External Funding within the Academy
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OVERVIEW

External funding is increasingly important at research universities. The growth of grant-seeking and grant administration activities are well documented, yet little is known about the use of social networks to further grant-seeking success.

The goal is this project to explore the idea of “influencers” and patterns of funding at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. This exploration will be grounded in social network theory and utilize existing external data about external grants.

CHARTS

Top Grant Getters by Total Number
n = 30

Summary of Top Grant Getters by Years Post PhD Graduation
n = 30

CONCLUSIONS

The primary research goal was to determine patterns of funding at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Our research uncovered three things:

1. PhD’s who are 10 years or less post graduation disproportionately underperform senior peers in grant awards.
2. The average and median number of years of top grant getter post PhD graduation, of 28 and 29 respectively, indicated grant-seeking knowledge is not diffused.
3. The vast majority of grant awards are brought in by a small subset of high-performing grant-seeking individuals and subsequently university departments.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research conducted raises several interesting questions that are worth exploring further:

1. Do research universities whose top grant getters have a lower average number of years post PhD graduation regularly attract high performing junior faculty?
2. Can the knowledge of highly successfully grant-seeking professionals be diffused to individuals and departments to improve university wide performance?
3. Does collaboration enhance grant-seeking performance and if so when it is optimal to work in a team when conducting research?