

Dr. [REDACTED] Director of Programs
Modern Language Association
85 Broad Street, Suite 500
New York, NY 10004-2434

January 16, 2019

Dear Dr. [REDACTED],

I write with enthusiasm regarding the position of Career Services Coordinator at the Modern Language Association. As a Fellow in the MLA's 2017–2018 Connected Academics Proseminar, what resonated with me most was the pioneering mission of the initiative itself. The prospect of continuing the work of broadening career horizons for undergraduate and graduate students of the humanities across the nation thus constitutes for me an exciting and unparalleled opportunity. My deep-seated passion for the humanities and my continuing commitment to career diversity, as well as my own unique professional trajectory, position me extremely well to succeed in this role.

I bring to the role the perspective and experience of a Connected Academics Proseminar alumnus. My capstone project, a collaborative effort pursued with a colleague at NYU, involved gathering feedback from graduate students, faculty, and administrators on professionalization and training in career diversity in doctoral education and producing a ten-page report on the mix of enthusiasm, curiosity, and trepidation we encountered. This experience offered important insight into both systemic and institution-specific challenges in creating a more open and sustainable model of doctoral education—insight that will prove crucial as I seek to replicate these efforts on a larger scale as Career Services Coordinator. Since the end of the Proseminar, I have continued my active participation in these conversations, including as an invited panelist at both the Connected Academics Summer Institute in September 2018 and at the American Historical Association's Annual Meeting, in a session dedicated to PhD career diversity, in January 2019. These panels have deepened my knowledge, broadened my perspective, and prepared me to continue to present—individually and collaboratively—at both regional and national conferences in the future.

Having worked in finance upon completion of my undergraduate degree and in retail after I finished my MA, I am eager and equipped to address questions of career diversity not only for doctoral students but for BA and MA students as well. The skills I developed as an undergraduate Comparative Literature major, especially in close reading of individual texts and observing trends across broader bodies of literature and scholarship, served me well in the three years I spent developing, summarizing, repackaging, and distributing equity and economic research at Morgan Stanley. The succinctness required for business communications and the pressing demands of market-driven deadlines in turn helped me immensely with concision in my writing and management of time and resources as I wrote seminar papers and proposed and drafted my MA thesis. My training in the humanities and professional experience outside of the academy thus have shaped and continue to shape one another, offering me a unique perspective from which to articulate both the value of humanistic expertise and its applicability across varying types of work.

Indeed, while it was my passion for and belief in the humanities that led me out of private enterprise and back to the university to pursue doctoral study, my dissertation topic resulted from



the deployment of the critical, interpretative, and research skills I honed in graduate coursework to trends I noticed in media I consume and social and activist circles with which I engage. Studying the history of HIV/AIDS in Italy has helped me to consider the value of humanistic endeavor not only in academia and private enterprise but also in the realms of social justice and public health, further convincing me of its vital importance in society and of the multifaceted potential of students who pursue degrees in the humanities at all levels. My dissertation research has also dovetailed with my longstanding commitment to the LGBT community and my interest in addressing questions of equality and diversity within and beyond the university, and I have channeled these interests into the creation of programming events open to the broader public. Realizing these initiatives has enriched my experience not only as a scholar but also as a teacher, forming an essential part of my extensive work mentoring and advising undergraduate and graduate students.

For the multifarious possible futures that lie ahead for the humanities, I believe that the most promising ones will view humanistic enterprise as not only valid but vital to the world beyond the classroom and the library, and will remain student-focused and increasingly student-driven. These values and my adherence to them will prove essential as I make the case for the humanities across funding and employment contexts as Career Services Coordinator. My expansive and expanding network within academia and across different public and private sectors will allow me to more easily and effectively propose new community partners for the MLA, and my experience in client relationship management will help me to nurture these new partnerships while simultaneously working to create a more sustainable model of doctoral education.

I look forward to hearing from you, and hope to have the opportunity to discuss the position further with you. I can be reached by telephone at 917 [REDACTED], or by email at brian [REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

[REDACTED]

Brian DeGrazia