

What Are You Going to Do With That?: Connecting Classicists From All Walks of Life via the Legion Project

On December 7th, 2015, the Paideia Institute announced via [Eidolon](#) the Legion Project (“[Legion](#)”), an initiative for tracking down Classics Ph.D. holders employed outside of academia with two main goals in mind: (1) stimulate engagement by people outside the field with the Classics community and (2) spotlight the broad applicability of a Classics degree. At the time of the announcement, three “Legionnaires” were up on the Legion page of the Paideia Institute’s website: Harry Schmidt, then Vice President of Engineering of the legal research startup Casetext; Christopher Geggie, who was heavily involved in the marriage equality movement; and Melissa Holzhauser, a teacher with a background in development.

Legion has since grown to include M.A. and B.A.s, an acknowledgement that Ph.D.’s are not the only ones who face the classic question, “What are you going to do with that?” Notable people Paideia has contacted and featured after the launch include Deborah Fryer, founder of LILA FILMS, Patrick Tyler Haas, Development Operations Associate at Room to Read, and Matthew Levine, a financial journalist for Bloomberg View. Popular industries for Legionnaires are science and technology, finance and consulting, development, education, medicine, and law. Legionnaires initially fall into one of two categories. Some are contacted after an Internet search based on ProQuest data (i.e., the list of completed dissertations that every school has available online), and others are identified for us via the “Nominate a Legionnaire” form on the website. Earlier this year 53 graduate programs were researched, and over the summer that data was double-checked and analyzed. Although the information is imperfect because there is no access to how many people *enter* a Classics Ph.D. program each year, some numbers were gathered that are unavailable anywhere else.

To start, the percentage of people who receive Ph.D.s but leave academia were calculated, and the rates at which they enter other industries was broken down. Schools were also calculated and ranked according to output and placement (in tenure track positions). The effect of gender on employment was also considered.. Finally, the output/employment rates of Ph.D.s were graphed over time at the largest schools. Some of these results in this paper, as well as offer some observations based on them, are presented in this paper.

In the course of this research, a third goal emerged: increase transparency *within* academia in respect to placement rates. This is a delicate subject, as Classics departments across the country are in precarious positions as it is, and transparency could have a negative impact on some graduate programs. Nevertheless, in this paper a case is made for more transparency and for practical ways for keeping Classics vibrant and viable by leveraging the legion of interest in the ancient world that extends far beyond the professoriate.

In this paper ideas for Legion's future are also discussed. Contacting and featuring Legionnaires will continue as long as there is information at hand, but as a next step is also to start programming for (re)engaging them in the discipline. As the Legion grows, there are plans to keep Legionnaires informed via email and social media as are all members of the Paideia community, and to host events to interact with them in person. It is believed that such interaction will be valuable for the discipline as a whole. For example, a substantial number of Classics graduate students will not end up in academia, so current Legionnaires could offer them advice based on their own experiences and introduce classicists to other industries. It is also planned to expand our B.A. outreach, in part to encourage undergraduate students who want to major in Classics but fear that choice will limit their career options.

In Classics, there is currently a tension between *training* and *formation*. Obviously, a good program combines the two, but that theory has not always carried over so well into practice. Legionnaires provide an invaluable perspective because while many testify to the impact of a classical education on their formation, the applicability of the training aspect is less obvious. This does not mean that training is only relevant to future professors. Rather, the discipline must become more open-minded as to what constitutes training and why it is done. Only then will we stop thinking that the only job you can get with a classics degree is a professorship, and that not getting a tenure track job is a failure.