GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this Colloquium is to present the full range of post-degree options that are potentially available to you. Since most of the professionalization we do in our Department focusses on the academic job market, students receive considerable assistance with preparing for the academic career choice. But the landscape of higher education has changed radically in the last 10-15 years. Truth in advertising demands that the Department inform you that the academic job market is extremely poor just now (and so is the national job market as the US goes through the current depression). Fewer tenure-track jobs are posted each year as universities trim budgets, close language departments, de-authorize tenured positions, or hire adjuncts to meet basic teaching needs. The humanities in general and foreign languages in particular are hard-hit, since many Americans now view such fields as too “elitist” and not sufficiently “utilitarian” or “monetizing.” This may be short-sighted, this may be a social/economic fashion, but it will not swing in the other direction in the near future.

You have two options: you can see the current job market as a problem, or you can see it as an opportunity to reinvent yourself. While some students who enter graduate school finish with a passion for the academic life (which, by the way, is never what they thought it was going to be like when they started their programs), a significant percentage of graduate students come to realize that they are not interested in spending the rest of their lives in the pressure cooker of a comprehensive research university (or, for that matter, in a isolated location where the small liberal arts college may be the only game in town). But having invested so many years and so much effort in advanced academic training, they feel that they cannot leave the Ph.D. track for something else. They may also fear to leave the track because they have no idea of what other careers are out there, and they do not know where to start. This colloquium will take that particular fear out of play and give you some flexibility in thinking about and planning your own career path.

Advanced academic training is never a waste of time, even if you never become a professor. It provides you with skills that are useful in a variety of professions, of which academia is only one. Advanced academic training prepares you to do many important things: to undertake high-quality, sophisticated research in both print and electronic sources on almost any topic and for any purpose; to correlate ideas to action; to analyze and argue clearly, cogently, and concisely; to express yourself persuasively in writing and speaking; to conceptualize, organize, and carry out long-term projects; to control detail; to be tenacious in pursuit of long-term goals; to deal patiently with large amounts of data; to learn and process unfamiliar material efficiently and effectively; to become a lifelong learner yourself, and to teach others how to learn. These are not negligible skills. These skills allow you to adapt easily to new or changing systems and to manipulate mountains of data without getting lost or confused. Such higher-level skills are always, and always will be, in demand, and they can be applied in any arena, not just academia. They are especially valuable as we move into a world where we cannot even know what kind of jobs will exist five years from now and where adaptability and the ability to manipulate information may be the most important skills of all for advanced-level jobs. The details will be handled in on-the-job training.

So what is going to be important in this brave new world? Microsoft recently identified six core competencies for the field of education in its broadest sense. These are also necessary competencies for success in any profession today: “Competencies describe the functional and behavioral qualities that an individual must possess in order to
help an organization achieve success. Each role in an organization requires a different emphasis or mix of competencies. Here are Microsoft’s six core competencies:

1. **Individual excellence**: Ability to achieve results by working effectively with others in various circumstances.
2. **Organizational skills**: Ability to communicate by various means within different organizational settings.
3. **Courage**: Ability to speak directly, honestly, and with respect in difficult situations.
4. **Results**: An emphasis on goal-oriented action.
5. **Strategic skills**: An array of skills used to accomplish focused, longer-term goals.
6. **Operating skills**: An array of skills used for daily management of tasks and relationships.

Each of these six competencies reflect realistic thinking about human resources in the professional sector, and if you are thinking of entering the professional sector, you should consider them carefully. These core competencies are important whether you work in education, administration, government, business, non-profits, or anywhere else. They attempt to express the *intangibles* that all employers want in their employees. Organizations can provide institutional/corporate knowledge or job-specific training in-house, but the competencies take years to develop and cannot be taught “on the job.”

As graduate students and/or Ph.D.s, you have more to offer than you think in each of these six competencies. This is where your research skills go a long way: they can help you to uncover the context and assumptions of the various professions beyond the academy and to learn the vocabulary and presentation paradigms that will allow you to demonstrate your deep skills and competencies to employers outside academia who may be skeptical about hiring a PhD.

The first step is to reframe your experience in grad school (and your thinking about careers) for the professional market. You must be creative in packaging, promoting, and marketing yourself and your skills; you must be proactive in designing and following through on an external job search. The rubrics that accompany the core competencies on the Microsoft website are a good starting place: the detailed material there will help you to learn the vocabulary. That material also outlines development strategies for each sub-competency and how they relate to things employers want. You have highly-developed research skills. You can learn this new language.

What kinds of opportunities are available to graduate students and Ph.D.s peripheral to and outside academia? Not as many as you would like, but more than you think. But the time to be aware that these other opportunities exist is now, when you still have time to shape a flexible intellectual profile, pick the right minor, apply for special opportunities or internships, acquire those extra computer skills, think seriously about your options, and develop the job search skills that will let you enter tomorrow’s highly-professionalized work force at any number of points. To get the job you want, perhaps you really need two MAs (one academic, one professional) rather than one PhD. Perhaps you should have applied for that summer internship in public humanities. Have you been volunteering in the right places? But to answer those questions, you must start thinking about your career path and options early.

Start by using your learning skills to develop a whole new set of proficiencies, including networking (often a challenge for introverted academics!), informational interviewing (ditto), strategic thinking, brutal self-assessment, self-promotion and presentation, resume and cover letter writing (very different from academic CVs and letters of application), and interviewing (ditto). Learn the culture and the “language” of the profession you have targeted. Consider strategies to persuade the potential employer that you really are “changing careers,” not treading water until something academic opens up. In this world, whom you know is key. I suggest that the first contact you “develop” is one of the professional career coaches at our institution’s career services office. This office is not just

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1 Outline at: <http://www.microsoft.com/education/en-us/training/competencies/pages/default.aspx#HowToUse>

Detailed definitions of the six core competencies and sub-competencies as they relate to EDUCATION are at: <http://www.microsoft.com/education/enus/training/competencies/pages/default.aspx#Competencies>

2 I have chosen the Microsoft Core Competencies for this document because I consider them to be “good to think with.” But there are many other evaluative systems out there, and some basic web work will turn them up.
for undergraduates. It is to help any student at any level find the right employment. (The one thing they do not do is help you find academic teaching jobs. That stays in your department.)

If you consider a professional job, you will enter a world that is exciting, fast-moving, constantly changing, and very competitive. On the difficulty meter, a professional job search is no more work than an academic job search; they are different, but both are extremely labor-intensive. Finding a job is a full-time job in and of itself. Finding the perfect professional job is not easy, and you will not walk into it on the first try. It bears repeating: you will not start at the top in your dream job because, while you have important skills, you have no real-time experience. The good news is that you can work your way to the top of the profession you choose, in many cases faster than is possible in the academy. And in most cases, the rewards will be at least as great as or, at the high end, far greater than in the academy. So will the risks be.

Your immediate strategy is this: look through the sample of opportunities that exist (many are listed below). Find the job lists for for the areas that interest you and comb through their job ads. Read some books, visit web sites devoted to moving from academia to the professional world. Consult with anyone you think might help. Go to chat rooms on sites like CHE and Versatilephd.com for anecdotal evidence, shared misery, shared victory, and good tips. Identify your aspirational (ideal) job. Sit down, evaluate your skills, and work out what you have to do between where you are today and your aspirational job. What can you do now to shape yourself? That will give you direction and a sense of what steps you need to take.

One of the shocks of entering the brave new world outside academe is discovering that no one really cares about your dissertation and that the letters Ph.D. actually scare some Human Resources officers. Some jobs will want you to have that credential (for the skill set), but the subject matter of your degree may be completely irrelevant. From the point of view of many employers, your credential alone is not proof of anything, except that you had the persistence to get the credential. You will need to prove to them that those skills will also allow you to do many other desirable things.

By the way, one of the reasons that many HR Departments do not like to see the letters “Ph.D.” on the resume is that they assume that you are going to be demanding, arrogant, whiny, uncooperative, dissatisfied, and ready to abandon the training and prep the employer invests in you at the first possibility of an academic position -- which is a great waste of their time, effort, and money. Your mission is to convince them that people make career changes all the time, and you are making a career change, too. You have to start seeing graduate school as a career track where you learned important, intangible skills and yourself as someone who can apply those skills in other sectors of the economy to the benefit of the employer.

The reality of the job market is a hard thing to think about because it challenges your assumptions about yourself, your abilities, your desires, your values, and your expectations for the future. For some students, graduate school becomes a way to delay real-life decisions and the academy a great place to hide out. In the end, only you know what you really value, what you want from life, what interests you, and what your greatest skills are. Quality of life is a priority in our age. You have an excellent education and considerable options. What do you want the quality of your life to be?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Read for the Seminar: Please read the three articles below. Note that there are comments of interest that follow the article.


2. These are recommended but not required for the session (please read at some point):


http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/issues/2011/1110/1110pre1.cfm


3. Web Work: Please divide these sites up informally amongst yourselves. Look at your site in some depth and be ready to comment about it at our meeting; if you identify other relevant sites, please share.

http://versatilephd.com/ [sound, growing site; run by Paula Chambers]

http://chronicle.com/section/AdviceColumns/144/ [scroll down to “Beyond the Ivory Tower”]

http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/altac/ [Alternative Academic Careers]

http://www.preparingfaculty.org/

http://gradschool.about.com/od/alternativecareer/Alternative_Careers_for_PhDs.htm

http://www.ironstring.com/sellout/

http://www.beyondacademe.com/ [not just for historians; run by Alexandra Lord]

http://www.KUCareerHawk.com [University Career Center - not just for undergrads]

4. Recommended Books:


Jane Chin. *PhD [alternative] Career Clinic*. 9Pillars, 2011. [This is a workbook with lists and strategies]

A LOOK AT THE POTENTIAL JOB MARKET FOR SLAVIC Ph.D.s

CAREER PATHS IN THE ACADEMY I: TEACHING

Comment: If you are set on a career in the academy, then you have to follow the MLA Job List, the AATSEEL Job List (and even just SEELANGS) religiously now to learn what kinds of academic jobs are actually being advertised, what kind of jobs are tenure-track and what jobs are adjunct or part-time, what the employers are looking for, where the post-docs are and what they are requiring. You have to evaluate and re-evaluate how your skills, intellectual profile, and interests stack up to the required and preferred qualifications of the opportunities that are out there -- do this early, do this often, while you still have time to consider all options. There are no longer any guarantees in the academic market.

If you are committed to a career in education, then consider all of your options. While all students in our field receive their Ph.D.s from large, comprehensive research institutions (because that is where the 25 or so Ph.D. granting programs in our field are located), you should not think of yourself as a clone of your research university faculty. Not all graduates want to teach or even should teach at a comprehensive research institution. Different institutions offer other professional priorities, qualities of life, and life styles. For example, research universities emphasize (surprise!) research productivity, entrepreneurial grantsmanship, and competition for resources and prestige; regional universities and small liberal arts colleges emphasize value-driven, “liberal” interaction with students and intensive teaching, in and out of the classroom, with modest demonstration of research capacity, more broadly defined; two-year institutions tend to be more “nine-to-five” and emphasize more direct “training” of students in specific skills but have little or no research requirement; teaching in a foreign institution offers yet another set of rewards. Whom do you want to be? A big fish in a big competitive pond? a big fish lording it in a smaller pond? a small fish happy in a small pond? a small fish hanging around the margins of a big pond? Take your pick, and make the appropriate career choices now. Each of these scenarios demands a different set of skills and knowledge and priorities and work.

Institution Types
- Private prep schools (which mostly hire MAs and PhDs rather than BAs and MEs)
- Public high school education (for which you may need to pick up a certificate or additional training for public schools, depending on state; private high schools have a different system)
- Community colleges and other two-year Institutions
- Small liberal arts colleges [SLACs]
- Regional universities (private and public)
- Comprehensive research universities (private and public)
- Institutions affiliated with particular religious groups (seminaries, some SLACs)
- For-profit institutions, like Phoenix, Kaplan, Berkeley, etc.)
- Teaching abroad (full-time professorial positions in foreign institutions)

Options
- adjuncts (pay-per-course, $1200-$4000; $1500-$2000 is average)
- one- or two-year positions (at visiting prof level, $35-45,000; more usually at instructor level, $25-35,000)
- post-docs (approx. $40,000; many are foundation-funded)
- tenure-track jobs (entry level currently averages $52-55,000)

The next few pages by no means represent a complete list of possibilities -- these are just the more obvious directions to investigate. Neither are all these tracks only for those with Ph.D.s in hand; many will, however, need at least an M.A.
CAREER PATHS IN THE ACADEMY II: ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND ADMINISTRATION

Comment: The administration and delivery of higher education and the maintenance of its infrastructure is a big and complicated business. An institution like KU has about twice as many full-time support staff as full-time faculty. The Human Resources (HR) home page of any institution, whether large research university or community college, posts job ads for faculty/academic staff, unclassified professional staff (administrators, assistant/associate directors, assistant deans, etc.), and classified support staff (secretaries, office managers, skilled and unskilled workers). Ph.D.s looking to change career tracks should target the professional staff category. Professional staff receive salary (not hourly wage) and benefits. True, a 40-hour work week is only a casual suggestion in their case: professional staff put in whatever time is necessary to complete projects on schedule.

The work of professional staff can be as complex, challenging, engaging, and rewarding as the work of the faculty. Both work toward the mission of the institution. Professional staff jobs demand advanced degrees, some relevant experience, and knowledge of how an institution of higher education works. They place you on campus and offer access to all of the cultural, intellectual, and social opportunities that campuses offer. If you like working with students, these jobs will take you into their orbit; if you don’t, there are jobs in which you will never see one, except at a distance. If you think you will miss teaching, then remember that teaching takes many forms. Many profession staff “teach” in their own way.

Internet resources are available to help you find appropriate professional positions around the country (and in some cases, around the world -- but be discriminating). If you want to work for a particular institution or in a particular part of the country, you can look at the job listings on the Human Resources site of specific institutions in those regions [such as KU’s <https://jobs.ku.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/Welcome_css.jsp>]. Institutional HR sites may list jobs as academic, professional, and support, or they may list them by category (administration, health, security, etc.) or by some other designation (classified/unclassified). Some HR sites are easier to navigate than others; you will need to register to use some of them. Almost all use on-line applications. Note that different states have different titles for these categories, some campuses are unionized, etc., but at this point in your career you should be able to research and learn anything.

You will not be immediately eligible for most professional staff jobs (any more than you would be immediately eligible for most professorial jobs in disciplines not your own). You may need to polish up your computer or graphic design skills to get a job, and this will also take some time. You may need to have several years of work experience in a lower level aspect of the job category to make you competitive for, say, a directorship (and the sooner you start . . .). But having been through graduate school, you know a lot more than you think about how higher education works, and that is also valuable knowledge.

Professional staff careers in the university offer more flexibility and range than academic careers. There are about 4,500 degree-granting, post-secondary institutions in the U.S., located in every part of the country. The larger institutions will advertise at least one job that you are capable of doing immediately. Turnover is year-round, so new postings come up all the time (i.e., these jobs are not tied to the progress of the academic year; most faculty jobs are advertised only in the early fall). Many of these administrative and support positions require an advanced

5 Reliable sites: don’t neglect the old standby, <http://chronicle.com/jobCategory/Administrative/88>, but also investigate the job lists of Inside Higher Ed <http://careers.insidehighered.com>, which includes both academic and professional jobs but allows you to filter for your preferences by job type, institution, or location. Others good places to start include <http://www.higheredjobs.com/>, which is very easy to search and lays out literally thousands of administrative jobs by category; also see Academic360 <http://www.academic360.com/>, Top Higher Education Jobs <http://www.tedjob.com>, the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium <http://www.hercjobs.org/>, and Academic Keys <http://www.academickeskeys.com/>. You will find other sites for yourself. If you are looking for jobs by region, you will want to identify your location, find the institutions in the region, and investigate the HR listings on their individual sites. Every university and college has an HR page that posts currently available jobs. Remember that such positions can turn over at any time throughout the year and new listings appear all the time.
6 Compare this to the 15-20 jobs, some of them temporary, for Slavic professors that become available in any given year.
degree at a minimum, and, in some cases, “an earned doctorate from an accredited institution,” but not necessarily in any particular field. These jobs recognize that the skills you acquire in Ph.D. work are transferable and as valuable as the specific knowledge you will acquire on the job. Once again, you will not walk in immediately and become the campus’s Director of International Programs, but you can get there in a timely manner by working out your “stepping stone” jobs -- i.e., program officer, field/regional supervisor, assistant director.

Professional staff will change jobs or institutions a bit more frequently than either full-time faculty or support staff. You will not always be lucky enough to have positions at the next level open up at exactly the right time at your current institution. You may have to move to another institution for that promotion. Another institution may also offer a perk you want. Some professional staff are able to negotiate a “hybrid” career: while your main position is administrative, you might still do some adjunct teaching or some independent research; some administrative positions may even include teaching as a component of the job if you have the credential.

The list of types of professional staff positions below is lengthy, but by no means exhaustive. If you flip through the KU phone directory (under “Lawrence Campus Administrative Offices”), you will get the idea of what kind of positions there are out there.

Some Examples of Career Opportunities in Academic Support and Administration:

- international Programs, International Student/Scholar Support
  - internationalizing activities and events, visa and tracking, applied English programs, foreign student advising, academic exchange programs, credential evaluation, international student and scholar services
- Study Abroad Offices
  - program management, advertising, events, administration
- Area Centers, Institutes, Programs of various kinds
  - executive director, associate director, assistant director, outreach director
- Higher Education Administration
  - executive assistant to the Chancellor, Provost, Dean, and their subsets
- Human Resources management
- Academic Advising, Counseling
  - student advising, career counseling and job placement, ombuds, academic integrity officer
- Student Affairs
  - academic life, resident life, student recruitment, admissions, enrollment, student success, orientation, student involvement, leadership, and organizations, financial aid, learning resources, etc.
- Academic Affairs, Provost Offices
  - assistant vice-provosts, directors, or officers for university communications, data analysis, information specialist, institutional planning and research, assessment, accreditation, compliance, faculty/staff affairs, faculty recruitment, faculty development, disability resources, research administration, and more
- Graduate Studies
  - assistant dean, director of graduate affairs for a School or College, graduate student recruitment, application systems, thesis and dissertation submissions, etc.
- Centers for Research
  - sponsored programs, administration, grant writing, grant administration, running budgets and programs, economic and business development
- University Endowment
  - development and fund-raising, gift planning, administration
- Alumni Affairs
  - alumni tracking, organization, public relations, events
- Registrar’s Office
  - student records, certification
- Honors Programs, accelerated degree programs
- Humanities Centers (associate/executive director)
- Adult and Continuing Education, Extension, Outreach
Computer and Information Technology (if you are a computer whiz)
Instructional Technology and Design (if you really love Blackboard!)
Digital Humanities (the coming thing)
Distance Education Services
Conference and Events Administration
Arts and Museum Administration (requires additional training)
Multicultural Affairs
University presses (publication and editing)
Library personnel
  requires an additional degree: subject or area librarian, specialist consultant, processing, user/scholar services, IT, digital scholarship, instructional services, collections, preservation, library administration, rare books curator or archivist

CAREER PATHS OUTSIDE THE ACADEMY

General Comment: One of the greatest criticisms leveled at people within the academy who are trying to help Ph.D.s get jobs outside the academy is that, while they have the concept and theory, they are light on applied practice. It is true -- faculty members are well-aware of what opportunities exist in their own bailiwick, those are outlined above. But where are all of these non-academic jobs for Ph.D.s that people refer to? Where should graduates be looking? There is no large body of instantly identifiable jobs for humanities Ph.D.s like there is for "engineers" or "doctors," which demand obvious skill sets. In many cases, job opportunities for humanities Ph.D.s will be limited, they may come up only once every few years (when someone moves, retires, or dies), and they are more likely to come up in some areas of the country than in others.

In this section, I have listed a number of agencies that employ Ph.D.s and do not flinch when they see "Ph.D." on your resume. In many such cases, you must have a Ph.D. to hold top-level administrative positions (in some cases program officers who entered without PhDs return to graduate school to acquire the credential so that they may advance within their agency). The possibilities below have reasonable (and in some cases, excellent) salaries and possibilities for promotion and movement within the agency or over to other agencies. You will not start at the top of the heap (any more than assistant professors start at the top of the heap), but the point is to have rational expectations and to GET STARTED. Get your foot in the door at some level, even if you believe a particular job is "beneath" your training and skills. You will not be there long, and the experience you get will take you somewhere else you want to go. If the job is really beneath you, then your talents, superior training, and valuable skill sets will get you promoted quickly and out of there. Some of the jobs involves regular international travel.

Not-for-profits of many different types

Comment: These organizations employ people at all levels, but they require a Ph.D. to advance to top levels. Jobs include administration, working as a program officer with specific grant initiatives or specific grantees, writing grant proposals, doing specialized research, writing reports, negotiating programs, etc. Better find out what our professional organizations are and if there is a place there for you.

Professional Associations
  someone runs ASEEES, AATSEEL, AHA, AAUP, and other professional associations on a day-to-day basis; while the nominal head is a famous professor on a short term, the permanent executive director who does the work almost always has a Ph.D.

Research and Exchange Organizations (senior administration must hold the Ph.D.)
  International Research and Exchanges Board IREX
  National Council for Eurasian and East European Research NCEEER
  Council for International Educational Exchange CIEE
  American Council for International Education ACIE [includes American Council of Teachers of Russian
ACTR] Council for the International Exchange of Scholars CIES (all program officers and above have Ph.D.s), etc.
You can start with these organizations as a program officer or staff, then move up.
NEH, NEA, other government research endowments (program officers and senior administration have Ph.D.s)
State Historical Societies, other state agencies
Charitable and philanthropic organizations of all sorts, large and small, local, regional, national, international
Human Rights monitoring organizations
National Foreign Language Center (most employees have Ph.D.s or are abd)
Educational Support
  Institute for International Education IIE
  American Council on Education ACE
  US Office of Post-Secondary Education [International Foreign Language Education Office]
  NAFSA [the world's largest nonprofit professional association dedicated to international education] 7
  IERF International Education Research Foundation (evaluates worldwide academic credentials)
Research organizations and think tanks (Wilson Center, Kennan Institute, Brookings, Rand, etc.)
Foundations (program officers and administrators for Ford, Carnegie, Mellon, et al., which support research and area projects)

Publishing (books and journals, online media; academic, trade, child, technical)
  acquisitions editor
  copy editor
  management
  literary agent
  literary consultant
  advertising
  sales
  author

Comment: About authors. Not everyone can be Umberto Eco, best-selling author of The Name of the Rose and Foucault’s Pendulum, well-published professor of linguistics and philosophy, and president of the Scuola Superiore di Studi Umanistici at the University of Bologna (we wish). But there are many kinds of books and authors, and a Ph.D. can research anything. Writing best-selling novels can be tricky, but many academically-trained authors write popular fiction successfully -- historical novels, romance fiction, murder mysteries, sci-fi, children’s books, thrillers, pseudo-Victorians, even traditional literature. (One recent example: Carrie Bebris, who writes the popular Mr. and Mrs. Darcy Mystery Series, left her career as a college English teacher for writing.) But there’s more: books by famous non-writers need ghost writers. Someone has to write or compile how-to books, commissioned biographies, technical manuals, magazine articles, popularizing editions, and reference works. Art and photography books need captions and introductory material. Someone has to write The Big Book of X and the Handbook of Y, usually under contract to publishers specializing in X and Y. Even Z for Dummies has to find a smarty to write it. If you enjoy writing for its own sake (almost never any footnotes!), remember that writing is a far, far broader game than squeezing out that academic monograph. This is one of those career options where developing a network of contacts is absolutely key. Once you are in the loop, your career builds. The trick is to do informational interviews, network, and make contacts who will bring you into the loop.

Advertising and Public Relations (radio, TV, print media)
  writer
  publicist

7 Just check out the many kinds of jobs listed at NAFSA’s job registry: <http://www.nafsa.org/careercenter/>
Journalism, Media, Communications
- journalist
- research consultant
- technical writer and editor
- motivational speaker
- foreign editor (write and edit English language materials for foreign publications/web sites with English language capacity; this can be as complex as working for a university press abroad or as simple as editing for one of the Russian news services with English language posts; if living abroad appeals . . . )

Government
- the usuals (policy analyst, abstracter, specialized translator, materials monitor for security or military agencies)
- program officer for international programs in Department of Education, other departments
- public affairs officer
- public relations officer
- resource coordinator
- outreach coordinator

Comment: Government jobs exist far beyond Washington, D.C. Government functions on the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Every state and every major city have trade, commerce, health, etc. entities that hire staff with international/research/outreach expertise. Even in D.C., State Department, Department of Education, CIA, and NSA are not the only game in town for a Ph.D. with language, area, and culture training. Every one of the fifteen cabinet departments has an office that deals with foreign countries in one way or another and has some form of international exchange, reporting, and research arm. You will not start at the top in your first position, but once you are in, you will be able to maneuver your way toward the top.

Insurance and Banking
- manager
- customer service officer
- technical writer
- personnel officer

Business
- manager; customer sales rep; marketing analyst; communications officer
- rare books (trade books, university press books) buyer/salesperson
- manager
- writer
- consultant
- fund-raiser
- International Chambers of Commerce
- events and instruction coordinator
- corporate trainer (includes cross-cultural and language trainers for international firms)

Library
- librarian (subject or area librarian or specialist consultant, processing, user/scholar services, IT, digital scholarship, instructional services, collections, preservation)
- library administrator
- rare books curator or archivist

Comment: For a career in libraries, you will need a second degree (M.A. in Library and Information Science) and

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top-of-the-line technology skills. Area studies librarianship is rewarding work that uses your languages and area knowledge. If you want to be a dean at a research library, you will need that Ph.D. Librarians also work in large public libraries in major cities and in business firms -- anywhere information management and training is required.

**Human Resources or Community Service**
- organizer
- writer
- consultant

**Public Humanities**
- museums (local, regional, national)
- historical societies (research, curation, outreach, advertising, grant-writing)
- PEN American Center
- public archives (local, regional, national)
- historic preservation
- community relations
- house historian (for a company, foundation, agency, museum, other entity)
- house researcher

**Comment:** Check out <http://publichumanities.blogspot.com/>. Perhaps a minor in Museum Studies or even a co-M.A.? Public Humanities Internship at the Hall Center while a grad student? Also: Did you know that there are companies like History Associates Incorporated that hire people to provide customized historical research and writing, litigation research, records management, and international services? Or that there is an organization called the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) that advocates for the humanities, humanities education, research, preservation, and public programs in Washington, D.C.? and they have professional staff? You could do some real good here. Next step: digital public humanities, a growing field that will need both supervision and product.

**Life among the Expats**

The respect in which American higher education is held abroad (at least for the time being) means that you can find academic positions abroad, but that is not the end of your options. As other countries internationalize, the demand for native English speakers around the world increases: expats work in banks, schools, customer services, administration, tourism and travel, PR firms, IT, etc. -- fields for which they often were not trained, but for which multiple language skills are essential. (On the job training!) It is not easy to break in, but once you have your foot in the door, your skills can take you places, especially with those strong language skills.

**IT’S PERSONAL: Your Hobby, Your Charity, Your Religion**

Are you a great cook? (did you know that Steve Macelli of Macelli’s here in Lawrence is a KU PhD/abd in Polish? but how he loves to cook for others!)
Are you a supporter or volunteer for the Red Cross, Planned Parenthood, the Humane Society, Sister Cities Program, etc.? They have real jobs, too.
Most religious denominations also have considerable infrastructure, some of which demands research, and there might be a place for you.

There are ways to turn your interests into a career or a business. It isn’t easy, but there are ways. It is all about quality of life and what is really important to you (pursue your values, follow your interests, keep your eye out for opportunities).
READING AND EVALUATING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

If you visit the sites in footnote 5 on page 6, you will find real professional job advertisements for positions in academic support and administration. Many of these jobs are suitable for humanities M.A.s and/or Ph.D.s (either immediately or eventually, depending on your profile). I visited higheredjobs.com and clicked on “Administrative” positions (this is the “professional” category, and it had a couple of thousand jobs listed), I found 84 different positions from all over the country listed under “International Programs and Services” -- a natural category for language and area professionals. There were also some goodies (starter jobs) among the 62 “Executive Assistant” positions listed. Not all categories will be of interest (just a wild guess, but I surmise that “Athletics and Coaching” is not a biggie for this audience, and “Laboratory and Research” or “Medicine” is not suitable), but something in the many of the other 45+ categories, from “Academic Advising” to “Volunteer Programs and Service Learning,” might be. And “Other,” with more than 400 entries, is interesting, to say the least.

Getting started on the search is not hard, but one has to be persistent. New jobs are posted constantly, and the window of opportunity for application may very small (1-2 weeks). You have to stay on top of the game and check regularly to see what’s new on the sites you determine to be the most useful to you. If you have questions about the position, you may want to contact the appropriate HR office or the contact person and ask if the position is local only, internal, or whatever else you want to know. (Many ads that are “internal” clearly say so.) Sometimes a phone call will tell you far more about the position than the ad tells you.

Job advertisements constitute the employer’s “wish list.” Rarely does a candidate come forth who meets all qualifications, required and preferred, and who has the je ne sais quoi that the employer is looking for but cannot stuff into the job description. In many cases, there are few, and sometimes no ideal candidates (I say this as a veteran of many search committees, both academic and professional); in some cases, the competition will be stiff. But employers know that some things can only (and must) be taught on the job, and that initiative, entrepreneurial spirit, commitment to the mission, willingness to learn, collegiality, enthusiasm, and the intangibles (key competencies, which some job ads actually list) really matter more, once required characteristics are (more or less) met. So in searching, your reach should exceed your grasp (to reference Browning).

Do not think that, because you have been a graduate student for X number of years, you have not worked and have no experience. Big mistake. On the contrary, you have worked very hard and you can do lots of things: you can search out information, organize it, use it, communicate it well in writing and orally; you are able to assimilate new information constantly and learn new things; you know how to teach others to learn; you are flexible; you are savvy with computers and programs and databases and the internet; you understand and can use social media; you can work alone or on a team; you know how to organize -- be it a work load or a pile of data; you can manage your time effectively; you work well under pressure and considerable stress; you can apply theoretical models to your data; you can create theoretical models from data; you can work with anyone. After all, you know how to deal both with egomaniacal professors and sweet snowflake undergrads; you have kept records of grades and performance, and every time you wrote a letter or recommendation for a student, you evaluated the performance of someone who was working for you. The list goes on. What you need to do is think about your grad student experiences, then sit down and translate them into specific professional skills and abilities.
You must also learn to learn to read job descriptions carefully and to evaluate them strategically. Things to consider:

✔ How does the position description correspond to your own professional goals, short- and long-term, and your personal goals (living wage, good health insurance, ocean view, good coffee bars)? Would you enjoy doing this job? Would you like being at this institution? If not, then continue clicking.

✔ What is the job description actually asking for? Move past the employer’s wish list: what does the institution really want/need? What will it take to do this job? Translate those “responsibilities” into your own language and experience, then compare it to your own assets and skills. Do you fit 65% or better? If yes, it is worth a shot.

✔ What do the key words in the advertisement mean? For example, what constitutes “administrative experience” or “supervisory experience”? What other kinds of activities and responsibilities are synonymous with “administrative” or “supervisory” in this particular case? Have you done things that are “administrative” and “supervisory” without realizing it? And “training.” How much “training” do you need to be “trained,” and what kind of training do you need (a separate degree, a course, a two-week workshop, a one-day workshop, some self-study on the weekends)? How do you translate your specific experiences as a graduate student to fill the “experience” requirement?

✔ So: where and how do your current skills and experience correspond to the skills and experience that the job description wants? If you don’t have the actual experience, what have you done that illustrates your ability, skills, or potential to meet the description?

✔ Find a self-promotion strategy: how are you going to sell yourself to this employer? Your value is not obvious just because you have been to grad school. What should you emphasize in this particular cover letter? The letter is YOU -- what do you look like on paper? What do you need to communicate and in what priority order? (You are a trained writer, so identify your audience and then pitch the crucial argument with logic and data.)

✔ Learn the language: what terms or phrases will best describe your skills, abilities, experience, potential, collegiality, and commitment in your cover letter? Here you need to shift radically away from “academese” and (ugh!) passive voice to more concrete and active descriptors to convey what you have achieved in grad school (where you actually learned and demonstrated more skills than you know). Some examples: Are you a fast and competent grader? Then you have demonstrated “quick turnaround of assigned work.” Did you complete syllabus requirements, write research papers, meet deadlines, submit grant proposals? Then you have demonstrated “ability to work within a variety of assigned parameters.” Did you complete syllabus requirements, write research papers, meet deadlines, submit grant proposals? Then you have demonstrated “ability to work within a variety of assigned parameters.” Writing and lecturing? You have demonstrated “excellent verbal and written communication skills.” Done a large research project? You have demonstrated strong “information and data management skills.” Herded freshmen? Overseen class projects? Run the Grad Student Organization? Those are “supervisory and team leadership skills.” You have to start thinking of your graduate student activities — academic, social, and service — as “specific skill set development.” And you need to find the right vocabulary for conveying them to potential employers.
✔ What additional experience or training do you need before you can apply for the kind of position you want to reach? Two-three years in the trenches, then move up? Additional professional development in, say, specialized computer skills? Networking in specific professional affiliations (societies, unions, organizations, contacts)?

✔ Do you need to talk to someone about your job search? (A definite “YES!” You should talk to everyone -- who knows whom they know? they could know a lead.) From whom should you seek advice? What questions do you need to ask? What do you need to consider? Who can help you develop a strategy for the job search?

✔ Who should be your mentor as you move forward in the search? Someone at your own graduate institution who is already doing the job is a good prospect; have you solicited an informational interview from that person? made a connection to that person? Developed that person as a possible reference?

✔ Who should be your references? Three professors is not going to do it for you.

✔ As you read job ads, develop a short-term and a long-term search strategy. Look at both possible, “right-now” positions and morselize over aspirational positions. What do you really want to do? What are the stepping stone positions that will bring you to such a position, if not now, then in three years? five years? Ten years? (It takes ten years minimum to move from assistant to full professor; most people take much longer. In academic support, you start lower, but you move up much faster.)

✔ If the job ad does not mention salary, or says it is commensurate with experience or negotiable, do you know how to find the appropriate numbers?

✔ What can you do now, as a graduate student, to develop necessary experience, knowledge, contacts, and mentors?


And hit the web sites.

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9 Informational interviews are extremely important in any professional job search. You need to learn about what is really involved in particular positions you think you might want to pursue, in the academy and outside. The best way to do that is to contact someone who is actually doing that job somewhere and ask if they are willing to be interviewed about their skills, their tasks and assignments, the options for promotion, what their day looks like, what they like most, what they hate about their jobs. You can make the appointment by e-mail, then do the interview by phone, Skype, or in person. You are not looking for a job in doing this (make that clear); you are gathering information about the job that will make an application more competitive for this job category at some other agency or institution. What the interviewee says can give you a lot of information about how to present yourself in a cover letter, what skills are most valued, what you should emphasize, how to translate you academic skills into professional skills, what the “language” of that profession is, etc. Sometimes the interviewee will e-mail back with early knowledge of a job opening; he or she may even be on a search committee for a job for which you are applying. You cannot have too many names in your contact list.