

Equity and Graduate Students Pursuing Non-Academic Career Paths in Classical Studies

Universities are making concerted efforts to draw attention to equity issues at the faculty level. Furthermore, in Classical Studies, groups such as the Women's Network of the Classical Association of Canada, Women's Classical Caucus, USA, Women's Classics Committee, UK, serve to support and mentor PhD students and early career academics. Discussions about equity appear to be tailored towards those on the academic career trajectory.

In this paper, I raise two contentious and somewhat related issues pertaining to the promotion of gender equity to all graduate students in Classical Studies. In particular, I argue that ageism and non-academic career choices factor into unconscious biases in the graduate student experience (e.g., admission processes, supervision, as well as scholarship applications and research). First, with respect to biases surrounding ageism, Sandler and Hall (1986) have stated that, "older women students may be viewed as inappropriate students. An irregular work history because of time spent on childrearing or a need to study part-time may be seen as evidence of a lack of commitment." (16) Second, biases also may be construed around future career choices (Krook 2015). Students inclined from the onset to engage in graduate work in Classical Studies may not wish to pursue tenure track positions. Not only do students with strong research potential face not being admitted, but if they are they may be deterred from doing the research that they are enthusiastic about and qualified to undertake.

The time is ripe for Classical Studies' faculty to recognize these biases and create environments for all graduate students to develop and promote their critical, analytical and communication skills in ways that still maintain the integrity of the graduate degree. As faculty, we are obligated to teach, mentor, and support our students without prejudice. Some other avenues to facilitate the work is to attend workshops and presentations, as well to keep up to date with the relevant literature about non-academic career paths. In addition, collaborative work on publications can also provide students with the necessary skill sets to pursue both non- and academic positions after graduation.

Bibliography

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