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From the Editor

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FROM THE EDITOR

This is the third annual report on the state of the job market for new Ph.D.'s. As in the past, the two primary sources for the report are the annual placement survey of doctoral-granting English departments and an analysis of the *Job Information Lists*.

The 1977-78 Survey

In September 1978, for the second consecutive year, a questionnaire on Ph.D. job placement was sent to all the 145 doctoral-granting English departments on the MLA's computer list. As in 1977-78, all departments responded. Between 1 September 1977 and 1 September 1978, 1,110 doctorates in English (Ph.D.'s and D.A.'s; Ed.D.'s were not included) were awarded, and 710 (63.9%) of the recipients found full-time teaching positions. The specific items on the questionnaire are listed in Chart 1. The questionnaire speaks for itself, but the gross figures alone fail to reveal some important information:

- In 1977-78, 6 more departments offered doctoral training than in 1976-77. In 1976-77, 139 departments on the MLA's computer list indicated that they offered doctoral training; in 1977-78, 145.
- In 1977-78, 16 more doctorates (1,110) were awarded than in 1976-77 (1,094). The highest number awarded in a single year was 1,455 in 1972-73.
- In 1977-78, as in 1976-77, 19 departments awarded *more* than 15 degrees; these 19 (13.1% of the total departments) awarded 425 degrees (38.3% of the total number of doctorates).
- In 1977-78, 8 departments produced more than 20 doctorates, 3 departments more than 25, and 1 department more than 30 (that department awarded 37 degrees).
- In 1977-78, the average number of doctorates granted per department was 7.7.
- In 1977-78, 25 departments placed all their graduates in full-time academic positions, with 24 of these departments awarding fewer than 6 degrees; 9 departments were unable to place any of their graduates in full-time academic positions; 4 departments awarded no degrees.

As Chart 1 indicates, the results of the 1977-78 survey are strikingly similar to those of the 1976-77 survey. It is encouraging, to be sure, that for two years in a row more than 60% of all new doctorates have been able to find full-time teaching positions; before the MLA undertook these surveys, very few members of

the profession would have guessed that the placement rate was so high. Even so, the surveys indicate clearly that a serious employment crisis has existed and continues to exist. Almost 40% of the classes of 1977 and 1978 were unable to find full-time teaching positions of any kind, and almost 60% were unable to find positions that offered some possibility of tenure. Moreover, there is absolutely no reason to believe that more than 35% of recent doctorates will be able to make a lifelong career of college English teaching.

The 1977-78 *Job Information Lists*

The information in Chart 2 was taken from the MLA *Job Information Lists* published since the fall of 1971. The following types of jobs were not counted: jobs for associate or full professors, jobs for M.A.'s or A.B.D.'s only, term appointments that could not lead to tenure, and "possible but not yet authorized" positions. The purpose of the count was to discover how many definite, tenure-accruing positions for new doctorates had been advertised in the four "regular" issues of the *JIL* in each academic year since 1971. In reading Chart 2 it is particularly important to be aware of its limitations. First, it is not a listing of all the jobs in English; it is a list of only the definite jobs, apparently tenure accruing, advertised in the *JIL*. Second, since some jobs for new Ph.D.'s were not advertised in the *JIL*, the MLA and ADE offices have no record of them. Third, since many jobs did not materialize until July or even August, it was impossible for them to be advertised in the four "regular" issues of the *JIL*. Fourth, many of the jobs that were advertised as "possible" or "doubtful" in the *JIL*, and thus were not counted, did in fact materialize and were filled. Fifth, since many of the *JIL* advertisements were ambiguous, one had to guess whether a job was definite or uncertain. Sixth, when departments stated that two or more areas of specialization were acceptable for a single position, only the first specialty listed was counted; no job listing was counted more than once.

The number of positions in rhetoric and composition, linguistics, and creative writing continues to be large; in fact, positions in rhetoric and composition, linguistics, creative writing, English education, technical writing, English as a Second Language, communications, reading, and developmental English account for 154 (or 57%) of all apparently tenure-track jobs advertised in the *Lists* in 1977-78.

The state of the job market in 1977-78 was not significantly different from the state of the job market in 1976-77, or 1975-76, or 1974-75; nor is 1978-79 likely to be significantly different from recent years. The only noticeable change in 1978-79 has been a marked decline in the number of subscribers to the *Job Information Lists*—from about 3,200 in 1977-78 (a number that had remained constant for several years) to about 2,700 in 1978-79. The brightest hope for job candidates is that the ADE and the MLA, working with individual departments, will be able to help in the search for nonacademic employment. To date we have done very little in this area, but we can no longer afford to ignore the needs of those who have completed their graduate education and are unable to find teaching positions.

Jasper P. Neel
Jeanne C. Nelson

Chart I

MLA/ADE Survey of Ph.D. Placement

	1976-77		1977-78	
	Ph.D. Recipients	% of Total	Ph.D. Recipients	% of Total
1. Full-time tenure-track appointment	466	42.6	481	43.33
2. Full-time renewable appointment not leading to tenure	141	12.9	163	14.67
3. Full-time non-renewable appointment for one year or less	62	5.7	66	5.94
4. Part-time appointment	114	10.4	117	10.54
5. Post-doctoral fellowship	9	0.8	13	1.17
6. Unemployed and seeking academic employment in a specific city or area	31	2.8	33	2.97
7. Unemployed and seeking academic employment anywhere	81	7.4	39	3.51
8. In nonacademic employment but still seeking academic employment*	44	4.0	38	3.42
9. In nonacademic employment and not seeking academic employment*	56	5.1	76	6.84
10. Unknown	90	8.2	84	7.56
	1094	99.9	1110	99.95

*Departments were asked to list the types of jobs and the employers, if known, for graduates holding nonacademic positions. In the 1977-78 survey, 65 departments provided this information. The following jobs, or general job types, were reported. The number in parentheses indicates the number of times each job was recorded; where no number is given, the job appeared only once. For the 1976-77 results, see the *ADE Bulletin*, No. 56 (Feb. 1978), p. i. Editing/writing (24), university administration (10), state or federal government agency (7), law school (6), self-employed (5 [pianist, carpenter, store owner, novelist, writer]), insurance (4), public relations/advertising (4), management (4), publishing (3), library (3), MBA program (3), consulting (3), museum (2), power company (2), administrative assistant (2), television, Xerox, minister, secondary school, bibliography, legislative assistant, mental health paraprofessional, finance.

Chart 2
Tenure-Accruing Assistant Professorships
Listed in the JIL, 1971-78

	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77	77-78
Old & Mid. Eng. Lit.	21	14	16	13	10	15	4
Renaissance	24	20	11	19	12	13	5
Rest. & 18th Cent.	27	12	16	11	9	14	9
19th Brit.	33	22	24	31	23	15	6
Amer. Lit. Gen.	30	14	24	21	20	18	6
Colon. Amer. Lit.	3	3	5	4	4	7	5
19th Amer. Lit.	3	5	6	8	3	8	7
Mod. Brit.&/or Amer.	25	20	24	22	21	19	11
Literary Crit.	9	3	7	4	5	7	4
Drama	10	9	13	13	7	8	7
Linguistics	34	34	20	42	41	53	29
Rhet. & Comp.	12	12	23	30	27	56	57
Creative Writing	13	12	14	12	6	29	15
Comp. Lit.	13	10	13	12	14	14	6
Black Studies	21	13	16	12	7	18	8
Folklore	3	7	1	5	6	7	3
Eng. Ed.	11	7	3	6	2	13	6
Journalism	8	7	9	8	12	3	16
Tech. Writing	4	2	4	8	5	7	8
Children's Lit.	7	7	2	7	1	6	3
Canadian Lit.	4	1	2	1	2	3	2
ESL/TESL	1	2	3	4	3	11	7
Communications	2	4	0	5	2	8	12
Amer. Studies	0	0	0	3	3	15	3
Generalist	16	14	14	12	12	17	20
Reading	3	1	1	2	3	0	1
Devel. Eng.*	*	*	*	*	*	7	3
Women's Studies*	*	*	*	*	*	3	0
Film*	*	*	*	*	*	5	6
Other	2	1	3	12	3	6	1
Total	339	256	274	327	263	405	270