A PIVOT CASE STUDY

PUTTING RESEARCH FIRST: STREAMLINING FUNDING AND COLLABORATOR DISCOVERY

Universidad de los Andes

ProQuest

Since its founding in 1948, Universidad de los Andes, a private university located in Bogota's historical center in Colombia, has been filled with a sense of responsibility to contribute to the development of the country and its international projection. Their mission is to provide their students and faculty an environment of comprehensive and flexible education by encouraging the teaching staff to cultivate an outstanding academic and professional life. Their commitment to continued education extends to the university's valued support of the student and faculty research activities.

PUTTING RESEARCH FIRST: STREAMLINING FUNDING AND COLLABORATOR DISCOVERY

With current enrollment at Universidad de los Andes of 12,500 undergraduate students, 2,500 students in master degree programs, and an additional 300 in PhD programs, the task of finding research funding continues to increase. Managing a staff of nearly 600 full-time teachers and 30 research managers, Andrea Navas Calixto, Research and Doctorates Manager at Universidad de los Andes, has been challenged to meet the need of researchers looking to secure funding. "When I first joined Los Andes in 2010, much of the funding application process was managed manually by mailing in applications for grants and funding. We had a research database but it was mostly underutilized," Andrea admits.

THE NEED FOR FUNDING HAS INCREASED
"Our research, PhD students and Doctorate Programs have increased in the last 6 years, so we were interested in enhancing and diversifying our research funds. With Pivot, we started to implement a new culture at the campus of finding resources for research for Los Andes faculty and PhD students." Andrea promotes using the Pivot database and academic networks for research funding, in addition to implementing strategies to seek funding for research and advising researchers in project management.

Frequently, it is the responsibility of the research office to secure funding. Like other research offices, Los Andes is confronted with the undertaking of engaging the faculty to support and help grow the research institution. Conveying the information from the research office to the faculty and graduate students in a relevant way can be invaluable. Engaging in a shared vision of research success makes a significant difference.

FINDING FUNDING IS TIME-CONSUMING
Andrea's goal as Research and Doctorates Manager is to strengthen doctoral preparation at the university and she believes that the best way to accomplish this is to train students and faculty to research grants themselves. Major pains of the individual researchers includes the amount of time that goes into finding the appropriate type of grant and that the requirements for each application are very detailed and compiling all of the documents can become laborious. The importance of obtaining funding for research is critical and with the help of Pivot, faculty and students are able to focus on their research instead of spending large amounts of time trying to find the grants that are available.

SECURE THE BEST FUNDING, SIMPLY
With the support of the university, Andrea has been able to go above and beyond by educating researchers of how they can connect to funds. She promotes Pivot at each of the departments' or schools' welcome meetings. She coordinates meetings for graduate students and meets with researchers individually to better understand their research interests and funding needs. In all of the sessions, Andrea shows them how to use Pivot keywords and funding types to locate the best funding opportunities to meet their research needs.

When researchers have the ability to personally research their funding opportunities, it can increase their odds of securing funding. They have the best knowledge of which requirements they meet, what their research interests are, and which scholar could potentially be the best fit to collaborate with on research projects. With faculty and students equipped with the ability and knowledge to search for funding themselves it allows Andrea to focus her energy on instilling the importance of seeking grants for research work and training more individuals. "One of my biggest challenges is to ensure that faculty and researchers understand the importance of finding funding for their research by obtaining resources that are relevant to the work they are doing," says Andrea.

'IT IS REALLY THAT SIMPLE, AND IT IS FANTASTIC.'
The feedback from the researchers has been positive. "Once they learn to save their funding searches in Pivot, they begin receiving alerts of grants that are available. And, that is truly where their opportunity for research funding begins. It is really that simple, and it is fantastic," Andrea explains.

Pivot works on a global scale by centralizing $33 billion in funding opportunities into one database which makes the process of finding funding easier to manage. In addition to the extraordinary international breadth of content it organizes and makes accessible, its inventive technologies streamline the work of research offices to proactively support the university research initiative. Pivot also provides collaborator discovery in one powerful, intuitive tool. There are over 3 million scholar profiles available for discovery and collaboration between researchers. The advanced search and alerts in Pivot allow researchers to easily narrow down their search by tailoring it to their specifications. At the heart of Pivot's usefulness is its recommender service, which matches funding and potential collaborators. With facets for filtering and sorting, the results list can now be precisely matched to the individual researcher's interests. Likewise, potential collaborators can be honed to better fit the opportunity. Andrea comments, "Before we started employing the Pivot database, generally, only national grants were applied for because there was not much information about international funds. Our main focus was finding organized and reliable information about international funding opportunities for our research projects."

PHD SUCCESS AT FINDING FUNDING
Lina Cuellar Wills is one student at Los Andes who hopes to find these types of researching abroad opportunities available in Pivot because she had other success with using the database. "My main challenge has been finding opportunities that match my needs as a PhD candidate in Colombia - sometimes it is too early to apply, sometimes it is too late. Also, it has been very important for me to find opportunities that can cover my living costs abroad, which generally are larger than those in my home city."

Pivot has been very useful for Lina, "Normally it is not very easy to know how and where to find funding opportunities abroad. Pivot has shown me that there are lots of resources coming from different kinds of organizations and that it is possible to submit proposals either as part of an institution or independently. I have a personal project in which I used Pivot to learn about what type of funding is offered to institutions, NGOs, and governments to support nonprofit organizations, which I am just starting."

IT'S MORE THAN JUST FUNDING
Pivot aids in connecting funding by matching collaborators with similar research interests and goals on an international level. Pivot combines an editorially-maintained database of funding opportunities with more than three million pre-populated scholar profiles and supports it with a proprietary connector algorithm that matches funding, faculty, and collaborators all in one step. The database is continuously updated by the Pivot editorial team with the latest opportunities to ensure reliability. "Adopting Pivot has been a cultural shift. Researchers simply didn't know where to go to find funding," shares Andrea.

RESEARCH STREAMLINED AND SIMPLIFIED
Finding funding for research doesn't have to be a daunting task. With the help of Pivot, universities can streamline the research development process making more time available to focus on the research that really interests the researcher. Pivot is unique as it integrates funding and collaborator discovery into one powerful tool so researchers can effectively collaborate with their colleagues, as well as quickly discover the right funding opportunities. A technology that is intuitive and easily implemented, Pivot will help increase efficiency in the research office. Without much training, users can quickly get started receiving funding recommendations and finding potential collaborators immediately. Pivot provides global and local connections that strengthen research by exploring new avenues for funding and collaboration, and users are also able to share and communicate funding and collaboration matches with their colleagues. Unmatched for supporting collaboration in the research development field, Pivot answers the growing demands on researchers to quickly discover the right collaborators and efficiently work in partnership with their colleagues to secure funding.