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Recommendations from the Teaching Trenches: Supporting Graduate Students and Junior Scholars in Old Regime, Enlightenment, and Revolutionary French Studies

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I want to first address questions from the Tallahassee Report regarding career perspectives. For context, I am writing from the perspective of a professor at a non R1-state university in a department of history: 1) without a graduate program, 2) with a 4/4 teaching expectation, and 3) with drop-in academic advising duties. Having graduated from UCLA, an R1-institution, the career model tended towards the expectation of landing a position with more emphasis on research and less on teaching. However, my mentor Kathryn Norberg always took a broader skills approach. Thus, in addition to research skills, she emphasized teaching and the ability to use technology to enhance teaching pedagogy. She also included me in grants for developing these skills, which helped me to be more flexible in my thinking about skills for the job market. Like many of my colleagues, I did not immediately land a tenure-track position and spent several years as a lecturer at both private and public institutions. I developed a broad range of courses, including Western Civilization courses from antiquity through the twentieth century, and at the best of times, upper-division courses in Enlightenment and Revolutionary history. To remain employed at a living wage, I also taught lower-division courses in U.S. history. Having the ability to teach both broadly and within my field of specialty became key to securing my tenure-track position at California State University (CSU), Dominguez Hills. The needs of a small department made the ability to teach lower-division courses in world and U.S. history and upper-division courses in early modern and modern European history as well as courses in women's history and film as history an asset.

I share details about my own experience to highlight what graduate students in Old Regime, Enlightenment, and French Revolutionary history need to bear in mind when entering the job market. Positions in our field are dwindling and research trends, as addressed in the Tallahassee Report, currently emphasize the ability to stretch beyond the traditional parameters of our field, which overlaps with potential expectations for teaching preparation and career perspectives.

For those coming straight to the job market while finishing the dissertation, teaching experience may be limited, so department workshops to help job candidates prepare their application files and venues for conducting mock interviews are desirable. Having chaired and sat on search committees in both the Department of History and Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at CSU, Dominguez Hills, I offer the following insights. The evaluation of teaching is a major part of the selection process for job interviews, especially at non-R1 and R2 universities. Job candidates must be prepared to address their teaching pedagogy, how they approach setting up and executing learning outcomes for lower- and upper-division courses, and their ability to address diversity in the classroom. Diversity in the Cal State system addresses the demographics of student populations, such as first-generation college students, underrepresented student populations, returning students,

military veterans, students with learning disabilities, and freshman and transfer students with a range of strengths and skills. Diversity at our campuses also means that many students are called upon to support their families either as children or parents themselves, working part-time or full-time while balancing full-time college schedules. Job candidates must also be able to articulate how they approach teaching the skills of the discipline, including how they direct students in original research projects, including the ability to find appropriate primary sources in translation for students due to the shrinking opportunities for French and other foreign language programs. Candidates coming on the market from R1 and R2 universities need to be able to articulate teaching pedagogy and practices that take into account the differences in expectations across institutions.

In terms of research, preparation and training of graduate students for the current job market should not only support completing the dissertation, but also help graduate students to present at major conferences and to develop publication opportunities prior to finishing the dissertation. The reality of the job market and limited positions in our field means that job candidates just entering the market are up against candidates with several years' teaching experience and more time towards publications, and often include tenure-track professors (who may already have a book published or a book contract). From this perspective, encouraging equal time on post-doctoral and tenure-track job applications should be a strong message, which allows more time to prepare the book manuscript or journal articles with a much lower teaching expectation than the early years of a tenure-track position, especially at state institutions.

For those in the early years of a tenure-track teaching position, it is imperative that you find ways to prioritize your scholarly work. Publishing, while expected at all university levels, will have varying degrees of institutional support. At a campus such as my own, the degrees of support varied greatly; without external grants, humanities professors competing for internal grants rarely receive more than one course reassignment during an academic year, leaving a 3/4 teaching obligation. At smaller universities, junior scholars need to be prepared for teaching mostly non-specialty courses, and at the same time demonstrate how they pull in their research in the field. In the CSU system and campuses across the nation, the scholar-teacher model provides the pedagogical framework for linking our scholarship to our teaching practices, which may also allow junior scholars another way to support their research agendas. Mentoring junior scholars in the field about how to budget their time and resources for research and navigate the publishing process, build a strong teaching portfolio, and strategize service obligations will serve the field well. Junior scholars at non-R1 and R2 institutions may feel isolated from the field at times. Similar to the suggestion in the report to create opportunities for U.S. and international graduate students to participate in seminars with junior and senior scholars, it may prove fruitful to facilitate development of formal and informal writing groups to help junior scholars build better networks and feel meaningfully engaged.

Facilitating invitations for graduate students and junior professors to participate in French research institutes, while not a new practice, might be approached more systematically across the field by creating a database of French research groups with affiliated American scholars in Old Regime, Enlightenment, and Revolutionary France studies. Beyond the research groups affiliated with the CNRS, there are many regional university-affiliated groups, such as the *Genre Femmes Méditerranée*, which I have participated in over many years, and forms, from my time as a graduate student in France. My ability to participate came from Lynn Hunt taking the time to

introduce me to Jacques Guilhaumou, who then went on to facilitate an invitation for me to join an earlier version of the group. Having taken up French at age 30 and traveling abroad for the first time a few years later, such connections have been essential for continually pushing my spoken and written French language skills. Participation has broadened my networks in France, allowed me to introduce American and French scholars to one another, and provided French presentation and publication opportunities. More importantly, I have made rich and lasting academic friendships that have sustained my ability to stay active in the field while rising through the ranks of tenure and promotion at a teaching- and service-intensive state university.

The issues surrounding lack of diversity and inclusion in our field need sustained attention, and it is encouraging to see the emerging dialogue and working groups forming. Most prominently, the Western Society for French History's formation of a Diversity and Inclusion Sub-Committee, the update to its Mission & Charter (<https://www.wsfh.org/mission-charter/>), and the 2017 Conference Plenary Roundtable on "Addressing Structural Racism in French History and French Historical Studies and the Post-Plenary Workshop: Confronting Structural Racism in Our Practice: Curricular, Pedagogical and Research Strategies." State campuses such as CSU Dominguez Hills, are the kinds of universities with student populations that we should be cultivating to improve diversity in graduate programs and professorial ranks in our field. First and foremost, we need to think about more inclusive ways to provide the training needed for successful applications to graduate programs. Language skills are one of the deficits students in state institutions may have in terms of opportunities to become fluent in French during their high school and college courses. For example, on our campus only introductory French courses are available. The creative thinking about graduate training in our field could also be applied to finding alternatives for undergraduates to develop the necessary language skills. Many of our students are already proficient in a second language, especially Spanish. We need to find ways to encourage and financially support these students to take courses at other campuses for more opportunities to develop French-language skills and pursue study abroad experiences in France and other French-speaking countries. For institutions evaluating graduate applications, if we really want to create more opportunities for diversity and inclusion in the field, there probably needs to be some serious discussions about allowing graduate students time to develop French-language skills as part of their graduate training rather than as a barrier to entering the field. As the report highlights, encouraging time in France as integral to graduate training will deepen their language skills and broaden their understanding of French culture and society.

Mentoring has laid the foundation of my own career path and the options that opened to me as a first-generation Latina in university life. At the beginning of my path in higher education at a local community college, I could not yet have dreamed of my trajectory as a professor in Old Regime, Enlightenment and French Revolutionary studies. For my students, some of the first steps to engaging their interest in our field comes from using my own research and bridging the gap between student and professor. Beyond the content of my research and my passion for the work, I share my research and writing experiences in progress. By unpacking the ongoing process of research and writing, the rollercoaster experience of highs and lows, and combining this with mentoring their professional development as undergraduates, students from diverse backgrounds begin to see themselves as able to join and succeed in graduate studies. With creative interventions in our field, more of these students will join our ranks in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to work together to strengthen Old Regime, Enlightenment and French Revolutionary studies, to better develop diversity and inclusion practices, and to bring in the voices of graduate students and professors from across the broad range of institutions.

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