The Humanities Indicators & Graduate Education: Light and Shadow

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What is an indicator?

- Quantitative data
- Change over time
- Descriptive, not explanatory—open to multiple interpretations
- Provides an empirical foundation for debate, policy formation
Figure II-10b: Doctoral Degree Completions in the Humanities (Absolute Number and as a Percentage of All Doctoral Degree Completions), 1966–2007

* Please see “Note on the Data Used to Construct Degree-Related Indicators” for an explanation of the differences between the two trend lines.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System; accessed via the National Science Foundation's online integrated science and engineering resources data system, WebCASPAR.

Humanities Indicators, 2009 • American Academy of Arts & Sciences
An overview

- Online resource only--humanitiesindicators.org
- 74 indicators
- Drawing on over 50 public and private data sources
- National picture
- Predicated on a broad conception of the humanities
Inputs, outputs, and context of graduate education

Pre-collegiate Education
- Reading competency
- Knowledge of history
- Humanities course-taking

Undergraduate Education
- Degree completions in the humanities
- Minority and female shares of degrees
- Language course-taking

Graduate Education
- Student indebtedness
- Higher education spending
- Federal Investment in R&D
- Faculty characteristics
- Time to degree

Degree Completions
- Gender and Ethnic Distribution
- Job Offers upon PhD Completion
- Occupational Trajectories
- Scholarly Publishing
Deep shadow: loss of data on faculty

National Study of Post Secondary Faculty

- Was only source of comprehensive, nationally-representative data on the characteristics and working conditions of humanities faculty
- Last administered in 2004
- Helping fill the void: the AAAS’ Humanities Departmental Survey
Humanities Departmental Survey

- Numbers and characteristics of faculty, students
- Disciplines profiled:
  - Art History
  - English
  - Foreign Languages
  - History
  - History of Science
  - Linguistics
  - MLA Combined English / Foreign Languages
  - Religion

- Findings available at humanitiesindicators.org under the “Departmental Survey” tab