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## IRIS receives \$500,000 grant from Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to study effect of COVID pandemic on university research

The Institute for Research on Innovation and Science (IRIS) has received a \$500,000 grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to study the effects of COVID-19 on university-based scientific research.

IRIS collects administrative data on research spending and employment from more than 30 member institutions that account for approximately 40 percent of total U.S. university research and development expenditures. A [preliminary analysis](#) of these data show that while universities have been able to retain large majorities of their research-funded employees, spending on goods and services related to research have fallen dramatically with the onset of the pandemic.

The support from the Sloan Foundation will allow IRIS to continue its work to understand the full impact of the pandemic on research operations at member universities, and to expand the number of universities included in the data analysis.

“The American research enterprise’s response to the COVID pandemic has wide-ranging and significant implications for the global standing of U.S. research and development,” said Jason Owen-Smith, IRIS executive director, and professor of sociology and Executive Director of Data Analytics at the University of Michigan. “A better understanding of the reactions to this downturn can help us prepare for the next one, and strengthen the university-based research that is such a huge driver of scientific discovery and economic prosperity.”

New data that result from the project will be publicly available to any researcher in the U.S. as a supplement to IRIS’ existing dataset. Along with information on universities’ responses to COVID, the project will include data on existing research resources that could be repurposed to focus on COVID.

Daniel Goroff, Vice President and Program Director at the Sloan Foundation, said the project fits well into the foundation’s focus on understanding and improving the functioning of science and technology development: “IRIS is unique in its ability to compile, link, and analyze data about research spending both on and by universities. Those data are especially important while COVID threatens the immediate vitality of institutions and individuals as well as the long-term vitality of innovation and economic growth. IRIS and its partner universities are making major contributions to understanding higher education at this critical moment.”

The Sloan Foundation was one of the original supporters of IRIS when it was founded in 2015.

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The INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON INNOVATION AND SCIENCE (IRIS) is a member consortium of universities anchored by an IRB-approved data repository hosted at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. IRIS was founded in 2015 with support from the Alfred P. Sloan and Ewing Marion Kauffman foundations. Ongoing support comes from member contributions and federal and non-federal sponsored projects.

IRIS collects record level administrative data from its members to produce a de-identified dataset for research and reporting that will improve our ability to understand, explain and improve the public value of research. Its mission is to be a trusted resource for high quality data that supports independent, frontier research on science and innovation in the service of the public interest.

IRIS was created to sustainably expand the Universities Measuring the Effects of Research on Innovation, Competitiveness and Science (UMETRICS) initiative developed in collaboration with the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. IRIS is housed at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, the world's largest academic social science survey and research organization.

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The ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION is a not-for-profit, mission-driven grantmaking institution dedicated to improving the welfare of all through the advancement of scientific knowledge. Established in 1934 by Alfred Pritchard Sloan Jr., then-President and Chief Executive Officer of the General Motors Corporation, the Foundation makes grants in four broad areas: direct support of research in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and economics; initiatives to increase the quality and diversity of scientific institutions and the science workforce; projects to develop or leverage technology to empower research; and efforts to enhance and deepen public engagement with science and scientists.

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