

PhDs@Work: UC Alumni Focus Groups

Kelly Anne Brown, UCHRI
Jacob Heim, UC Irvine



History of Humanists@Work

THE HUMANITIES AND CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF



Networking at Humwork (pre-workshop)



Thank You

Thank you to our hosts at:

The Humanities Institute, UC Santa Cruz

San Francisco Ballet

The Townsend Center for the Humanities, UC Berkeley

and for future hosting:

UC Los Angeles, Humanities Division

Focus Group Questions

1. How many of you began your graduate career wanting a tenure-track teaching position? When did it change? And why? Can you point to pivotal moments during your doctoral training when you began to change your mind about going on the tenure track? What are they?
2. How did your program prepare you, generally and specifically, for the position (and industry?) you're in?
 - a. Potential follow-up question: how do you think about the issue of preparation now that you're in this other kind of non- or non-traditional academic position? Grad programs are very interested in this question, and we're wondering how much they need to be, and in what ways.
3. What has most surprised you, or what are the biggest adjustments you've had to make, since finishing the PhD and entering the workforce?
4. What preconceptions did you have about your field that have turned out to be false? That have turned out to be true? What role, if any, did your experience as a graduate student have in forming those preconceptions?

Focus Group Questions

5. What do you foresee as some important developments in the future of work (across industries) in the next decade or two? What does it look like specifically for your industry?
6. How likely would you be, in your current profession, to hire someone who just earned a PhD from a program like yours? What would be your biggest concerns about such a candidate? What factors would you pay the most attention to in determining whether they were a good fit?
7. In general, do you see your former professors and friends/colleagues from grad school as a valuable part of your professional network? If not, can you think of anything that would change that?
8. What should we ask you? What questions are most pressing?

Focus Group Composition

3/6 focus groups completed (Santa Cruz, San Francisco, & Berkeley); 3 more focus groups planned for Orange County, Los Angeles, & Davis or San Diego.

15 individuals involved in first 3 focus groups

14 women

4 students of color

2 first generation students (undergrad)

Years of graduation: 2004–2018, with $\frac{1}{3}$ before 2009

Alumni represented: UC Santa Cruz, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Barbara, & UC Los Angeles

Disciplines included: Literature, Ethnic Studies, English, Art History, Anthropology, & Italian Studies

Current industries:

University administration (7)

Consulting/ Self-owned business(4)

Non-profit/Cultural Institutions (2)

Tech (2)

Major Thematics

LEAVING THE ACADEMY

GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPECTATION, INFORMATION, AND GENERAL EXPERIENCES

THE “FRACTURED” GRADUATE SCHOOL SELF

IMPACTS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION WORK AND LANGUAGE

FUTURE OF WORK

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Major Thematics

LEAVING THE ACADEMY

Major Thematics

**GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPECTATION, INFORMATION,
AND GENERAL EXPERIENCES**

Major Thematics

THE “FRACTURED” GRADUATE SCHOOL SELF

Major Thematics



IMPACTS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION WORK AND LANGUAGE

Major Thematics

THE FUTURE OF WORK

Major Thematics

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT



**THIS IS WHAT A
HUMANIST
@WORK
LOOKS LIKE**