Do Long Embargo Periods Facilitate External Publication of Electronic Theses and Dissertations?

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"The American Historical Association strongly encourages graduate programs and university libraries to adopt a policy that allows the embargoing of completed history PhD dissertations in digital form for as many as six years." (July 2013)

This study compares embargo selections of History & Political Science PhD candidates at Auburn University in the years before and after the above policy statement was issued.

It also compares publication rates for monographs based on unrestricted and embargoed dissertations in History & Political Science at AU.

Embargo Selections, AY 09/10 – AY 14/15

Significant change occurred for Hist./Poli. Sci. in AY 12/13 (above), presumably a result of public discussion. This was less pronounced for total dissertations (below). Two years later, most History submitters still embargoed, while most Political Science submitters did not.

Embargo Lengths, AY 09/10 – AY 14/15

Again, significant change occurred for Hist./Poli. Sci. in AY 12/13 (above). This was observed to a lesser extent for total dissertations. (below). Two years later, History embargoers selected the longest period available (5 yrs), while Political Science embargoers varied.

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.

Dissertation to Monograph

As of 8-15-2015, 23% of unrestricted dissertations from AY 05/06 through AY 09/10 had been published as monographs. Time to publication varied, but 3 years and 5 years were the most common.

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.

Embargoed dissertations, AY 05/06 – AY 09/10

As of 8-15-2015, 20% of embargoed dissertations from AY 05/06 through AY 09/10 had been published as monographs. Time to publication was consistent with that for the unrestricted dissertations.

Conclusion: Embargo provided no noticeable publication advantage during the study period.

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.

Embargoed dissertations, AY 05/06 – AY 09/10

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.

Embargoed dissertations, AY 05/06 – AY 09/10

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.

Embargoed dissertations, AY 05/06 – AY 09/10

Hist./Poli. Sci. diss.