

Panel Discussion:

Are universities allowed and capable to plan their research?

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As a university president my main contribution to research lies not in the production of individual research results or research reports. Rather, it is my responsibility to provide the framework for the faculties for doing research and thus to work with research funding partner, public as well as private, to ensure that the funding is as abundant as possible and also enters the university in a way that supports our strategy and the way that in agreement with the manner research must function at a university in the 21st century.

I am president of a comprehensive university with colleges of science, engineering, arts/humanity, social science/business and health science. Thus, it is also necessary to ensure that the research planning at the University of Southern Denmark allows for the diversity there must be across such a broad field of endeavour.

Given those constraint I am of the opinion that research funding for a comprehensive university must include

- basic funding that support the research based education that is a hallmark of any research university
- Basic funding that allows for bottom-up research planning initiated by the university itself and in agreement with its strategy
- Both basic funding and competitive grant funding, the latter from both private and public funds
- Some competitive grants that are purely bottom up, that is, initiated by the individual researcher and others that are strategic, that is, where the funding agent has decided the *topic* of the research – but not the *outcome* of the research.

There are many balances to be struck in the weights of these ingredients in the funding of a given university. What is the balance between basic research funding and competitive funding? How large a fraction may strategic research be of the total research output if we still wish maintain our objectivity and independence? How does is vary across the very different fields of research at a comprehensive university?

These and related questions will be addressed in my contribution – taking the outset in the situation we have in Denmark.