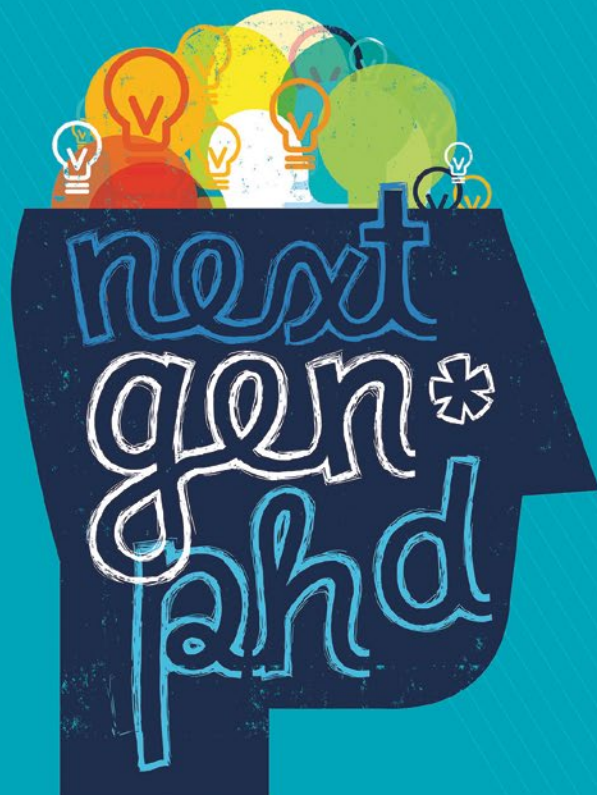


Summary of
Prior Work

in Humanities PhD
Professional
Development



SEPTEMBER 2017





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for the Council of Graduate Schools

A Long History

Doctorally-trained humanists have always found success and meaningful careers in a variety of settings. Without question, the capacities developed in PhD programs will transfer to any number of professional contexts (Bender, 2006; Nerad, 2009; Sauermann and Roach, 2012; Turk-Bicakci, Berger & Haxton, 2014). Despite a rich history of meaningful contributions, those humanities PhDs who have pursued careers beyond the academy have traditionally felt ignored or even disowned by their alma maters, home departments, and advisors. Even in the face of evidence that humanities PhDs employed in business, government, and nonprofit sectors earn higher salaries and are overall more satisfied with their work than those in academe (Figure 1), the narrative that so-called *non-academic* careers were consolation prizes for runners up persists. This myth has proven stubborn, fueled by talk of *The Job Market* and *The Profession*, and the story of professional development for humanities PhDs in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries bears a frustrating resemblance to an album on repeat.

Since the period immediately following World War II, a volley of commissions, researchers, organizations, and funders have recommended expanding the professional development offered in doctoral programs. As early as 1947, the Truman Commission

report on higher education, for example, recognized that most PhDs enter college teaching, but counseled that “graduate schools take advantage of the opportunity and the obligation to make a distinguished contribution through providing internship training for those who plan to enter...different fields [e.g., as researchers, counselors, special service personnel, or administrators]” (President’s Commission, p. 20). This recommendation was made independent of hand-wringing about the availability of college teaching jobs, and points to the fact that individual student career choice has never been unidirectional.

Nevertheless, it would be foolish to ignore how ideas about (and the realities of) academic job markets have shaped universities’ views of doctoral student preparation—and how structural conditions have constrained individual choice. During roughly the period from 1955 to 1965, most educational experts expected “a desperate shortage of adequately trained [university] teachers...as far ahead as one could see” (Carter & Farrell, 1969, p. 357). This assumption, fueled by enormous increases in federal research funding, triggered the rapid expansion of doctoral programs. Even during this time that Cassuto (2015) calls the “golden age” of graduate education, however, universities hired only about half of all PhD recipients each year as college teachers (Carter &

Farrell, 1969, p. 357). This proportion fell considerably as PhD programs continued to grow throughout the last decades of the twentieth century.¹

With the reduction in the proportion of PhD graduates finding academic employment, the humanities community began to feel the first pangs of an academic job market “crisis.” A 1974 *Washington Post* article (Weisman, p. A2) reports that, “with declining [undergraduate] enrollment, reduced government financial support, more emphasis on applied subjects, the outlook for historians and the humanities in general is considered bleak.”^{2 3} A report on the 1977 Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR)⁴ notes “declines in employment among the most recent recipients of humanities PhDs as well as an increasing movement of these individuals into nontraditional fields of employment” (Maxfield & Henn, 1980, p. 17). In 1980, “[t]he academic job prospects for... Ph.D.’s in the humanities seem[ed] dismal indeed” (Commission on The Humanities, 1980, p. 85). Familiarly, the recommended antidote was for “graduate schools and departments [to] reassess their purposes and curricula, and consider how the training they offer in the humanities might be better adapted to both academic and nonacademic employment” (Commission on The Humanities, 1980, p. 88). This refrain, of a tight academic job market

resulting in calls to rethink graduate training, echoes across the decades.

Nerad and Cerny (1999), through surveys of PhD alumni, tracked the results of the academic job market between 1982 and 1985 and captured the career advice PhDs received. Bearing witness to a familiar story, they reported that many English PhDs, “because of the difficult academic job market,...entered a ‘holding pattern’ of working in short-term non-tenure-track faculty positions, with some teaching courses at several different universities simultaneously” (1999, p. 4). Only 8% of Nerad and Cerny’s respondents had faculty mentors that “encouraged them to look for careers outside academia” (p. 3). This despite the fact that PhD graduates in Business, Government, and Nonprofit (BGN) sectors experienced more satisfaction with many areas of their work life than those within academe (Figure 1). Based on their findings, the researchers recommended that “[g]raduate programs in the humanities...include preparation for employment in the BGN sectors as well as in academia” (p. 11).

Academic organizations sprang to action to develop solutions in response to these trends. In 1984, the American Philosophical Association began publishing *Careers for Philosophers*, a handbook for doctorally-trained philosophers interested in pursuing careers outside

1. A recent article from the MLA’s *Profession* (Laurence, 2017) skillfully represents the realities of doctoral attainment in the modern languages from 1955–2014. This proves a useful case study for the shifting situation in the humanities at large. Laurence reports that “in 1970, [language and literature] doctoral programs, expanded in size and enlarged in number, awarded doctorates to 2,012 graduates, well over triple the number of 1958 (1,365 graduates in English and 647 in other modern languages). Through the 1960s,...doctoral programs were accelerating the production of modern language PhDs by more than 10% per year, on average.”

2. The article cites as further evidence, “a seminar on ‘alternative employment’ [at the 1974 meeting of the American Historical Association] offered standing room only.”

3. For more examples of newspaper articles from the 1970s and 1980s on the subject, see Wood (2016).

4. Humanities fields were included in the *Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) from 1977 through 1995* (biennially).

FIGURE 1

**Levels of job satisfaction in English PhDs employed in Business, Government and Nonprofit (BGN) Sectors and Academe
EXCERPTED FROM NERAD AND CERNY (1999)***

Satisfaction category	BGN	Academe
Autonomy of work	92%	90%
Location for spouse	91%	75%
Content of work	87%	89%
Prestige of organization	83%	68%
Work environment	83%	73%
Flexible work	82%	84%
Career growth	78%	67%

* These findings are part of the *PhDs 10 Years Later* study (Nerad & Cerny, 1999), which remains the most detailed and comprehensive examination of post-PhD career satisfaction to date. The study surveyed, in 1996-97, six disciplines, among them English PhDs 10 to 13 years after degree completion. The 814 English PhD respondents from 61 US research universities were predominantly white, slightly more than half women (53%), and were on the average 35 years of age at completion of their degrees. The figure presented here results from an analysis of dimensions of job satisfaction that are commonly associated with the privileges of academia. These dimensions were compared for respondents employed in BGN and academic sectors in 1995. Reprinted with permission.

of academia.⁵ The Committee on Institutional Cooperation⁶ that same year published a study, *Humanities Ph.D.'s and nonacademic careers: A guide for faculty advisers* (Risser & Wyman, 1984), designed to "support and encourage students in seeking and preparing for non-academic jobs" (Hechlinger, 1984, p. C1). In an interview, one of the study's authors made the usual recommendation:

Instead of merely tolerating a trend, ...departments in the humanities... should sponsor workshops on

non-academic careers and make their curriculum more flexible. They should encourage Ph.D. candidates in the humanities to take additional courses in other areas, such as economics, political science or in computer technology, to make them more "marketable." (Risser qtd. Hechlinger, 1984, p. C1)

Isolated efforts sought to implement this recommendation at universities, such as through the creation of summer institutes for humanities PhDs to transfer their skills to business

5. The APA continues to update and make available this resource under the name *Beyond academia: Professional opportunities for philosophers*.

6. Now known as the Big Ten Academic Alliance: <https://www.btaa.org/home>

and government⁷ (Feinberg, 1982) and certain interdisciplinary programs (Mouat, 1982). Nevertheless, few lasting reforms penetrated humanities departments in the area of broad professional development.⁸

The promise of faculty shortages, projected to appear in the late 1990s, accounted in part for the limited and scattered nature of professional development reform. These labor market shortages were expected either due to “the bunching” of retirements (Bowen and Schuster, 1986; Sovern, 1989) or changes in undergraduate enrollment patterns and other factors (Bowen & Sosa, 1989). This idea permeated the consciousness of the graduate education community to such an extent that one of the stated aims of the long-running (1991–2000) Mellon-funded Graduate Education Initiative (GEI) was to lessen attrition and shorten time-to-degree in humanities PhD programs to ensure “an adequate number of PhDs were to be available” to meet this projected need for professors (Ehrenberg et al., 2006, p. 1).

The promised flood of jobs into the humanities academic job market never materialized, however, and the need for broader professional development persisted. For example, 52% of art historians who graduated with their PhDs from 1985–1991 still “reported that their teachers and mentors encouraged them to focus

their aspirations almost exclusively on the dwindling number of positions in college teaching, despite faculty recognition that prospects for academic jobs were extremely gloomy” (Sadrozinski, Nerad, & Cerny, 2003, p. 71).

An Association of American Universities (AAU) report from 1998 recommended tracking at least first professional employment of PhD graduates and urged universities to “evaluate the [doctoral] curriculum to assure that it equips students with the knowledge and skills needed for a broad array of postdoctoral careers” (p. 24). 1998 also saw a controversial article from Elaine Showalter, then president of the Modern Language Association, championing the idea of broad professional development for graduate students. This met with strong backlash from the graduate student caucus of the MLA (Bousquet, 1998). While the community continued to debate what humanities doctoral education should include, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (WWNFF) launched programs to better connect doctoral education with careers, especially in the public humanities.⁹ In 2005, the WWNFF joined the growing list of those recommending that doctoral programs “[i]mprove professional development of doctoral students in a full range of careers, tracking their success as scholars, teachers, and practitioners in a variety of sectors” (p. 10).

7. Institutes existed at the University of Virginia, New York University (NYU), and the University of Pennsylvania, among others. NYU’s program, Careers in Business—Campus to Corporation, was funded in part by NEH (Fowler, 1981, p. D17).

8. Public history departments stand as the notable exception. Public history as a distinct mode of historical thinking and practice emerged in the 1970s, and more can be learned about the field by visiting the National Council on Public History: <http://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/> (NCPH 2017). This review concerns itself primarily with how broad professional development has been structured in humanities programs across disciplines without requiring separate degree pathways.

9. See descriptions of *The Humanities at Work* (<http://woodrow.org/about/past-programs/#HW>) and *The Responsive Ph.D.* (<http://woodrow.org/about/past-programs/#RESP>) on the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation website (2007–2017).

Investigating the PhD's purpose

In the new millennium, the academic job market in the humanities relaxed, although nowhere near as much as predicted, due in part to rapidly increasing numbers of PhDs awarded. This relieved some of the pressure on PhD programs to provide versatile professional development. However, a number of researchers who had been working throughout the latest downturn began circulating their findings at this time. These researchers zoomed out to look at doctoral education in theory and practice, and asked questions about how professors and administrators viewed the purpose of doctoral education. Consistently, they found structural vulnerabilities inherent in the dominant, apprenticeship model of humanities doctoral education and disagreement about the purpose of PhD programs. Three studies in particular contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the difficulties of introducing reform in doctoral student professional development due to competing views of the purpose of the PhD: the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (CID), Nyquist and Woodward's *Re-Envisioning the PhD* project, and Golde and Dore's (2003) *At Cross Purposes*.

The CID, which ran from 2001–2006, aimed to understand and map the current state of doctoral education as well as its many possible futures. In the process, the CID documented the persistent and irreconcilable differences of opinion about the purpose of the doctorate that had surfaced in the debates about Showalter's article. The CID prompted faculty and students from individual doctoral programs to ask, "What is the **purpose** of the doctoral program?" (Walker et al., 2008,

emphasis in original), and results were mixed. According to one project report, "not all programs made great breakthroughs, and none, we suspect, would say that their work was complete at the end of the CID" (Walker et al., 2008). The inability to reach consensus on the purpose(s) of the PhD, even among faculty in the same program, proved a major roadblock to the effort. The CID team concluded "[t]hese tensions about purpose are arguably intrinsic to the very enterprise of graduate education" (Walker et al., 2008).

This assertion bore out in the work of the *Re-Envisioning the PhD* project. The project's final report (Nyquist and Woodford, 2000) identifies patterns from interviews with 375 individuals throughout the doctoral education landscape. The findings include a model depicting the conflicting attitudes toward the fundamental purpose of doctoral education, and ideas about how students should be selected, enrolled, and trained. This model, outlined in the continua below (Figure 2), demonstrates the widely differing views about doctoral education the researchers found.

Nyquist and Woodward describe not only differences of opinion about whether the PhD should be narrowly or broadly considered, but strong emotional investment in both these positions. They remind their readers, "doctoral education not only deals with the production of degree holders, but with a cultural belief system that shapes professional lives" (p.5). No group of individuals feels the truth of this statement more keenly than doctoral students themselves, and Golde and Dore's study went to the source to further understand how the debates about the purpose of doctoral education functioned in practice.

FIGURE 2

Nyquist and Woodford's (2000, p. 6) continua of conflicting views about doctoral education, from the Re-envisioning the PhD project

Purpose	
Ph.D. is a research certification.	Ph.D. requires broader professional preparation.
To Prepare students as academics	To prepare students for a variety of career options.
Enrollment	
Ph.D. programs need to be very selective.	Ph.D. programs should admit all qualified applicants.
Need to decrease the number of Ph.D.s.	Need to increase the number of Ph.D.s.
U.S. students should be privileged.	International students should be encouraged.
Training	
Best preparation is the apprenticeship model.	Other types of mentoring are needed.
Funding practices work well.	Funding practices need to change.
Current model attracts the "best and brightest."	Current model discourages the "best and brightest."

Golde and Dore asked PhD students about their expectations about what programs would offer them. They found that "the training doctoral students receive is not what they want, nor does it prepare them for the jobs they take" (2001, p. 3). Golde and Dore describe "a three-way mismatch between student goals, training, and actual careers" (p. 5):

Doctoral students persist in pursuing careers as faculty members, and graduate programs persist in preparing them for careers

at research universities, despite the well-publicized paucity of academic jobs and efforts to diversify the options available for doctorate-holders. The result: Students are not well prepared to assume the faculty positions that are available, nor do they have a clear concept of their suitability for work outside of research. (p. 5)

Golde and Dore, too, recommend "Mak[ing] available...opportunities to help students explore and prepare for a variety of careers" (p. 46), including

as faculty.¹⁰ The picture that emerges from the work of these three studies is one where the purposes of doctoral education remain up for debate—but not explicitly. As a result, programs are structured without defined outcomes in mind or designed to promote outcomes that conflict with the expectations of individual students or faculty. This conflict also exists among external stakeholders and funders, and could help explain the limited adoption of these recommendations or reforms throughout the last sixty years.

Meanwhile, a digital revolution

While researchers and programs worked to define the purposes of doctoral education, the turn of the twenty-first century witnessed the rapid adoption of the internet and digital technologies. New initiatives explored the possibilities of these tools, both in terms of emerging scholarly methodologies and professional opportunities. The digital humanities proved fertile ground for new opportunities for professional development and professional pathways.¹¹ Digital platforms also enabled new forms of information sharing and network building. For example, in 1999, Paula Chambers launched the WRK4US (Work For Us) listserv, which linked humanities and social science PhD holders with an

interest in careers beyond academia. Its success was such that Chambers converted it into [Versatile PhD, a commercial platform providing models, advice, job opportunities, and community support to graduate students and recent PhDs](#), in 2010.

Key components of the digital humanities (DH) infrastructure related to PhD career diversity took shape during this period. 2002 saw the launch of [HASTAC](#) (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory). This interdisciplinary scholarly collaborative includes professional development for students, and formalized a program on [HASTAC Scholars](#) in 2008. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences began making the case for collecting systematic data about the humanities, culminating in the launch of the [Humanities Indicators](#) in 2009 (Solow, et al., 2002).¹² The American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) formed a Commission on Cyberinfrastructure for the Humanities and Social Sciences (2006, p. 34) that recommended, along with more sustained investment, “more formal venues and opportunities for training and encouragement” to engage in digital technologies.

The NEH sponsored programs and events related to the intersection of the humanities and technology beginning in the mid-1970s (NEH,

10. The finding that students were not even prepared for faculty careers set off alarm bells in the academy (Gaff, 2002). Notably, reforms in pedagogical preparation of graduate students have met with some success. For example, CGS and AAC&U’s [Preparing Future Faculty](#) (PFF) initiative and the [CIRTL network](#) (Centers for the Integration of Teaching and Learning) have successfully seeded and sustained reforms in this area. Despite these gains, however, in 2013 Derek Bok still had basis to call the lack of pedagogical preparation “[t]he most glaring defect of our graduate programs.”

11. This is not to suggest that the digital humanities (DH) emerged suddenly, as Minerva, at the turn of the century. DH evolved alongside and in collaboration with digital technologies and technologists (Hockey, 2004; Nyhan, Flynn, & Welsch, 2015).

12. A notable feature of the data gap in the humanities is the incomplete knowledge of what careers humanities PhDs pursue over the long term, especially since humanities fields were omitted from the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR) in 1995. A number of recent efforts have addressed this gap, including [PhD Career Pathways](#) (Council of Graduate Schools), [Where Historians Work](#) (American Historical Association), the [TRaCE project](#) (Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas, McGill University), and [Inside and Outside the Academy: Valuing and Preparing PhDs for Careers](#) (Conference Board of Canada, 2015).

2000), and in 2008 their commitment grew into a new grantmaking office, the Office of Digital Humanities (ODH). ODH has played an important role in the conversation about broad professional development for humanities PhDs. Not least of its contributions: in 2009 Jason Rhody, then Senior Program Officer of ODH, coined the term “alternative academic” and its attendant hashtag, #alt-ac (swiftly converted to #altac) (Nowviskie, 2014). Informal networks on social media platforms such as Twitter took up the hashtag and it continues to thrive.¹³

The University of Virginia Library’s [Scholarly Communication Institute](#) (SCI), which ran from 2003–2013, provided a valuable incubator for ideas about how emerging forms of digital communication and scholarship should shape PhD professional development (Rumsey, 2012; Rumsey 2013a; Rumsey 2013b). In 2011, #Alt-Academy grew out of the SCI’s work. Self-described as “both an edited collection and a grassroots, publish-then-filter approach to networked scholarly communication,” #Alt-Academy (2011) provided a space for humanities graduate students and recent PhDs to theorize and chronicle transitions to non-professorial careers within or beyond the academy.

A growing demand for the stories of the professional pathways of humanities PhDs with diverse careers was (and continues to be) met by websites ranging from personal blogs that share their authors’ own individual stories to coordinated data collection efforts by national organizations. A number of sites collecting PhD career stories were and are hosted by fellow PhDs committed to making visible the diverse ways that PhD holders (particularly in the

humanities) navigate their careers. Examples include:

- [Beyond the PhD](#) (active from 2008–2009)
- [PhDs at Work](#) (2011–2015)
- [What Are All the PhDs?](#) (2013–2016)
- [Transition Q & A](#) (2013–present)
- [Recovering Academic Podcast](#) (2016–present)

Examples of universities and professional organizations’ collections include:

- [What Do Researcher Staff Do Next?](#), Vitae—UK (200–present)
- [What I Do: Historians Talk about Their Work](#), AHA (2013–present)
- [Career Paths](#) feature in *Perspectives on History*, AHA (2013–present)
- [Humanists@Work](#), University of California Humanities Research Institute (2015–present)
- [The Legion Project](#), *The Paideia Institute* (2015–present)
- [IPLAI TRaCE project](#), Institute for Public Life and Ideas, McGill University (2016–present)

Individuals, universities, and professional organizations, including the ones above, also began to develop and host online professional development resources for humanities PhDs seeking diverse careers. These vary so dramatically they are impossible to generalize, but include sites aggregating general advice, such as [Beyond Academe](#), career planning tools such as [MyIDP](#) (developed for STEM fields) and the [PREP program](#) at Michigan State University, and sites hosting modules for professional skills building such as [My Grad Skills](#).

13. For thoughtful discussions of the term “alt-ac,” its history and continued utility, see Nowviskie (2012), Sayre et al. (2015) and Rogers (2013).

Social networks constituted through digital platforms and social media alongside these resources have propelled the conversation about PhD careers beyond the academy. For many PhD students and recent alumni, these digital tools and networks were their only support when contemplating or navigating a career in business, government,

or nonprofits. As digital resources have drawn on more institutional resources, they have grown in impact and sophistication. The influence of digital communities and tools may account in part for the recent shift in the graduate education community's commitment to preparing PhDs for diverse careers.

A New Moment: Ongoing Efforts

A June 2017 article by Leonard Cassuto in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* notes, in reference to career diversity for PhDs, “We’ve gone from ‘Why should we?’ to ‘How should we?’ in a remarkably short time.” Since 2009, calls for action to rethink how humanities PhDs are prepared for their careers continued and amplified. Nor did national organizations or individual universities stop at merely encouraging others to act. A flurry of programs at every level of the graduate education system (programs, graduate schools, institutions, consortia and systems, professional and disciplinary associations, private and public funders) has generated momentum that promises real change. The NEH Next Generation Humanities PhD program entered this landscape in 2016 and will contribute its own piece to the quest for systemwide change. Next Gen operates alongside and in conjunction with ongoing efforts in the humanities and graduate education ecosystems. What follows is a list of notable ongoing efforts in the area of humanities PhD broad professional development. While by no means exhaustive, it aims to provide a sense of the range and scope of national and local humanities initiatives.¹⁴

National Initiatives

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES (ACLS): PUBLIC FELLOWS

In her 2011 address to the, ACLS president Pauline Yu introduced the ACLS Public Fellows program, which places recent humanities PhD alumni into two-year, full-time positions at governmental, cultural, and community organizations. This program, now in its seventh year, continues to expand and involve new employer partners, of which they have engaged over 100 to date.

AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (AHA): CAREER DIVERSITY FOR HISTORIANS

The AHA’s influential “No More Plan B” (Grafton & Grossman, 2011) enjoins history departments to “examine the training we offer, and work out how to preserve its best traditional qualities while adding new options. If we tell new students that a history PhD opens many doors, we need to broaden the curriculum to ensure that we’re telling the truth.” Since 2014, AHA has taken up its own challenge with the Career Diversity for Historians effort. This multifaceted effort includes a data visualization tool

14. This moment, this movement is not restricted to humanities fields. The graduate education community across all fields have been engaging in conversations about broad doctoral professional development and taking steps to change how students are trained and socialized. Notable initiatives in STEM include [Broadening Experiences in Scientific Training \(B.E.S.T.\)](#) (National Institutes of Health) and NSF’s National Research Traineeship (NRT) Program.

providing program-level information about the outcomes of History PhDs and provides intellectual leadership for departments and faculty. The current phase will provide two-year assistantships for PhD students in up to 20 history departments to coordinate departmental efforts to expand career preparation.

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION (APA): BEYOND ACADEMIA

In 1984, the APA began publishing *Careers for Philosophers*, a handbook for doctorally-trained philosophers interested in pursuing careers outside of academia. The APA continues to update and make available this resource under the name *Beyond academia: Professional opportunities for philosophers*.

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS (CGS): NEXT GENERATION HUMANITIES PHD

The NEH-funded Next Generation Humanities PhD grant program was designed to provide funds to universities “to plan and implement changes to graduate education that will broaden the career preparation of a PhD student beyond a career in the academy” (NEH, 2016). The Next Gen program addresses the need for a robust network of public humanities organizations and activities in the United States. To serve this need in the long term, Next Gen targets a persistent challenge in doctoral education: programs are too often designed to prepare students for only one career.

The Council of Graduate Schools provides intellectual leadership and support for the NEH Next Gen grantees as they take up the challenge of changing the narrative to value diverse career outcomes while providing the needed supports to students. The 2016–2017 cohort

consists of 25 “planning” and three “implementation” grantees.

COUNCIL OF GRADUATE SCHOOLS (CGS): PHD CAREER PATHWAYS PROJECT

Supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF grant #1661272) and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, this project brings together a coalition of universities seeking to better understand and support the careers of PhD students and alumni. Twenty-nine universities have been selected to participate in PhD Career Pathways as funded project partners. An additional group of universities (21 to date) will participate as project affiliates.

Participating universities will administer two CGS-designed surveys: one for current PhD students in years two and five of their programs, and the other for PhD alumni at three, eight, and 15 years post-graduation. Universities will use the data to strengthen career services, professional development and mentoring for graduate students. The Council of Graduate Schools will support universities’ implementation of the surveys and collect aggregate data for analysis.

GRADUATE CAREER CONSORTIUM (GCC): IMAGINEPHD

The GCC plans to release *ImaginePhD*, a free online individual development plan, in the fall. Designed specifically for doctoral students and alumni in the humanities and social sciences, *ImaginePhD* will guide users to identify their skills, values and interests and to explore job families that best fit their individual needs.

MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MLA): CONNECTED ACADEMICS

The 2014 Report of the MLA Task Force on Doctoral Study in Modern

Language and Literature insisted that modern language and literature departments broaden their definitions of success to include careers beyond academia. The report begins, “Departments must recognize the validity of the diverse careers that students might follow within and beyond the campus and ensure that appropriate orienting and mentoring takes place” (p. 2). It recommended departments “review their programs to align them with the learning needs and career goals of students” (p. 3). To assist departments in this work, the MLA launched Connected Academics, a program with several components, including pilot programs at three university campuses to implement recommendations of the task force report and annual “proseminars” for doctoral students and recent PhDs.

Connected Academics recently released a toolkit, *Doctoral student career planning: A guide for PhD programs and faculty in English and other modern languages*. This resource includes valuable information for departments and programs about how to begin implementing changes to support diverse PhD career paths.

THE PAIDEIA INSTITUTE: THE LEGION PROJECT

The [Legion Project](#) at the Paideia Institute is collecting data on and the career stories of holders of Classics PhDs. It also functions as a network of these “Legionnaires.”

Local initiatives

ENGAGING HUMANITIES (UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN)

The University of Wisconsin’s Center for the Humanities’ Engaging Humanities project includes opportunities for students and faculty to shape public humanities projects and to share their academic research with broader audiences.

THE HUMANITIES PHD PROJECT (UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN)

The [Humanities PhD Project](#) provides PhD students with career exploration opportunities and aims to integrate professional skills development into the doctoral curriculum.

HUMANITIES WITHOUT WALLS (VARIOUS)

Consisting of a cohort of fifteen humanities institutes, [Humanities without Walls](#) hosts career exploration workshops for humanities PhD students and “grand challenge” research funding for interinstitutional research teams.

WALTER CHAPIN SIMPSON CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES (UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON)

The [Simpson Center](#) supports public scholarship in the humanities and digital humanities through a variety of initiatives, and promotes cross-disciplinary scholarship.

Conclusion

The initiatives above address a problem that is by no means new. Generations of students have completed humanities PhDs without access to formal career or professional development, many toiling under the illusion that a tenure-track research job is the highest calling and only acceptable definition of success. Recommendations for reforming the processes of professionalizing humanities PhD holders have echoed across the decades, but the current moment feels different. Rather than individual voices crying out in the wilderness, assemblages across the humanities and graduate education landscape have begun to work together to push for systemic change.

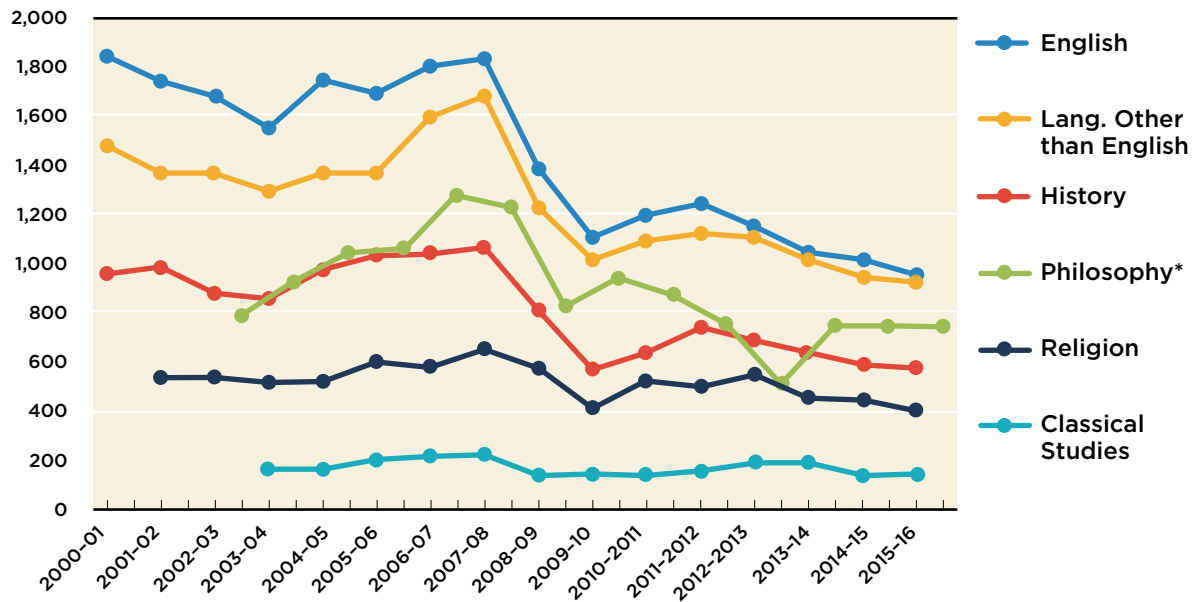
Behind this push lies, certainly, the continued stagnation of the academic job market (see Table 3 and Table 4), but this is not the only, nor the most important driver. 2017 has

witnessed a growing urgency to recognize the vitality and importance of the humanities in public life. We simply cannot proclaim the fundamental necessity of humanistic thinking to a thriving democracy, to a rich and rewarding life, to a fuller understanding of our present circumstances, and then turn around and insist that the most highly-trained humanists are only fit for one professional context.

As individuals and organizations continue to push for substantive change, it is worth remembering that PhD holders are themselves human, with complex and varying circumstances, desires, anxieties, and needs. This diversity strengthens the system at large and deserves to be honored. Doctoral students and alumni likewise deserve the opportunity to recognize the variety of options they have for meaningful work, and to choose their pathways for themselves.

FIGURE 3

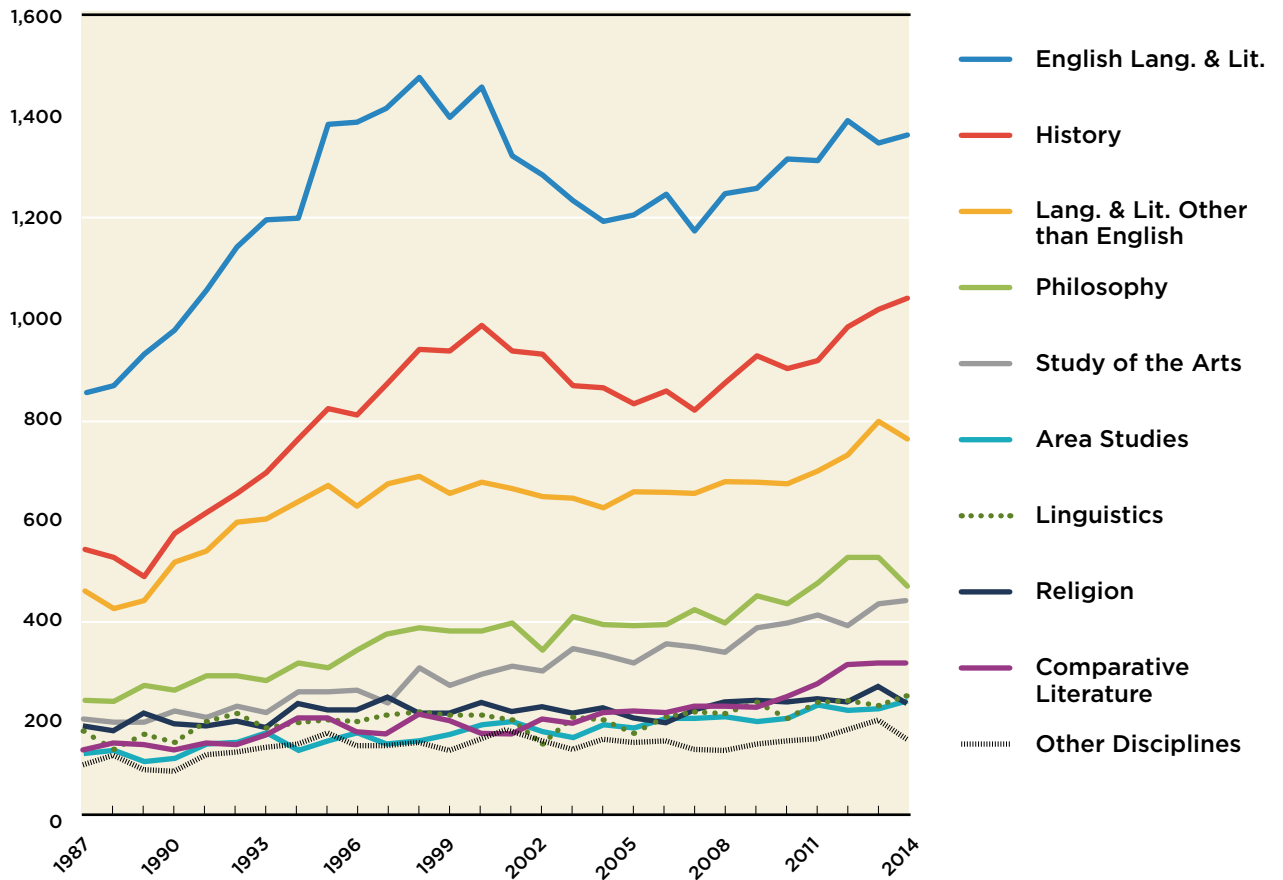
Number of Advertised Job Openings through Disciplinary Society, 2000-01 to 2015-16



* Philosophy job listings reported by calendar year. All other disciplines report by academic year.

Source: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2017.

FIGURE 4 | Number of Doctoral Degree Completions in the Humanities, by Discipline, 1987–2014 (Indicator II-10dd)



* Values for the disciplines included in the "Other" category are provided in Supporting Table II-10dd.

Source: Humanities Indicators, 2016, American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2016. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Data System; accessed via the National Science Foundation's online data system, WebCASPAR.

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