities	14.0	14.4	13.2
Other	37.6	38.0	36.8
Part-Time			
Business	9.2	7.6	8.5
Engineering	3.1	2.2	2.7
Natural Sciences	16.0	15.7	16.9
Social Sciences	9.0	9.9	7.9
Fine Arts	8.7	9.2	9.0
Humanities	15.9	17.8	15.0
Other	38.9	37.6	40.0

"Other" includes agriculture and home economics, communications, education, health sciences, law, occupation specific programs, and all other programs.
Source: *Digest of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, 2006), Table 238, and *Digest of Education Statistics*, National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, 2003), Table 237.

confirm this conjecture. The distributions of full- and part-time faculty members employed in various fields in 1992, 1998, and 2003 shifted by only a few percentage points over the decade under consideration.[31]

The percentage of faculty who work part-time is another gauge of employment prospects. The 1990s were a period of increasing use of part-time faculty nationwide, in response to some extent to the financial problems colleges and universities had begun to experience. Indeed, the data presented in Table 3b show that between 1992 and 2003 the share of faculty in the humanities who worked part-time did rise (by 2.1 percent), in the arts (by 1.5 percent), and in business (by 5.5 percent). In the sciences, however, the share of part-timers remained constant, and in engineering it declined. These changes, like those in the distribution of faculty among fields, are small and thus provide little evidence that employment options have worsened more in the humanities than in other fields. Moreover, increases in part-time employment may or may not signal deterioration in job opportunities. In some fields, particularly in business and the professions, practitioners often teach part-time in their own special fields. In

31 Interpretation of these percentage changes should be tentative since the data are subject to considerable sampling variation.

Table 3b
Percentages of Part-Time Instructional Faculty and Staff in Degree-Granting Institutions in Various Fields of the Arts and Sciences, Business, and Engineering, Nationwide

	1992	1998	2003
Business	46.5	45.0	51.0
Engineering	32.2	27.1	29.6
Natural Sciences	37.2	37.0	37.2
Social Sciences	36.8	41.4	37.4
Fine Arts	50.9	53.4	52.4
Humanities	44.8	47.8	46.9

Source: See Table 3a.

the humanities, however, part-time employees are often hired to teach introductory courses in literature, foreign languages, and English composition; they are usually paid modestly, on a per course basis, to teach large numbers of students, and often lack the benefits typically available to regular members of the faculty.

Non-tenure-track faculty also staff high-enrollment courses. Despite their sometimes being full-time, they, like their part-time colleagues, have no assurance of employment long term. A soon-to-be published study of non-tenure-track faculty in major U.S. universities reports that the number of such faculty members is growing and that undergraduate teaching needs drive the fields and disciplines in which they are appointed. In the arts and sciences, these are English, Spanish, and writing/composition, as well as economics and mathematics. The growing number of these "teaching specialists" is therefore not a phenomenon confined to the humanities.[32] The effects of shifting teaching obligations to non-tenure-track faculty on the quality of education being offered and on the satisfaction of those who hold these jobs have only begun to be explored. In light of straitened academic budgets, the use of part-time and non-tenure-track faculty as a means of reducing the costs of teaching may well increase.

Perhaps the most discussed and most lamented features of the job market in the humanities are the shortage of jobs for new PhDs, the shrinking number of tenure-track jobs, and the prolonged period during which these conditions have prevailed. Prospects for entry level academic jobs[33] depend, like jobs in general, on demand, specifically on enrollments, as we just noted. They also depend on prevailing student-faculty ratios, the number of new PhDs seeking academic jobs, the number of professors who retire, the number who are

32 See John G. Cross and Edie N. Goldenberg, *Who Teaches, Who Decides, Who Cares? The Rise of the Teaching Specialist in Higher Education* (forthcoming), 21.

33 See William G. Bowen and Julie Ann Sosa, *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences: A Study of Factors Affecting Demand and Supply, 1987 to 2012* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) for a thorough discussion of the multitude of forces affecting the state of the academic job market. The great majority of PhDs in the humanities works in colleges and universities, unlike many degree recipients in the sciences and engineering.

replaced, and the extent to which academic institutions allocate resources to expand departments at the lower ranks or elect to contract them. Thus budgetary decisions universities and colleges make strongly affect labor market opportunities for young scholars.

The availability of academic posts at all professorial ranks in English, languages, and history is registered in job listings published by the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Historical Association (AHA), respectively. These lists provide some indication of the availability of jobs but are not definitive sources since not all academic positions are posted nor are all those posted actually available.

Years of difficult job markets in the humanities have led to large pools of job seekers, with the result that new PhDs compete for jobs with others who have "been on the market" for long periods of time or who are seeking better jobs than they have. For example, a 2004 MLA survey of hiring outcomes for tenure-track positions listed at four-year institutions showed that about two-thirds were filled by candidates no longer enrolled in graduate school at the time they were hired. These more seasoned job seekers included those working full-time in non-tenure-track positions, in part-time positions, occupants of tenure-track positions elsewhere, or postdoctoral appointments.[34] Moreover, our own research indicates that considerable job mobility occurs soon after the first appointment has been secured. Based upon a survey of over 6,700 PhDs in the humanities and related social sciences who earned degrees from thirteen leading universities, just over half (58 percent) who had full-time, non-tenure-track positions at four-year institutions right after earning their degrees had moved in the next three years into full-time, tenure-track posts, many at institutions other than those where they got their first jobs.[35]

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As Table 4 shows, the number of placements made in jobs the MLA listed has fluctuated substantially through cycles of comparative scarcity and plenty over the more than quarter century for which data are available. But overall, the table shows an upward trend in placements in both fields since the late 1990s.[36] Table 4 also shows that the share of new PhDs receiving tenure-track positions at four-year institutions (via jobs listed with the MLA) has fluctuated over the whole period covered but has increased since the late 1990s in both English and foreign languages.

While the MLA data suggest that the job market in the aggregate has recovered somewhat in recent years, the number of job openings in the various specialty areas of English and in different foreign languages has not risen uniformly[37] and they do not necessarily match variations in the specialties of new PhDs or of job seekers, more generally. Thus while the data indicate job market prospects in general seem to be improving, it does not follow that this is so across all the specialties.

34 *Report on Trends in the MLA Job Market Information List* (Modern Language Association, September 2007); available at www.mla.org/jilreporttext1007pdf.

35 Ronald E. Ehrenberg, Harriet Zuckerman, Sharon Brucker, and Jeffrey R. Groen, *Educating Scholars: The Effectiveness and Quality of Doctoral Programs in the Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming), chap. 9.

36 Ibid., Figure 1. The MLA Job Information List is confined to posts for PhDs primarily for full-time jobs in four-year academic institutions.

37 Ibid., Figures O-1 and O-2.

Table 4
Shares of New PhDs in English and Foreign Languages Receiving Tenure-Track Appointments at Four-Year Institutions in the Year They Received Their Degrees

English

Year	Number New PhDs (1)	Number Tenure-Track Placements (2)	Share (2)/(1)
1977	1079	466	.43
1978	1027	481	.47
1979	911	391	.43
1980	951	379	.40
1982	771	326	.42
1984	734	298	.41
1987	669	334	.50
1993	948	491	.52
1995	1079	411	.38
1998	1078	400	.37
2001	978	431	.44
2004	960	459	.48

Foreign Languages

Year	Number New PhDs (1)	Number Tenure-Track Placements (2)	Share (2)/(1)
1977	728	310	.43
1978	637	299	.47
1979	648	263	.41
1980	535	252	.47
1982	491	185	.38
1984	492	237	.48
1987	444	224	.50
1993	562	285	.51
1995	594	283	.48
1998	652	270	.41
2001	620	276	.45
2004	587	268	.46

Source: *Report on Trends in the MLA Job Information List* (Modern Language Association, September 2007), Figures 6 and 7, available at www.mla.org.

Similar data on job openings are compiled annually by the AHA and include listings for junior and senior academic positions, for public historians, and some postdoctoral positions. Like the MLA listings, the AHA postings are primarily for full-time jobs, but information on the tenure-track status of positions is often not given. AHA's periodic summaries and analyses of job listings in its newsletter *Perspectives*[38] show that the number of new PhDs exceeded the number of job openings listed each year between 1991 – 1992 and 2002 – 2003. Since job seekers in history, like those in English and foreign languages,

38 See, for example, American Historical Association, *Perspectives*, January 2008, available at www.historians.org.

are not confined to new PhDs, and not all jobs that are listed are actually filled, these data underestimate how difficult the job market in history has been. Between 2003 – 2004 and 2005 – 2006, however, the job market seems to have improved somewhat, as the number of new job listings exceeded the number of new PhDs being produced.[39] But since job seekers outnumber new PhDs, it is unclear how much improvement has actually occurred.

An alternative measure of the state of the job market for new PhDs in history comes from data collected annually in the *Survey of Earned Doctorates*, which tallies the number of PhDs who have "definite employment" at the time of being awarded the degree. The share of new PhDs in history who have reported having jobs when they finished their degrees has trended upward since the mid-1990s, increasing by about 10 percent.[40] However, as in English and foreign languages, what is true in the aggregate is not true for new PhDs specializing in various subfields of history. More job openings are listed in Middle Eastern, African, and Asian history, but specialists in American and British history have confronted much less favorable employment options. It is difficult to predict whether modest improvements in job opportunities in English, languages, and history will be erased by faculty cutbacks due to deteriorating state budgets and the effects of the retreat of financial markets on college and university resources. This is not unlikely since some of the most heavily endowed universities have already elected to impose hiring freezes.

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The expenditures universities make on their libraries are the third source of evidence on their investments in the humanities. But since libraries serve all fields, they are not indicators of the well-being of the humanities specifically, however central a role libraries play in humanistic inquiry. This said, there is marked concern that university libraries are not keeping up with the rising costs of serials, digital and paper, especially in the sciences, and that they have cut back on book purchases, especially scholarly monographs, as a consequence.

Humanists' concerns about the adequacy of library budgets are associated with their distinctive practices of scholarship and publication. Unlike the sciences, humanistic scholarship relies heavily on library collections and archives, often not only on their home campuses but elsewhere as well. In contrast to the sciences, which emphasize publication in peer-reviewed journals, in most disciplines in the humanities, prime attention goes to the publication of scholarly monographs and synthetic books since deeply researched and rigorously argued projects usually require the scale of explication book publication offers. Thus the gold standard in the sciences for judging promotion and tenure is publication in major peer-reviewed journals, while in the humanities promotion and tenure decisions are strongly influenced by publication of books by prestigious university presses,[41] although in some humanistic disciplines,

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid. This measure tends to underestimate the actual number of new PhDs who successfully find jobs. This is why examining job holding three months after the degree rather than confining it to the date of the degree is a wise research strategy.

41 There are of course exceptions to this rule: publication with a serious commercial press has its own cachet.

publication in peer-reviewed journals also counts. The emphasis in the sciences on papers led to their being termed "papyrocentric,"[42] which in turn suggests that that the humanities' preference for book publication might permit them to be termed "bibliocentric," notwithstanding the use of this term in other scholarly contexts.

It is the "bibliocentrism" of most of the humanities that sharpens their concerns about the adequacy of library budgets, the allocations made within them, the difficulties young humanists have in finding publication outlets for their work, shrinking markets for university press monograph publications, and what is seen as the need libraries have to reduce book acquisitions in order to pay for increasingly costly serials.

Does the evidence on expenditures support these concerns? Yes and no. Trend data show a major expansion in purchases by academic libraries generally in the decade between 1996 and 2006, but even so, rates of growth in library expenditures were greater for serials than for monograph purchases: the former increased 5.1 percent and the latter 1.8 percent. Research libraries specifically also spent more on serials as compared to monographs. Between 1986 and 2006, their average expenditures on serials rose by 7.5 percent annually while expenditures on monographs rose 3.1 percent annually. Taking into account the differing rates of price inflation for monographs and serials, monograph purchases remained essentially flat, increasing by 0.1 percent annually, while serial purchases grew by 2.1 percent annually. However, these data cover a full forty years of library history and do not show the major expansion in expenditures that occurred between 1996 and 2006. But even in this briefer period of increased spending, rates of growth in expenditures for serials were much greater than they were for books; the former grew at 5.1 percent annually and the latter at 1.8 percent. Thus in both the longer and the shorter term, despite expansion in library budgets, their monograph purchases – so important to humanists – grew far more slowly than purchases of serials.

But the significance of these data is less clear than it may seem for a number of reasons: as we noted, serial purchases benefit scholars and scientists in all fields, and the Association of Research Libraries' (ARL) data are problematic since comparisons they permit are quite limited. Starting in 1999 – 2000, the ARL elected to include the expenditures on electronic resources in its serials data, thus producing a substantial increase in reported serials purchases. In addition, monograph prices and inflation rates vary widely across subject matter areas: the average list price of a humanities monograph, for example, is less than half that of a physical and life sciences monograph. Between 2000 and 2005 the average price of a scholarly monograph in the humanities remained essentially constant in real terms. In contrast, during that same period, the average price of a mono-

42 Derek J. de Solla Price dubbed the sciences "papyrocentric" and engineering "papryophobic" in "Is Technology Historically Independent of Science? A Study in Statistical Historiography," *Technology and Culture* 6 (1965): 553 – 568. More recently, the term *papyrocentric* has surfaced in literature on bibliometrics, for example in Stephen Harnad's discussion of the "papyrocentric attitude"; see http://english.ttu.edu/Kairos/2.1/features/brent/papyro.htm. The term *bibliocentric* appears to have been used mainly by scholars of religion, who refer to religions that accord prime authority to books as bibliocentric against those that give primacy to revelation, for example.

graph in the physical sciences increased in real terms.[43] To complicate comparisons further, average monograph prices also differ according to the subject matter of books, ranging, in 2005, from less than $30 for literary titles to over $90 for "language" titles; between 2000 and 2005, average prices in real terms fell for the former but increased for the latter.[44] Absent information on how monograph purchases by libraries have varied over time for the sciences, social sciences, the humanities, and other branches of higher learning, and within the humanities, for its component disciplines, it is not possible to say definitively how the humanities have been affected in comparison to other fields or by recent changes in the expenditure patterns of academic libraries.

Much anecdotal evidence is offered for reductions in the sales of scholarly monographs published by university presses and for reductions in the size of monograph press runs. These are said to be in the vicinity of several hundred, rather than the average of a thousand or so that was the norm two or three decades ago.[45] This is consistent with the claim that fewer libraries acquire all major publications of university presses than once did. But while such anecdotes are not entirely at odds with data showing the absence of growth in expenditures on monographs, they do not seem to square with the Blackwell's reports showing an increasing number of book titles being available in the humanities.[46] There is no publicly accessible, industry-wide evidence for these trends in the number of titles released, printed, and sold because publishers, for-profit and nonprofit, consider such data proprietary.

In marked contrast to the complicated and often incomplete evidence available on publishing in the humanities generally, Hilary Ballon's and Mariët Westermann's study of art history provides detailed data and informative analysis of publishing in that field, including changes in publication practices of university presses.[47] Art history, they observe, is fortunate in having an audience for its books that goes well beyond the academy, and this is consistent with the increase in new titles Blackwell's recommends to research libraries for purchase in the fine arts.[48] However, a combina-

43 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-12c.jpg&o=hrcoIVD.aspx__topIV12: Part IV. *Figure IV-12c: Average List Price of New Titles, by Subject, 2000 – 2005.*

44 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-12d.jpg&o=hrcoIVD.aspx__topIV12: Part IV. *Figure IV-12d: Average List Price of New Humanities Titles, by Category, 2000 – 2005.*

45 If these claims are so, it is still not evident what they mean. One publisher recently remarked that the number of books in press runs is being curtailed, but the number of press runs per book has increased because it is relatively easy and inexpensive to add new press runs with current print technology.

46 These observations may not be contradictory, as one of our readers suggested, since Blackwell's reports on the number of new titles released, not the number of books printed or sold.

47 Hilary Ballon and Mariët Westermann, "Art History and Its Publications in the Electronic Age" (Council on Library and Information Resources, 2006), 45 – 46; available at http://cnx.org/content/col10376/1.1.

48 Humanities Indicators Prototype, http://www.humanitiesindicators.org/content/hrcoImageFrame.aspx?i=IV-12b.jpg&o=hrcoIVD.aspx__topIV12: Part IV. *Figure IV-12b: New Titles in the Humanities, by Category, 2000 – 2005.*

tion of other factors has led important university presses, such as Cambridge and Princeton, to reduce the number of monographs they publish in art history; these include insufficient sales to cover expenditures, the high cost of permissions and fees, and the expense of producing books with illustrations. Those presses remaining in the field have turned increasingly to publishing exhibition catalogs, which come with subsidies from museums. These trends might suggest that younger scholars in art history are having increasing difficulty in finding publishers for their books, which are usually highly specialized monographs. However, the ratio of books published to the number of PhDs awarded in art history increased between 1985 and 1999, and only fell back to 1989 levels in 2004.[49] Future publication opportunities in art history cannot be forecast with certainty; but it is clear that monographs directed at specialized audiences have become "scarcer because of the linked phenomena of decreasing print runs, increasing costs-per-copy, and rising prices."[50]

In short, the evidence is mixed on the willingness of universities and colleges to invest in the humanities when account is taken of their expenditures on libraries, on serials and books, on scholars' publication prospects, and the fortunes of university presses. These data are exceptionally complicated and thus not a clear basis for pessimism or optimism among bibliocentric humanists.

The support the humanities receive in public institutions of higher education merits special attention. Many public universities, as we noted earlier, have experienced marked reductions in state funding while facing increasing costs. They are pressed to help their local economies grow and confront the rising costs of science, especially if they are or aspire to be major research institutions.

How public and private universities compare on three indicators may shed light on the status of the humanities in each class of institution: the graduate student stipends they provide, rankings of the prestige of their doctoral programs, and library expenditures. These indicators are far from perfect, but they convey something of the relative status of the humanities in each kind of institution.

Among universities generally, graduate student stipends are higher in the sciences and engineering than they are in the humanities according to a 2004 study in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.[51] This difference is not simply a result of fellowships in the sciences paying more because they cover twelve months rather than nine, as is ordinarily the case in the humanities. It reflects the major commitment the federal government has made to training scientists. The National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and a variety of other agencies support graduate fellowships and training grants with the result that the great majority of graduate students in the sciences and engineering are fully financed. Some federal money is also available for the education of humanists, but it is given primarily through fellowships the Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship Program

49 Ballon and Westermann speculate that recent declines in the ratio have contributed to the sense of "crisis" scholars report; "Art History and Its Publications in the Electronic Age," 25–26.

50 Ibid., 19.

51 Scott Smallwood, "The Stipend Gap," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 15, 2004.

awards. These are supplemented by a small number of grants from private foundations, but by and large, universities themselves are the main supporters of graduate students in the humanities.[52]

The *Chronicle* study also reported that graduate stipends tend to be higher at private than at public universities of comparable quality. We also know that leading private universities we studied are more likely to fund all or nearly all of their graduate students in the humanities with multiyear "packages." They provide four years of support and sometimes more: some cover several summers and, some, research travel. But competition for graduate students considered most promising is intense in the humanities, which has led major public universities (and some less wealthy private ones) to reduce the number of students they admit and to concentrate their fellowship funds on a small number of outsized offers comparable in size to those private institutions make in order to recruit at least some of the graduate students they want most. Yet most of their graduate students must teach, receive smaller stipends, and have less predictable support.[53]

Much more important than the size of graduate stipends in assessing how well the humanities have fared in public universities is the scholarly quality of the graduate programs they offer. That program quality and its measurement are highly contested notions is more or less a given. Yet studies of "quality" go back to the 1920s and have become enormously influential in higher education. The most extensive and the most reliable of these have come from the National Research Council (NRC). It would have been highly desirable for us to have been able to draw on the newest and still much-awaited NRC evaluation due to be released in winter 2009. Instead, we rely on the less satisfactory and not truly comparable evidence on "quality" of graduate programs provided by the 2005/2006 *U.S. News & World Reports (USNWR)* ratings[54] and compare them to the 1995 NRC ratings. This allows us to determine very roughly whether, in the intervening decade, humanities programs at public universities held their own, that is, continued to be at or near the top in broad categories of rankings in the two time periods.

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Table 5 shows the percentage of public universities in 1995 and 2005/2006 that were ranked in the five, ten, and twenty-five top-ranked programs in five academic disciplines that *USNWR* rates (economics, English, history, mathematics, and physics). Some modest slippage in the number of public university programs in English is apparent, but no such changes occurred in top-ranked history departments. Indeed no deterioration seems to have occurred in the shares of public universities in the top five and top ten in mathematics, physics, or economics, although there were some small shifts downward in the next fifteen. On balance, these data suggest

52 See grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm.

53 Fellowship "packages" usually carry requirements for teaching and service as research assistants. Dissertation fellowships remain hard to come by. See Ehrenberg et al., "Changing the Education of Scholars."

54 Criticism of the methods used in the *U.S. News & World Reports* rankings continues and focuses on their limited coverage, validity, and reliability. For example, in the humanities, only the fields of English and history are included in *USNWR* rankings. Both the 1995 and 2005/2006 rankings are based on reputational surveys of faculty in the fields, but these surveys are not identical, nor are the sampling methods used the same or the methods of administration or response rates.

Table 5
Percentages of Doctoral Programs in Public Universities Ranked in the Top 5, Top 10, and Top 25 in Selected Disciplines in 1995 and 2005/2006[d]

	Top 5 1995	Top 5 2005/2006	Top 10 1995	Top 10 2005/2006	Top 25 1995	Top 25 2005/2006
Economics	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	36.0	30.8[c]
English	33.3	20.0	20.0	18.2[b]	48.0	48.0
History	20.0	20.0	30.0	30.0	48.0	48.0
Mathematics	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	48.0	40.0
Physics	20.0	16.7[a]	30.0	33.3[b]	56.0	57.7[c]

a b c Denominator was more than 5, 10, or 25, respectively, because of ties in the rankings.
d Mathematics and physics were evaluated in 2005 and the other fields were evaluated in 2006.
Source: Authors' calculations from Marvin L. Goldberger, Brendan A. Maher, and Pamela E. Flattau, eds., *Research Doctoral Programs in the United States: Continuity and Change* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1995) and 2007 *America's Best Graduate Schools* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. News and World Reports, 2006).

that in English and history, public university programs remained strong, as they did in mathematics and physics.

In light of the escalation of endowments of top tier private universities, and thus competitive advantage in recruiting of faculty, it is surprising that so little change has occurred in their standing compared to public universities.[55] It is possible that the measures we used were too crude and too limited to detect erosion in the assessed quality of programs in public universities or that faculty members in the humanities were unmoved by the offers they received or that that significant change occurred before 1995. It is entirely possible that public universities "protected" their major departments, both in the humanities and other central fields, and the impact of funding cutbacks was felt elsewhere, in disciplines less central to university missions or in myriad other activities in which public universities engage. The results of the National Research Council's new evaluation of doctoral programs will shed important light on the relative strength of the humanities in public and private universities since its coverage of the humanities and other fields is far more extensive and far more detailed than *USNWR*'s.[56]

Earlier we noted the special importance libraries have for humanist scholars and widespread concerns about the adequacy of library expenditures while also observing that libraries are important to all disciplines, albeit in different ways. Table 6 displays the number of public universities ranked by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) in the top ten, top twenty-five, and top fifty in terms of total library expenditures from 1965 – 1966 to 2005 – 2006.[57] It shows no change in the number of public university libraries represented among the top ten in spending in 2005 – 2006 compared with 1965 – 1966. However, by the

55 "College and University Endowments over $200-Million," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 31, 2007.

56 Closing of doctoral programs may also signal problems. The University of Florida announced the elimination of its philosophy department in spring 2008; see *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 2008.

57 We chose to compare overall expenditures even though ARL ranks libraries on a variety of measures, including, but not limited to, the number of volumes they hold, monographs purchased, staff salaries, and expenditures on serials and electronic resources. Most ARL sta-

Table 6
Number of Libraries in Public Universities Ranked in the Top 10, Top 25, and Top 50 in Terms of Total Library Expenditures

Year	Top 10	Top 25	Top 50
1965 – 1966	5	17	33
1975 – 1976	7	16	35
1985 – 1986	5	16	33
1995 – 1996	4	13	31
2005 – 2006	5	13	28

Source: Authors' calculations from *ARL Statistics* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, various years).

end of this forty-year period, the number of public universities ranked in the top twenty-five and the top fifty was substantially lower than it was at the start, with the decline concentrated in the second twenty-five. Whether having local access to special library materials, in this era of frequent travel, interlibrary loans, and increasingly available research materials on the Web, makes a significant difference in the ability of humanists to pursue their scholarly projects is not at all clear, but the support of the great majority of public university libraries does bear watching in connection with other indicators of the health of the humanities.

What, then, has been learned from this assembly of evidence on funding of the humanities? Does the current state of affairs suggest that the humanities are encountering harder times now than in the past, or that nothing much is new? On balance, there is some cause for optimism, some for pessimism, and much that leads to uneasiness. Things are new in extent if not in kind. It seems clear that the humanities have failed to find many eager patrons outside the academy. Trends in government support, concentrated almost entirely in the NEH, are disquieting. While the overall amount the NEH has to spend has hardly varied since 1996, less and less of it has gone to the academic humanities and more and more to the public humanities. Funding for "the humanities" from private foundations, in the aggregate, has been increasing, but the lion's share has recently gone to museums and historical societies, deserving institutions that are related to the academic humanities but are not quite of them. The trend D'Arms noted in 1995, of the costs of the humanities being shifted from the federal government to universities and colleges, continues today. On a far greater scale, the same shift of costs to universities has been occurring in the sciences. Although federal research budgets for some of the sciences have increased, they have not for others, and the costs of scientific research universities are now assuming are increasingly large. Thus the stage is set for heightened competition for institutional support among the sciences, the humanities, and all the other fields that are pursued in research intensive universities.

That undergraduates' interest in studying the humanities has not waned in recent years, at least as gauged by the share of bachelor's degrees being earned

tistics are roughly comparable from 1963 onward, when efforts were made to make the data contained in its reports equivalent.

in these fields, is encouraging. So, too, is the modest growth in the number of new doctorates granted in the humanities in the face of the relative declines in faculty salaries. Top graduate programs continue to be eager to recruit the best students they can and now provide multiyear packages of support to those that they accept, although financial assistance for graduate students in the humanities remains inadequate in a great many institutions.

Evidence on employment indicates little change in the share of full-time faculty members in American universities who had jobs in the humanities in 1992 and 2003, while the share of humanities faculty employed in part-time and in non-tenure-track positions grew. It seems likely that changes are responses to enrollment pressures rather than to systematic targeting of the humanities in efforts to economize. The poor job market that has persisted for several decades in English, foreign languages, and history seems to have eased somewhat, but demand for and supply of specialists are not well matched. Thus, labor market prospects for humanists are mixed and no one knows what effects the financial crisis of 2008 will have on university and college faculty hiring. However, there is little reason to suppose that the large differences between private and public institutions in salaries and job conditions, and between the humanities and other fields, will fade. There is reason to assume that strong pressures will continue in the academy, particularly in public institutions, to find ways to teach students more cheaply as enrollments grow.

Library purchases of books have grown, but far more slowly than their purchases of serials, and it appears that the number of specialized monographs they buy has contracted, though more so in some disciplines in the humanities than others. The evidence on publishing opportunities in the humanities is exceptionally complicated and requires far more systematic study than has been done to date.

One thing is clear: the support the academic humanities can now call upon is the product of a great many forces operating outside the academy and within it. It is therefore unlikely that improved support can be easily achieved. Furthermore, other matters in higher education, such as increasing access to college, providing sufficient financial aid for students, and dealing with its growing costs, have far higher priority.

More broadly, the major financial problems the nation is confronting have already begun to affect institutions of higher education adversely. How these pressures will play out in the longer term is not yet clear. The benefits the academic humanities confer on society are not understood well enough, by a sufficient number, to justify the belief that much better days are ahead.[58]

58 Since this paper was written, the financial markets collapsed, leading colleges and universities, state governments, and their supporters to experience major losses. This should be kept in mind when considering our analysis.