

Environmental Scan - PESTLE

The Margaret Herrick Library / Academy Library

Excerpt: Political and Economic sections, authored by Michelle Berman

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Political Landscape

Observation:

President Trump has signed an executive order dismantling the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which provides funding and other resources to many libraries, archives, and museums, including the Margaret Herrick Library. The heads of IMLS and other agencies have been ordered to “reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required by law” (Pager, 2025). The National Endowment for the Humanities, another important source of funding for libraries, archives, and museums, has also been targeted by executive orders which require it to “terminate all ‘equity-related’ initiatives, grants, or contracts” (Eburne, 2025).

Observation:

Many colleges and universities across the United States are cutting their budgets in response to uncertainty around NIH and NSF funding and possible tax increases on university endowments. According to Forbes, “universities might try to shore up their science programs by reappportioning support from lower-demand graduate programs in the arts and humanities (Nietzel, 2025). Many patrons of the Margaret Herrick Library are graduate students and other researchers in university humanities programs. Trump’s gutting of the Department of Education also threatens financial aid for students across California, including hundreds of thousands who receive federal Pell grants or federal loans (Jones and Zinshteyn,

2025).

Implications:

These cuts to important sources of federal funding endanger both libraries, archives, and museums and the academic community. Current projects like *In Frame: Centering the Underrepresented in Moving Image Archives*, a collaboration between the Academy Foundation and several other archives to create a searchable public database on individuals and films historically marginalized from the American canon, may need to find other funding sources to survive. In the short- to medium-term, the number of graduate students in the humanities, and undergraduates as well, may decline substantially, reducing usage of the Margaret Herrick Library, which makes it difficult to justify funding requests.

Recommendations:

The Margaret Herrick Library should unite with other libraries, museums, and archives to demand Congress act to protect the IMLS, utilizing its communication resources to raise awareness of the situation among film scholars and other constituents. The Library should also create reports for other funders, especially AMPAS and its Board of Governors, that outline potential outcomes of cuts and reiterate the importance of the Library as a resource to both researchers and the general public.

References

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