Career Trajectories of World Language Graduates: A LinkedIn Perspective

Gilles Bousquet, Lindsey Leigh Smith, and Caitlin Yocco-Locascio

According to the 2018 Inside Higher Ed Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers, sixty-one percent of respondents found that “politicians, college presidents and boards are increasingly unsympathetic to liberal arts education” (10). Even though recent literature on the career value of liberal arts degrees generally offers a positive outlook, as reported in the work of Robert Matz at George Mason University as well as in studies by the economists Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz, there is still a worry that “today’s liberal arts major is tomorrow’s nonpaying tenant in her parents’ basement” (Jaschik). These concerns, and the ways in which language instructors and departments across the nation have been responding to them, were a motivating factor for the panel discussion World Languages and Humanities Majors: Career Trajectories and Advocacy, which took place at the 2018 MLA Annual Convention in New York City (Bousquet et al.). This conversation highlighted the many opportunities that exist for departments looking to promote their work through partnerships with local business and industry leaders, government officials, professional organizations such as the ADFL, or alumni.

The urgency of such conversations, both within institutions and between them, was reinforced two months later when the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, announced the elimination of thirteen majors, including French, Spanish, German, and English (“UW-Stevens Point Proposes”). In the institution’s official announcement of the changes, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Greg Summers cited “a growing preference among students for majors with clear career pathways” when explaining their curricular shift. Like the anxieties identified by Scott Jaschik, however, Summers’s remarks reveal a problem of perception above all else, suggesting that advocacy efforts must first address the widespread fear that liberal arts majors may struggle in the job market.

In response to job-placement worries, we have found alumni engagement to be a key strategy for demonstrating the many ways in which a liberal arts education can lead to meaningful employment. In the digital age, social media platforms, and especially professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, can be leveraged by departments to better identify and communicate the accomplishments of alumni, highlighting professional trajectories that may inspire current students while also calming the concerns of education stakeholders both on campus and off.

Using LinkedIn to Reconnect with Language Alumni

Because quantitative measures increasingly drive both enrollment and administrators’ budget decisions, it is urgent for liberal arts programs around the country...
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to systematically engage with alumni. That said, the ever-increasing use of social-networking sites has ushered in a period of transition for alumni associations and for alumni programming professionals. As Sean Kramer and Rob Shoss explain:

For many alumni associations, events and programs continue to have declining attendance and participation while the costs of offering them continue to increase. Social networking sites, YouTube, podcasts, and other Web 2.0 tools offer new ways to communicate with alumni, not to mention new ways for alumni to connect with each other without the alumni association’s involvement. (22)

In addition to facilitating connections between alumni and their peers, these technologies offer distinct opportunities for departments looking to learn from the varied experiences and expertise of their graduates. Even if direct communication with alumni is limited by distance or scheduling constraints, social-networking sites provide spaces for personal promotion that often include a user’s academic affiliations and professional history. In this way, alumni may create a digital connection to their alma mater even if they are not actively engaged in alumni programming. LinkedIn in particular has recognized users’ interest in academic connections and has implemented features such as alumni groups and LinkedIn Alumni over the past decade to help users find their fellow graduates (Allen).

Along with providing alumni networking opportunities, the LinkedIn Alumni tool also displays analytics according to institution, highlighting geographic and professional clusters. As the demand for data grows, we agree with Goldie Blumenthal’s observation in The Chronicle of Higher Education that LinkedIn is “sitting on a gold mine of data.” At the University of Wisconsin, Madison, we have been piloting a career study using LinkedIn to track alumni of programs including French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, and Middle East studies. Starting with departmental and institutional graduation reports from 2000 to 2015, a small team of PhD students and faculty members, led by Gilles Bousquet, turned to social media with the following questions in mind: How many of our alumni use LinkedIn? Where do our graduates end up? How did they get there? Which employment sectors are represented? Within these sectors, which fields are represented? How do figures compare for different language programs?

Over the course of two years, the team gathered data from LinkedIn profiles including graduates’ current location, employer, and position. Alumni employment information was coded according to sector (private, education, government, and nonprofit), and private-sector positions were then classified by subsector or field. While applications such as Web crawlers would have certainly accelerated this process, data collection was completed by hand for three reasons: the initial scope of the project was limited to alumni from a single department, LinkedIn discourages the use of computer-aided data collection, and the team could make note of unexpected trends or of trajectories that fell outside the initial scope of the project. Compared with other social-networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Snapchat, LinkedIn emerged as the best option for collecting data on how graduates’ academic choices translated to their career. Social-networking sites serve many purposes (Labrecque et al. 38), but LinkedIn’s stated mission to “connect the world’s professionals to make them more productive and successful” was particularly well-aligned with the interests
of this project. Social media has become an essential part of personal branding since the concept took off during the mid-1990s, and LinkedIn is the clear leader in social networking for professional purposes, with a reported 562 million users in two hundred different countries (“About LinkedIn”, “A Brief History”).

Although placement statistics are certainly valuable to departments and administrators alike, it is not just the wealth of quantitative data that interests us but also the underlying personal narratives that LinkedIn users trace when constructing their professional profiles. Before creating a LinkedIn page, graduates carefully reflect on their education, cocurricular activities, and professional experience; they then curate their profile to highlight the skills and experiences they value most from their campus experience, especially those they perceive as marketable. For example, completion of a study abroad program might be presented as evidence of cultural competency, foreign language skills, adaptability, and international experience. Involvement in student organizations can be indicative of leadership potential and an ability to collaborate while also demonstrating how candidates connect their academic interests with other personal or professional pursuits. For those alumni who are already employed, profiles typically include postgraduation activities and accomplishments, documenting their early professional years in a way that links their academic and cocurricular experiences with the professional positions that have followed. In comparison with job-placement data, graduates’ profiles on LinkedIn connect the dots for us, helping us better understand how our academic programs prepare students for careers in business, government, education, and the nonprofit sector.

Though some may question the reliability of the information reported on LinkedIn, we have found it very effective for examining how graduates construct personal narratives for the purposes of employment. Because this information is publicly shared, it is constantly subject to verification by colleagues, employers, or potential collaborators. For those using LinkedIn to identify new employment opportunities, there is an expectation, and even a hope, that the information on their profile will attract attention and be verified through interviews, reference checks, or other steps in the hiring process. Jamie Guillory and Jeffrey T. Hancock, who studied deception in printed and online résumés, found that “Web sites such as LinkedIn, which make resume information public and linked to one’s network, can foster greater honesty for resume claims that are most important to employers, such as claims about experience and responsibility” (139). Moreover, given the mobility of alumni in the first few years of their career, the evolving role of alumni associations, and the professional incentive of marketing one’s skills online, these self-reported data are sometimes more up to date than the information gathered through established career-tracking methods.

Our work, then, can be situated alongside the quantitative data collection conducted by alumni associations and similar organizations. Their databases offer an excellent source of official degree and contact information while also following graduates’ continued involvement with their alma mater. Our project complements the efforts of alumni associations in two ways. First, this project uses graduates’ evolving employment history to identify the common threads linking their academic, extracurricular, and professional achievements over time. Second, our research focuses on
how these narratives relate to a certain department or degree program. In this way, the department’s role in alumni relations differs from that of alumni associations, offering a worthwhile contribution thanks to its disciplinary focus and its attention to narrative. Likewise, this departmental specificity allows us to build on existing external employment reports for liberal arts majors across the nation. Though salary studies have been done for graduates in a variety of majors (using resources such as PayScale), little attention has been devoted to the developing trajectories of world languages alumni or to the ways in which these individuals share their professional paths using technologies such as LinkedIn.

Alumni Trajectories by the Numbers

Besides offering a testament to how recent graduates are faring in the professional world, LinkedIn profiles also present the wide variety of careers that our students might pursue. Of students who earned a degree in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, between 2000 and 2015, 57%, or 615 graduates, have a LinkedIn profile. Of these alumni, 59% are employed in the private sector, 20% participate or are employed in the education sector, and 18% are employed in the public sector, in either nonprofit or governmental positions (see fig. 1). We were unable to determine an employment sector for 3% of graduates, often because the profile was out of date or incomplete.

Taken together, these percentages offer a snapshot of our department’s current alumni network, though the data have some limitations. Recognizing that these percentages are likely skewed toward the private sector, since LinkedIn is less commonly used for recruitment in the education and public sectors, we have largely used these numbers as a guide for further study and for cross-program comparisons rather than as a precise measure of where our graduates end up. It is also important to consider the challenges associated with the dynamic nature of the data—namely, that some users may have changed positions during the period of data collection—and the fact that the profiles reviewed included graduates at very different points in their career. For instance, since many alumni complete graduate study or teach abroad before seeking permanent employment in other sectors, we would expect data limited to our most recent graduating classes to be more heavily weighted toward the education sector. Despite these limitations, these data offer a reassuring response to questions of employability; among French and Italian graduates using LinkedIn, nearly all succeeded in finding work.

Even so, in analyzing the data from alumni, it is not just job placement that interests us but also the variety of careers represented, especially in the private sector. Graduates of the department have cultivated careers in administration, management, consulting, financial services, technology, engineering, communication and marketing, and many other fields (see fig. 2). Indeed, prospective students and their parents wondering how a degree in French or Italian translates to the job market can see many options in our findings.

While several French and Italian majors are working in universities, government agencies, or nonprofit organizations, most are carving paths toward the private sector
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and building careers in administration and management. Our graduates are finding employment both locally and globally, in world-renowned companies including Facebook, AT&T, Deloitte, Lenovo, Moody’s Analytics, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, Target, and Amazon. Although these professional outcomes are not entirely surprising in today’s global marketplace, they are perhaps not the paths envisioned by outspoken critics of university language programs, such as the governor of Kentucky, Matt Bevin, who has argued that university funding structures should incentivize electrical engineering programs over French literature degrees (Beam). In discouraging language study, Bevin claims to be responding to industry demands, but his approach runs counter to the recommendations of the Commission on Language Learning, a research entity created by a bipartisan group of United States congressional representatives. The commission found that there is, in fact, a growing need for individuals with language skills across the nation and warned that the devaluing of language study has already had adverse effects for business, scientific advances, national security, and international relations. As explained in the commission’s 2017 report:

There is an emerging consensus among leaders in business and politics, teachers, scientists, and community members that proficiency in English is not sufficient to meet the nation’s needs in a shrinking world, nor the needs of individual citizens who interact with other peoples and cultures more than at any other time in human history. (viii)

In the report’s executive summary, the commission argued that language learning should be a national priority and that two- and four-year institutions of higher education should reverse recent cuts to language programs (viii). Similarly, a 2015 brief prepared by the Joint National Committee for Languages leans on the research of Donald A. De Palma and his coauthors in The Language Services Market: 2015 to argue that career outlooks for language majors should be promising since “[t]he language industry continues to grow at 5%–10% per year, some 3–4 times faster than the overall U.S. economy, and is worth at least $15b per year” (15). The findings that language skills are marketable for a variety of career paths underscore the encouraging employment outcomes that we observed for graduates with degrees in French and Italian.

Looking to other language programs at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for comparison, we found similar trends with regard to distribution across employment sectors. Nearly two-thirds of Japanese and Chinese majors, for example, find employment in the private sector, as reported through LinkedIn; thus, students majoring in these languages are not only employable but also in demand, it seems (see figs. 3 and 4). Employers dedicated to research and technology were more heavily represented on the profiles for Chinese and Japanese majors than in the data for French and Italian majors and included global leaders such as Microsoft, Kawasaki, Apple, Toyota ITC, and Google. For alumni of the Chinese and Japanese programs, the education sector was again well represented, as graduates either furthered their own knowledge or found employment as educators. In comparison with graduates of the Department of French and Italian, however, Japanese majors included a higher percentage of international students, primarily from China. As Ye Jin, a Chinese national and current graduate student at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, noted, it is an asset to be trilingual, with language skills in Japanese, Chinese, and English,
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when seeking employment in many Asian nations. She also explained that the competition for work visas in the United States may contribute to alumni employment outcomes by increasing participation in graduate programs among international students hoping to stay in the country.

As we saw among graduates of the French and Italian programs, most alumni of the Chinese and Japanese programs employed in the private sector found positions in administration or management, echoing national career outcomes shared by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at George Mason University (Bousquet et al.; “Across the Nation”). Using data from the American Community Survey (compiled and organized by the United States Census Bureau), its career center reports that degree holders in languages and linguistics across the nation are primarily employed in education, management, administrative support, and sales, reiterating trends noted in the recent findings of the Humanities Indicators project (State of the Humanities) and the Humanities Departmental Survey (overseen by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences), which investigates employment figures for humanities graduates more broadly (White et al.). A third iteration of the Humanities Departmental Survey is forthcoming, as is a survey on the state of the humanities in community colleges.

Though such figures, along with the trajectories outlined by our graduates on professional networking sites, are certainly encouraging in the current data-driven educational environment, these quantitative measures also invite new avenues of inquiry. For instance, leaders of world language departments may be left wondering if their graduates are finding (or creating) positions for which their language skills are an asset and if they regularly use other transferrable skills developed over the course of their language study. This is where the narrative behind the numbers helps make the case for liberal arts education, for graduates’ career trajectories offer a nuanced story that statistics alone cannot tell.

Tracing Career Narratives

The benefit of using LinkedIn as a complement to census figures and other statistical measures lies in the storylines that emerge from our graduates’ profiles; we can see not only what they are doing with their degree but also how they got there, including the resonances between their various academic, extracurricular, and professional activities. Across the language programs surveyed, we found that many graduates had, in fact, secured positions that capitalize on their language skills in some way, like the graduate with a degree in Japanese who now works with the language-learning application Duolingo. Some alumni have even created new opportunities that combine their interdisciplinary interests. Among them, Alex Meyer, a 2006 graduate with degrees in Chinese and mechanical engineering, cofounded a transportation start-up with manufacturing operations in China before eventually taking a leadership role at Caterpillar, Inc. 10

Even in cases where graduates were not currently in a position requiring foreign language skills, many alumni included their experiences abroad and their degree(s) as part of their LinkedIn profiles. One student paired French with economics and studied abroad with the opportunity to take core courses in economics in French,
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Eventually pursuing a career in finance. Although language was not an integral part of the student’s position, language abilities and experience were listed on the LinkedIn profile, where they might catch the eye of professional contacts or recruiters in the future. Similarly, some alumni include mentions of language teaching, even if they have not continued with a career in the education sector. One graduate majored in French and English, earned a graduate degree in education, and taught language courses before getting hired by the United States Department of Defense. Another profile traces how interests in French and political science, in conjunction with internships in local political offices, led to positions alongside legislators at the state and federal levels.

In this way, research on alumni trajectories can give world language departments insight into the marketability of their degrees as well as ideas for curriculum development that foster the experiences and skills emphasized on alumni profiles. Assessment is a crucial element of programmatic development, and LinkedIn profiles are a valuable resource, helping departments and their students respond to the demands of the job market by identifying and supporting intellectual endeavors that students can use to cultivate their professional persona even before completing a degree.

Career Observations and Curricular Development

Following the preliminary findings of this project, we have identified a few trends that are showcased again and again on alumni profiles, such as study abroad experiences, internship opportunities, and involvement in student-run organizations. With these key points in mind, we have begun to infuse career and professional development awareness into the organization of our department and course offerings. In response to alumni interest in on-campus leadership opportunities, as seen in LinkedIn profiles, the Department of French and Italian formed a group of twenty students called the French Ambassadors. These undergraduate students are consulted for feedback and involved in the conception and implementation of departmental programming. The success of this group led to the formation of its Italian counterpart, the Ambasciatori Italiani, which currently consists of eight undergraduate students who offer a student perspective on curriculum as well as on opportunities for promoting Italian language and culture. As the group’s adviser, Jelena Todorovic, reported, this group has been instrumental in the organization of campus cultural events (such as the annual cena italiana), department communications, academic support for students of Italian, off-campus excursions, fund-raising, and the creation of a spirit of collaboration between faculty members and students.

In addition to being leaders among our undergraduates, the members of these focus groups have given us valuable suggestions for placing career and professional development resources in the curriculum. In some cases, this has involved developing new courses that complement long-standing language and literature offerings. Within the undergraduate curriculum, we have added an experiential learning component to the study of French for business involving simulations in which students direct a company or journalistic publication in the target language. We are also in the process of designing courses that will give STEM students a linguistic and cultural base for
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working in international laboratories or global technology firms. Moreover, our efforts extend beyond the classroom. For instance, in 2017, our department hosted a daylong workshop that put prospective language teachers in contact with members of Wisconsin’s chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French.

One of our most promising endeavors has been encouraging dialogue between current students and recent alumni who can offer their personal take on how to make a language degree pay off. These conversations have included both formal and informal events, such as an alumni panel organized by the French Ambassadors to discuss the transition from academia to the professional world. The French and Italian Department also cosponsored a professional development workshop with SuccessWorks, a career initiative of the College of Letters and Science. This event featured alumni from language programs who currently work at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction as well as alumni who use their language skills daily for careers in medical technology, automotive supply, and agricultural manufacturing. After a panel discussion, workshop participants were given the opportunity to engage with each of the presenters in small groups, allowing for a more targeted career discussion. By following the ongoing narratives of department alumni, we are better able to create an environment in which the relationship between student and department does not necessarily end at graduation. These opportunities for leadership, team building, and organizational experience are mutually beneficial; the department gains important insight about our students’ interests and goals while offering leadership and organizational experience that our students can later use to attract the attention of potential employers. By directly including students in the evolution of departmental programming, we hope to build relationships that will continue even after our students graduate.

Similar efforts are being conceptualized and undertaken in other world language departments or area studies programs across campus. Preliminary findings regarding the employment trajectories of students graduating with a certificate in Middle East studies, a program that draws an interdisciplinary group of students whose interests overlap geographically rather than linguistically, showed a larger percentage of alumni working in nonprofit and government agencies than we found in other programs (see fig. 5),. In response, the program director, Nevine El-Nossery, suggested organizing workshops with recent alumni working in nongovernmental organizations or in diplomacy to help students envision a variety of paths for their future. She also mentioned that strengthening interdisciplinary partnerships with faculty members in international relations or political science would complement current courses offered by faculty members in history and cultural studies. Such efforts would provide support for students already planning a career in civil service or foreign affairs and may spark the interest of students whose interests are less defined.

Moving forward in the Department of French and Italian, and in other world language departments, we would like to deepen the relationships between faculty leaders, current students, and program alumni. Already, conversations with alumni regarding their academic and professional experiences have reinforced the marketability of cross-cultural competency, a global mind-set that recognizes and understands different ways of viewing and interacting with the world. In addition, the
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Trajectories of our alumni show that study abroad experiences often overlap with leadership opportunities described on graduates’ LinkedIn profiles. Internships, particularly those in foreign countries, serve as professional training while simultaneously refining students’ communication skills in a foreign language and nurturing their ability to adapt to a new cultural environment.

The most productive partnerships, however, at least when it comes to preparing students for the professional world, may come from conversations between current students and graduates of the program. Whether in the form of professional development workshops and guest lectures that bring current and former students together in an academic setting or in more casual encounters on campus or online, departments can lean on their ever-expanding alumni network to connect students and graduates with similar professional or personal interests. Consider the example of Benjamin Garton, a 2016 graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and a former member of the French Ambassadors with degrees in French and Japanese. He is just entering the professional world with a health-care-technology firm based in the Midwest after teaching in Japan. In addition to his current position and his academic training, Garton lists interests in Google and Amazon on his LinkedIn profile. It would not be hard to imagine him finding common ground with Michelle Eatherton, who completed degrees in international relations and French in 2003 and has since found success in Global Funding Operations at Amazon. Eatherton might even be able to offer guidance specific to their shared interests in the tech industry.

The LinkedIn study has offered our department, and others like it, a wealth of information, allowing us to better align our work on campus with the needs of our graduates as they transition into the professional world. Yet we would like to insist on the professional benefits of increased interaction between students and alumni. For, although departments are well equipped to connect students to experts in their chosen field, alumni are the true experts when it comes to framing academic, extracurricular, and professional experience in a way that translates to the job market. As Paula Bonner, outgoing president and CEO of the Wisconsin Alumni Association, has said, “Chancellors leave, deans leave, faculties leave, but the alumni are always here. If you graduate, you’re an alum for life.” And thanks to the LinkedIn study, we can more clearly envision ways in which our current and former students’ trajectories might intersect productively, growing our department’s professional network with each graduating class and helping our students do the same.

Notes
1. More information, including statements from the chancellor, Bernie Patterson, and the provost, Greg Summers, is publicly available on the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, Web site. Summers also contextualizes this decision in a March 2018 editorial for the Chronicle of Higher Education. This situation has been evolving quickly since spring 2018. At the time of publication, several programs had been saved, though the French and German programs were not among them (“UW-Stevens Point Rolls Out”).
2. Dix has reported in commentary for Forbes that the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, is just one of many institutions, public and private, to reconfigure their academic offerings in recent years.
3. The concept of personal branding is typically attributed to Tom Peters, who coined the term in his article “The Brand Called You,” published by Fast Company in 1997.
4. In a similar fashion, Eugene Lang College, the liberal arts division of the New School in New York City, asked its students to identify the value in their college experience (Supiano). In this case and on LinkedIn, alumni responses provide an insightful look at what job seekers are proud of on the job market.
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5. The “2018–2019 College Salary Report,” based on a survey of 3.2 million respondents conducted by PayScale, includes a study of salary potential according to major. This resource offers a snapshot of early and mid-career salaries for approximately four hundred undergraduate majors.

6. For information on how LinkedIn data have been used to examine alumni of other disciplines, see Case et al. on information systems graduates, Heydenrych and Case on chemical engineering graduates in South Africa. Though most studies focus on alumni of undergraduate degree programs, LinkedIn data have also been used to study the professional trajectories of PhD program alumni (Patton).

7. Although Bevin has been an outspoken critic of university language and literature programs, it should be noted that the Kentucky governor earned a BA in East Asian studies from Washington and Lee University in 1989. These details are not, however, included on his professional Web sites.

8. As defined by the authors of the committee’s report, the language industry encompasses translators, interpreters, teachers, and other professionals. The authors explain that language careers support all sectors of the United States economy, though they are most often linked to manufacturing, information and telecommunications, education, financial and professional services, and health services (3–4).

9. We found that 70% of graduates with a degree in Chinese (210 students out of 298 total) have a LinkedIn profile, whereas 56% of graduates with a degree in Japanese (110 out of 197 total) have a LinkedIn profile. This lower LinkedIn participation rate may be attributed in part to the relatively high number of international students participating in these programs and to the availability of professional networking sites more tailored to their country of origin.

10. We would like to thank University of Wisconsin, Madison, graduates Alex Meyer, Michelle Eatherton, and Benjamin Garson for their enthusiasm and support of this project.

11. For more information about SuccessWorks, please visit their Web site: careers.ls.wisc.edu/careers/where-do-our-students-work/national-aggregate-heat.

12. The Middle East studies program only dates back to 2006–07, and, since we do not have a major in Middle East studies, students in the program dedicate much of their time to coursework for other departments and programs. Out of 203 certificate students, 135 (or 67%) had a LinkedIn profile.

Works Cited


“Across the Nation.” George Mason University College of Humanities and Social Sciences, 2019, chss.gmu.edu/careers/where-do-our-students-work/national-aggregate-heat.


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Jin, Ye. Personal communication with Gilles Bousquet et al. 22 Feb. 2018.


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Fig. 1
Graduates of the Department of French and Italian, 2000–15, by Employment Sector

Source: LinkedIn profiles of 615 University of Wisconsin, Madison, alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2015 with a major in French or Italian.
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Fig. 2
Graduates of the Department of French and Italian, 2000–15, Currently Employed in the Private Sector

Source: LinkedIn profiles of 362 University of Wisconsin, Madison, alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2015 with a major in French or Italian and who are currently working in the private sector.
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Fig. 3

Source: LinkedIn profiles of 110 University of Wisconsin, Madison, alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2015 with a major in Japanese.
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Fig. 4

Source: LinkedIn profiles of 210 University of Wisconsin, Madison, alumni who graduated between 2000 and 2015 with a major in Chinese.
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Fig. 5
Graduates of the Program of Middle East Studies, 2006–15, by Employment Sector

Source: LinkedIn profiles of 135 University of Wisconsin, Madison, alumni who graduated between 2006 and 2015 with a certificate in Middle East studies.