

The State of Area Studies:
a survey of foreign language and area studies specialists in higher educationⁱ

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Executive summary

Issues of funding and infrastructure dominate the needs of area studies in 2014.

- Respondents are gravely concerned about the stability of external funding to support foreign language teaching and area studies research centers. The question of external funding is inextricable from a more general picture of the state of area studies because respondents say that external funding is essential to sustain a) the teaching of less-commonly taught languages and advanced levels of other languages, b) outreach to the community, and c) library resources in foreign languages. Our data also show the ways that federal funding has numerous multiplier effects in terms of the scholarly impact and public benefit of training foreign language and area studies specialists.
- Higher education institutions need to create stable, multi-disciplinary programs to provide students with in-depth knowledge about critical world regions, especially the Muslim world and sub-Saharan Africa. Student interest in the Muslim world is growing but the numbers of students who want advanced training in Arabic, Turkic and Persian languages will always be small enough that universities will not be inclined to devote substantial resources to the departments that cover these languages. However, a select number of universities should be encouraged to specialize in these regions to ensure predictable training in these languages and societies.
- Area studies is facing a problem with de-professionalization in foreign language teaching and library sciences. When these specialists retire, they are often replaced by native speakers or graduate students who don't have professional qualifications and are offered low-paid, part-time positions. This de-professionalization detracts from both language education and language-specific research, but it also may deter prospective students from going into these disciplines. Our data indicate that there may not be enough students currently training as area studies librarians to replace the current large cohort of retiring librarians with advanced foreign language skills.
- East Asian studies has a large cohort retiring between 2014 and 2025, so universities need to prepare in order to sustain the existing infrastructure by retaining attractive tenure-track positions and support staff positions in order to recruit the current cohort of Ph.D. students who are interested in working in higher education.

Introduction

The data presented in this report come from a survey of US-based foreign language and area studies specialists conducted in January-February 2014. More than 4,000 people responded to the request to participate, which was circulated by the National Council of Area Studies Associations (NCASA) and their members on listservs and social media sites. In the end, there were about 3,500 eligible and reasonably complete responses.

Not all of the respondents work in higher education, and those that do disproportionately represent tenure-track or tenured faculty who have a long-term investment in area studies (as evidenced by their membership in the NCASA member organizations). 69% of our survey respondents are in full-time tenured or tenure-track positions, compared to 25% nationwide across disciplines.ⁱⁱ Our data clearly underrepresent those unemployed or working in part-time or contingent conditions since this group is less likely to be able to afford association membership (in 2012, the average salary for full-time instructors and lecturers was only about \$41,000ⁱⁱⁱ and many adjuncts are living at the poverty line.)^{iv} Therefore, these data cannot be taken as representative of foreign language and area studies faculty as a whole, but should be interpreted as a picture of those who are central to the mission of area studies in higher education and who have the deepest institutional roots. However, when looking at the students in the survey, we need to keep in mind that unless working conditions change in academia, a shrinking portion of them will be able to carry out a similar level of lifetime commitment to international scholarship.

The following table summarizes some of the major characteristics of the sample in our survey:

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample	Response Percent
Speak a language other than English	98%
Speak at least three languages other than English	55%
Native speakers of a language other than English	18%
US citizen or permanent resident	96%
Born in the US	76%
Intends to work in the US in the future	95%
White/Caucasian	85%
Female	54%
Employment sector	
- Academia (including think tanks, etc.)	84%
- Business	4%
- Government	4%
- Non-profit	4%
Employed in higher education (including student employees)	88%
- of those, working as faculty (teaching and/or research)	74%
- working at a public institution	56%
- working at a Ph.D.-granting institution	72%
- working at a community college	2%
- working at a minority-serving institution	13%*
Have a Ph.D.	66%
Is currently a student	22%
- of whom will graduate in 2014-2015	62%
- of whom will receive a Ph.D.	77%
Retirement cohort	
- 2050 or later	25%
- 2020 or sooner	16%

* It is likely that respondents did not understand this term in the way as it is used in the Department of Education

The paper proceeds as follows: part I interprets the results of our survey in relation to the academic job market, analyzing students, the part-time and contingent workforce, and retiring faculty. Part II interprets the needs of area studies in relation to support for the infrastructure for foreign language and area studies training in higher education. The conclusion section is followed by an explanation of methodology.

Part I: Area studies and trends in the academic job market

The last extensive study conducted by NCASA took place in 1991 and focused on the question of “shortages” of faculty in U.S. higher education.^v A huge wave of faculty retirements in the humanities and social sciences was predicted in an influential 1989 study by Bowen and Sosa,^{vi} and the 1991 NCASA study relied on their methodology for its conclusions. However, Bowen and Sosa’s predictions were undermined by changes in laws related to mandatory retirement and changes in university hiring policies that meant retiring faculty were not necessarily replaced, and increasingly when they were replaced, they were replaced with part-time or contingent faculty. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of university faculty in the U.S. grew by 27%, but during this same period, the number of non-tenure-track faculty grew by 47% and part-time faculty grew 35%.^{vii} The U.S. Department of Labor projects at least a 15% increase in jobs for foreign language and literature faculty by 2022, but cautions that many of these jobs will be part-time or adjunct positions.^{viii}

Therefore in this study, we are very tentative in making predictions about supply and demand, and we also include employment instability as a significant factor in our analysis of the academic labor market. The adjunctification of the academic labor market is both a deterrent to potential graduate students and a factor in shortages of available specialists who may unpredictably exit the academic job market due to poor working conditions. Finally, in addition to these structural factors in higher education, foreign language and area studies are tied to current events that create booms and busts in demand, more than most other academic fields. In assessing the prospects for area studies, we need to take into account the stability of employment as well as the retirement rates. The respondents in our survey who are retiring have good jobs, but they indicated that they think up to 30% of these jobs will not be replaced, or replaced

without tenure. The erosion of tenure is another factor that disrupts our ability to project who will be teaching even five years in the future (the median amount of time adjuncts teach before finding a full-time job or leaving teaching is four years).^{ix} We will examine these factors in turn: student interests, academics in unsatisfactory work, and retiring academics.

Future faculty: a profile of area studies students

The detailed breakdown of student disciplinary and area interests can be found in table 6, so here we will focus on a few other characteristics of the student respondents. The vast majority of students in our sample are getting a Ph.D. and want to go into academic work, with another 11% naming academia as their second choice. But with the burden of student loans (37% are already more than \$10,000 in debt themselves) and the increasing lack of stable employment, what would their second choice be? Nearly half of those naming academia as their first choice would choose non-profit work as their second choice, and nearly one third would go into government work. Finally, the overview data show that area studies is becoming both less male and less white (much like higher education as a whole), based on our comparison of our student and non-student respondents.

Table 2: Profile of the student respondents (n=808)		
Degree program		
Bachelors	7%	
Masters	15%	
Ph.D.	77%	
Professional	2%	
% with more than \$10k student loan debt		
	37%	
Plans after graduation		
	1st choice	2nd choice
Continue my education	9%	6%
Academia	69%	11%
Business	5%	11%
Government	8%	27%
Non-profit	8%	38%
Other	20%	6%
	Students	Non-students
% female	62%	52%
% white only	81%	86%

The other way we can look at area studies students is through the eyes of their professors and other higher education professionals who work with them. We asked about their perception of how student interest in their region had shifted. Scholars of the Middle East/North Africa and of East Asia felt that students had definitely become more interested in their region in the last 10 years, while most specialists on Europe and the Former Soviet Union felt that student interest had stayed the same or had fallen.

Table 3: Compared to 10 years ago, would you say that there are more or fewer students interested in the region of the world you focus on?			
	About the same	Less interested	More interested
MENA	18%	12%	70%
East Asia	19%	14%	67%
South/Central America/Carribbean	23%	16%	61%
Sub-Saharan Africa	25%	14%	60%
Southeast Asia/Oceania	21%	20%	59%
South/Central Asia	24%	20%	57%
Europe	32%	34%	34%
Former Soviet Union	35%	38%	27%

We also asked faculty to estimate, just for comparative purposes, how many students at their institution were interested in their world region. Again, faculty in European and post-Soviet studies were at the low end of the range of estimates, and the scholars of the southern hemisphere (especially Latin America) suggested that relatively high numbers of students were interested in their region. We can take these data into account as we look at issues around supply and demand in the subsequent sections.

Frustrated faculty: unemployment, underemployment, and contingent labor

Even though our sample underrepresents faculty who are not on the tenure track or already tenured, we need to take into account the current dynamics of academic hiring in order to assess these issues of supply and demand, and the way that changing career paths may influence the decisions of prospective area studies graduate students. In response to the debates about rising student debt and the increasing reliance on adjunct faculty in higher education the survey asked several questions about the debt load and employment of respondents. In the following table, we compare these numbers to numbers collected since 2010 by the AAUP on U.S. faculty overall and by the NSF on social scientists.^x Here we can see that our sample is disproportionately employed in full-time positions compared to others in our profession.

Despite this bias in our sample, we can infer where there are real employment stresses among area studies scholars by looking at which categories or respondents had higher than average under- or unemployment. First, we should note that women are somewhat more likely to be in part-time work (8% vs. 6% of men), but that is true across the labor market in the U.S., and whites and non-whites have the same percentage in part-time work. People with degrees from interdisciplinary and area studies programs, and those with language/linguistics degrees are more likely to be underemployed, as are Southeast Asia specialists and Arabic speakers. We also see a

very high rate of part-time employment among community college employees, where part-time faculty make up 70% of the teaching staff.^{xi} We should keep these high rates of underemployment in mind when we consider the question of the 2025 academic labor market in the next section because the trend has been for the proportion of full-time tenured positions in higher education to drop by about 1% per year.^{xii}

Employment status of non-students	Respondents	AAUP/NSF data
Full-time	81%	40%
Not employed	2%	2%
Part-time	8%	41%
Retired	8%	n/a
Graduate student employees	15%	19%
Categories with relatively high unemployment or underemployment (excluding students and recent grads)		
	Unemployed	Part-time
Area studies/interdisciplinary	3%	11%
Language/linguistics	2%	12%
Southeast Asia/Oceania	2%	10%
Middle East/North Africa	2%	9%
Arabic speakers	2%	16%
Community college employees (n=29)	n/a	18%

In order to dig deeper into these employment numbers, we asked those who were employed about the number of jobs they worked, their contract length, their status as full-time or part-time, and whether they a) wanted to be working for their current employer in five years (and if not, why not) and b) whether they thought they would be working for their current employer in five years. Additionally, those in short-term positions or working without a contract, and those employed part-time were asked whether they desired a longer-term contract or full-time work. From these variables we constructed an analysis of those employed in “stable” employment versus those who expressed dissatisfaction with their working conditions or for other reasons might want to change jobs in the next five years.

Table 5: Employment stability indicators for non-students	
Works two jobs without indicating their current employment situation is satisfactory	10%
Not satisfied with their contract length or lack of contract	8%
Not satisfied with their part-time status	4%
Unhappy with another aspect of their work situation (pay, stability, work/life balance)	9%
Two or more of these issues	7%
In satisfactory, stable employment	74%
Recent graduates in unstable work	44%
Overall % in stable work, excluding students and recent graduates	
Women	77%
Non-whites	78%
Community college employees (n=29)	55%

In the supply and demand analysis in the next section, these respondents who are not happy with their employment situation are categorized as “available for work,” but in this brief analysis we will preview what is presented there. One pattern that showed up across different types of measures was that specialists in East Asian studies, speakers of Mandarin and Japanese in particular, and members of the Association for Asian Studies were significantly more likely to have stable employment – 5% or more above the average. Conversely, specialists in Sub-Saharan Africa, speakers of African languages, and members of the African Studies Association were much less likely to have stable employment – about 5% below the average. Specialists in South America, Central America and the Caribbean were also less likely to have stable work. However, when we take other factors into account in the multiple variable regression analysis, we see that these differences are largely accounted for by differences in age cohort in each specialization: East Asianists in our sample, for example, are further into their careers on average, have a higher proportion of their doctorates and are more likely to be employed in academia.^{xiii} When we compare the cohort of non-students who graduated in the last 15 years in each discipline, we do see interesting differences between the highest group and the lowest: East Asianist recent grads have a below-average instability rate of just 45%, compared to the high 59% rate among South/Central Americanists (see table 6 below). Finally, we did see some differences in

employment patterns when we look at the breakdown of respondents by discipline, patterns echoed elsewhere in our analysis: linguistics and area studies degree holders are less likely to be in stable employment while librarians and philosophy/religious studies scholars are more likely to be in a stable job.

Fanfare faculty: retirements and replacements to 2025

Like our analysis of employment conditions, our analysis of retirements and graduations to 2025 relies largely on internal comparisons across our data set, which is skewed towards those who are well-established in academia. The analysis focuses on when certain specializations will face a larger than average retirement cohort and which specializations seem to have an especially large mismatch between soon-to-be-retiring faculty and graduating Ph.D. students. We also take into account the respondents currently unemployed, dissatisfied with their jobs, and/or in contingent and part-time positions who would likely accept a full-time tenure-track job in their field if one were opened up by a retirement (referred to as “available to work” in this analysis). First we will give some highlights of an in-depth data analysis, then analyze the tabular data which gives the picture in broad strokes.

East Asian studies and the potential shortage of academic professionals who speak Mandarin

Table 6 below does not break down the retirement picture by whether or not the retiree is a teacher or by discipline and language together, but a closer look at the data shows that teachers of Mandarin and other Asian languages have a higher retirement rate than average – 11 of the 21 respondents teaching “other Asian languages” will retire by 2025. When we look at highly functional speakers of these languages in the humanities more broadly, we see a similar picture of a large retirement cohort in East Asian Studies. 27% of highly functional Japanese speakers

with humanities degrees will be retiring in the next six years alone, as well as 25% of Mandarin speakers and 42% of those who speak another Asian language. The projected deficit for Mandarin speakers is the lowest among the language groups. The retirement rate among Mandarin speakers is higher than the average in terms of faculty, but even more so in terms of librarians working in higher education: 27% of Mandarin-speaking librarians will retire in the next decade and another 55% in the 2020s. This result is so striking that we can probably predict a shortage of Mandarin-speakers who are trained in library science (as opposed to Mandarin speakers who are drafted into doing library work even though they are not educated in that field – more on that next).

Issues for library sciences and language teaching – deprofessionalization?

We may be seeing a trend of de-professionalization among librarians with area studies expertise more broadly, with a large retiring cohort and a relatively small number of incoming students: 35% will be retiring in the next 10 years. We have 40 outgoing librarians and just 16 library science students in the sample. The fact that there is also only one “available for work” librarian in the sample indicates that there may already be an undersupply of librarians with advanced language and area studies knowledge. Anecdotally, professional area studies librarians are sometimes replaced by someone who has knowledge of the language but no formal training in library science, so this may be an indicator that the professional librarian is on the way out in area studies. To the detriment of the field – area studies library acquisitions and salaries are an easy target for budget cuts (see part II).

Of the other disciplines, the humanities are also facing a high retirement rate (notably 30% of the language/linguistics Ph.D.’s in the study). In Polish and other Slavic languages 4 of the 10 teachers in the survey plan to retire before 2025. 205 humanities faculty retiring in the

next year are matched by 124 graduating humanities Ph.D. students. This low number may reflect that potential Ph.D. students have been discouraged by the high number of academics available for work in the humanities (approximately 64 – or 50% of the number of incoming Ph.D.'s). This is congruent with the research that shows that fields such as history and foreign languages are more strongly represented among part-time faculty in the U.S. than any others except for studio art and English.^{xiv}

Since language teaching is the foundation for what we do in area studies, these results warrant further scrutiny - we may be seeing a similar trend of de-professionalization among language teachers. Though the number of students in language Ph.D. programs may be steady, the supply has not been keeping up with demand since at least 2003, and this trend appears to be continuing.^{xv} Languages, especially the less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), are often taught by native speakers with little formal training in language teaching, and these faculty are often in low-paid, contingent or part-time positions. Of those in our sample who had taught a foreign language in the last two years, little over half had a Ph.D. in language or literature. Teachers of French, Spanish and German are much more likely than those of other languages to have a Ph.D. in language or literature. Having a Ph.D. in a foreign language seems to be devalued in higher education, and may be increasingly seen as unnecessary to qualify for a low-paid adjunct position.

Table 6: % of language teachers in our sample without a language or literature Ph.D.	
Critical languages (Farsi/Persian, Turkic languages, Hindi/Urdu, Swahili)	75-91%
Less-commonly taught languages (Korean, Mandarin, Arabic)	50-75%
French, Spanish, German	26-40%

Ongoing problems connecting with social scientists

The incorporation of social science, and especially economics, faculty into area studies has been a long-standing concern, as reflected in the 1991 NCASA report that noted declining numbers of economists among their members and reports of declining interests in replacing retiring economists with another having the same area studies specialization. Given this long-term trend, it is unsurprising that there were very few people with economics Ph.D.'s in the sample (29, as compared to 350 political scientists and 81 sociologists) and 37% of them are retiring in the coming decade. Economists, even more than other social scientists, dis-identify with area studies as they move forward in their careers and focus more on disciplinary schools for their professional identification. The same fear was expressed regarding political scientist in the 1999 NCASA report, suggesting that political science, too, was becoming increasingly theoretical and therefore political scientists were becoming less likely to be members of area studies associations. Indeed, the proportion of political scientists in this sample is 10%, which is a decline from the 1991 survey of NCASA members, which showed around 20% of the members were political scientists. Only anthropology seems to be holding its own across the age cohorts in our sample.

Table 7: the aging of social sciences in area studies	Discipline as % of the age cohort		
	60s-80s	40s-60s	20s-40s
Political science	15.5	10.9	9.4
Anthropology	8.7	9.1	8.5
Economics	3.0	0.6	0.8
Sociology	2.8	2.4	1.4
Communication	0.0	0.6	0.8
Geography	0.4	0.9	1.6

A well-rounded B.A. or M.A. student who wants in-depth foreign expertise needs to take more than history and literature classes, yet even at major universities there may be a dearth of

courses on South American economies or the politics of Southern Africa. Social scientists do not have many professional incentives to acquire foreign language and area studies skills, nor do they have many opportunities to teach area studies courses if they have such expertise. It might not necessarily be true that social scientists are not competent in foreign languages because - those who are foreign language and area studies specialists are less likely to join an area studies association than, say, historians and therefore are not as likely to be represented in these data. But the data do reflect the problematic relationship between social science and area studies.

When we look at the numbers of social scientists in our data, we see four particular trends. First is that political science continues to be one of the most popular disciplines, in fourth place at 11% of the respondents and anthropology takes fifth place with 9%. The next trend is that the proportion of social scientists is much smaller in younger cohorts, with the exception of anthropology, which represents between 8.5-9.1 of the respondents across cohorts. This overall trend may express a declining interest in identifying as an area studies specialist or it may just represent a declining interest among social scientists in affiliating with area studies associations. In either case, the data point to disincentives for social scientists to develop in-depth language and area studies expertise, something confirmed quite strongly by anecdotal data in academia. Third, this disinclination to affiliate is weaker among political scientists and anthropologists than among sociologists and economists. This might indicate that particular incentives are needed to attract people from the latter two disciplines to the in-depth study of world regions. Finally, there are two rising social science disciplines that should be noticed and perhaps courted by area studies: geography (n=46 in our survey) and communications (n=20). Indeed, geography is one of the disciplines noted as being an “expanding” field in our labor market data below.

Other data points

The overall retirement projection to 2025 is much higher for B.A.-granting institutions (i.e. liberal arts colleges) than for Ph.D.-granting institutions: 35% of the staff at B.A. institutions will be retiring in this period, vs. 26% of the staff at larger universities. As we noted before, the respondents likely did not understand the designation “minority-serving institution” in the way it is used in the Department of Education, but of the 13% of respondents who thought they were working at a minority-serving institution, 25% will retire by 2025. Community college faculty were only 2% of our sample but have a 38% retirement projection by 2025.

Interpreting the data: expansion, devaluation, saturation and deficit fields

Our calculations of supply and demand in the next 10 years are based on the following definitions:

- *n*: the number of all respondents in that category (e.g. all highly functional Arabic speakers in our sample)
- *% in stable employment*: the % of the respondents in each category who were in full-time, long-term contracts or who were happy with a shorter contract or part-time work. Students and recent graduates were excluded from this analysis for reasons discussed in the previous section. Students and people who were retired from all employment were not included in this category.
- *% available for work*: the % of the respondents in each category who were not in the “stable” category, plus a proportion of the respondents who say they expect to change jobs in the next five years (see appendix A for details on how this was calculated)
- *% retiring from academia*: the % of respondents in that category whose primary or secondary employment is in academia, and who indicated that they will retire before 2025. Thus we are including teaching and research faculty, as well as librarians and support staff with language and area studies expertise in our sample.
- *% students going into academia*: the % of all respondents in that category who are students pursuing an M.A. degree and plan to continue their education, or any student whose first choice for employment after graduation is a job in academia. Respondents in this category also indicated they do not anticipate that they will retire from all employment before 2025.
- *Projected deficit*: a score was calculated that projected what kinds of deficits we might see in 2025 (see appendix A for details on how this was calculated). Here we simplify the score as a large projected deficit of *candidates*, a large projected deficit of *jobs*, or 0 if the projected deficits were not large enough to make a projection with confidence.

- *Highly functional speakers*: since most of the survey respondents spoke multiple languages at varying levels of proficiency, a simplified coding scheme was used to be able to meaningfully compare respondents in terms of language spoken and proficiency. In short, those who spoke a language at an intermediate level or higher and used the language on a daily basis. Those who qualified with multiple languages were coded accordingly.

In our discussion of these data, we will only interpret data on the specializations where there is an especially high or low deficit and where the overall number of respondents is high enough that we can be fairly confident in our predictions (e.g. disciplines with at least 30 respondents in the survey, that is, at least 1% of the sample). We will end the section with an analysis of how to interpret these trends and which sectors of academia are saturated, expanding, devalued, and facing a deficit in the labor market.

Table 8 – projected deficits in various fields						
	Sample n	% in stable employment	% available for work	% of academics retiring	% of category who are students going into academia	Projected deficit
Total	3596	79%	6%	27%	17%	n/a
Language – speakers who are highly functional in this language						
Arabic	109	68%	9%	18%	25%	Jobs
Farsi/Persian	26	70%	17%	26%	27%	Jobs
French	104	65%	8%	24%	15%	0
German	56	79%	5%	23%	29%	Jobs
Hebrew	13	100%	17%	27%	15%	0
Hindi/Urdu	30	94%	2%	20%	13%	0
Japanese	162	84%	7%	28%	10%	0
Korean	31	75%	7%	15%	26%	Jobs
Mandarin	206	81%	4%	36%	16%	0
Multi-lingual	537	78%	7%	29%	16%	0
Other-African	35	79%	3%	25%	26%	0
Other-Asian	91	84%	10%	41%	14%	Candidates
Other-European	71	77%	13%	20%	17%	0
Polish/Slavic	58	77%	4%	33%	16%	0
Portuguese	15	69%	0%	36%	7%	Candidates
Russian	362	80%	7%	24%	17%	0
Spanish	140	83%	4%	24%	9%	Candidates
Turkic	37	74%	2%	14%	30%	Jobs
Occupation						

Language teachers	809	75%	9%	26%	18%	0
Librarians	113	83%	1%	40%	14%	Candidates
Teachers	2462	79%	7%	28%	15%	0
Researchers	1915	82%	7%	28%	11%	0
Other (outreach, support, editors)	166	64%	5%	24%	17%	0

(Continued on the next page)

Table 8 (continued)						
	Sample n	% in stable employment	% available for work	% of academics retiring	% of category who are students going into academia	Projected deficit
Total	3596	79%	6%	27%	17%	0
Regional specialization						
East Asia	819	81%	5%	33%	13%	0
Europe	1396	78%	6%	27%	16%	0
Former Soviet Union	990	78%	6%	25%	17%	0
MENA	766	73%	6%	26%	17%	0
South/Central America/Caribbean	321	74%	7%	25%	11%	0
South/Central Asia	646	76%	5%	25%	19%	0
Southeast Asia/Oceania	318	75%	5%	42%	8%	Candidates
Sub-Saharan Africa	407	72%	6%	26%	18%	0
Discipline						
Anthropology	283	78%	9%	23%	22%	0
Area studies	410	73%	6%	17%	19%	0
Arts/art history	108	80%	7%	27%	15%	0
Business/law/medical	42	59%	0%	45%	2%	Candidates
Communication	20	100%	0%	18%	20%	0
Economics	29	77%	12%	37%	3%	Candidates
Education	67	66%	8%	25%	22%	Jobs
Geography	46	88%	2%	22%	35%	Job
History	788	81%	4%	27%	22%	0
Language/linguistics	255	65%	8%	39%	9%	Candidates
Library science	56	82%	0%	37%	2%	Candidates
Literature	392	85%	8%	25%	20%	0
Other	177	71%	4%	28%	15%	0
Political science	350	82%	5%	28%	16%	0
Psychology	6	33%	0%	67%	0%	n/a
Religion/philosophy	82	86%	3%	28%	29%	Job
Science/math/engineering	20	75%	7%	10%	10%	0
Sociology	81	83%	7%	29%	21%	0

Asian studies and language/linguistics have a large older cohort while other fields and disciplines have large cohorts of younger scholars, and often these numbers are reduced to questions of job shortages and overproduction of Ph.D.'s. However, a large cohort of incoming scholars is not necessarily an "oversupply" unless there is also a large percentage of the field in the "available for work" category, indicating that new Ph.D.'s are entering an already saturated

job market. But when this is not the case, we argue that a larger incoming than outgoing cohort indicates a field where student demand is high and that is ripe for expansion in the academy through the institutionalization and stabilization of teaching and research positions in these fields. Conversely, devalued fields are those with both high ratios of outgoing to incoming and high numbers of available workers, indicating that the devaluing of their expertise is discouraging new scholars from pursuing the field. There is also a category for a true deficit, where a field or discipline seems to be losing specialists at a high rate and fully employing those it already has. Therefore, we recommend the following perspective in looking at the data in table 8:

Table 9: Higher education job market dynamics – projections for 2025	High % available for work	Low % available for work
Job deficit - more incoming than retiring academics	Saturated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Farsi/Persian speakers) • Arabic speakers • Education degree 	Expanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religion/philosophy degree • (Turkish/Turkic speakers) • (Geography degree)
Candidate deficit - more retiring than incoming academics	Devalued: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language/linguistics degree • (Economics degree) • Speakers of “other Asian languages” 	Deficit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library science degree/librarians • (Business/law/medical degree) • Spanish speakers • Portuguese speakers

Note: Ordered in terms of size of the projected deficit score; categories with an n under 50 are in parentheses.

An saturated market indicates that student interests have failed to be met by an equal number of university positions, resulting in a higher level of availability for work but a still strong student interest. The fact that Arabic and Farsi/Persian speakers are in the “saturated” category may reflect the spike in interest in these languages after 2001, but it also reflects the possibility that academic institutions are not responding to this interest by institutionalizing positions for these scholars, many of whom are in unstable employment and may leave the academic career path.

An expanding market indicates a rise in student interest that is met by the job market. Interestingly, geography and Turkic languages are apparently ripe for expansion in the academy with high levels of student interest and low levels of instability in the job market, but with small numbers in our sample (46 and 37 respectively), we should be cautious in our interpretations. The scholars in the religion/philosophy field seem to represent a wave of younger scholars in Islamic studies who have found stable jobs in the academy.^{xvi} Half of the respondents in this discipline have earned their Ph.D. since 2000 and 75% of them are specialists in the Middle East and North Africa or South and Central Asia. These data provide evidence for the ways that student interests are driven by current events and government priorities. However, for all of these specializations in the “expanding market” category, the response of the academy to student interest is key. Without the creation of stable jobs in these areas, all of these Islamic studies specialists could end up with the Arab and Farsi speakers in the “saturated market” category.

Devalued markets : devalued job markets are those where employers don’t recognize how to meet student demand and exclude specialists because of their perception of over- or under-qualification of candidates. For example, language and linguistics Ph.D.’s will be retiring at a high rate in the near future but there is a trend for universities to hire current Ph.D.’s as adjuncts or to hire non-Ph.D.’s to replace them. Employers see language Ph.D.’s as overqualified when they can get language teaching (especially less-commonly taught languages, which often don’t have a well-established home department to defend tenure-track positions) for cheaper from graduate students or native speakers not trained in language teaching. This causes a surplus of underemployed candidates that may discourage prospective Ph.D. students: 13% of our language/linguistics Ph.D.s are working part-time (vs. 7% average), 16% are on short-term contracts (14% average), and 15% are working two or more jobs (11% average).

On the opposite end of the devalued market are employers who see area studies economists as under-qualified. The low number of Ph.D. students in economics in our sample may be a response to the fact that they will pay a professional penalty for being too interested in area studies. In both cases, as the older cohort retires their replacements have a hard time finding a job because hiring committees do not see their training as an asset. Though we have anecdotal evidence to support the argument about language and linguistics, the argument about economics being devalued is speculative. The number of economists in the sample is small (n=29), so the difference between a high and low number on availability for employment is the difference between two individuals getting a more satisfactory employment situation. Certainly when we compare economics to sociology, another discipline that does not especially value language and area expertise, we do not see a similar picture – it is pretty much in the middle of the pack on all of these measures.

Deficit markets are ones where retirements of high but there isn't a lot of surplus labor in the market, perhaps because more attractive options draw graduates away from academia. We already discussed the potential librarian shortage, and the other professional degree fields fit with a similar hypothesis about graduates pursuing other options. This may also be true for Spanish and Portuguese speakers, since it doesn't seem likely that student demand for or interest in these languages and their respective geographical areas is declining. However, these data on Spanish and Portuguese speakers should be viewed with caution since these respondents found their way to the survey not through their professional association (LASA) but perhaps via the MLA or an NRC. If it is the latter, then the small proportion of students may just be due to students being even less likely to be involved with NRC activity than with professional association activity.

Part II: Area studies, higher education infrastructure, and the stability of funding

We cannot talk about the state of area studies in higher education without examining the role that university administrations play in ensuring that in-depth language instruction and a variety of area-focused courses are available to students. However, most of our respondents felt that in their university, foreign language and area studies training would be impossible without federal funding – only about 10% of our respondents thought their university would fully support area studies programs on their own. Furthermore, we show that this funding is extremely effective at building the kinds of programs that we need in higher education, and providing a good return on the investment. Thus one of our major conclusions about the needs of area studies in higher education involves demonstrating the strengths of the area studies model to both university administrations and to external funders. Area studies needs stable support in order to develop high quality language and multi-disciplinary training programs.

The respondents of this survey represent a dedicated group of specialists who have invested a lot in their own training. The U.S. government has invested in their training as well, and our data support the idea that government funding makes a difference in the depth of foreign language and area studies knowledge, and in the dedication of funding recipients to using that knowledge. Our data show that specialists trained in foreign languages and area studies are extremely committed to using their training and to giving back to their students, to their scholarly communities, and to the broader public. About 95% of those who answered questions about their use and commitment to using their language and area studies skills in their work responded that they are indeed using these skills and value using these skills in their future work, and about 75% of these respondents can be categorized as highly committed specialists.

Table 10: commitment to using foreign language and area studies training		
Q: Are you using your foreign language and area studies knowledge in your current job(s)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A lot	72.9%	2185
Some	21.3%	640
No	5.8%	174

Q: How important is it to you that your next job is related to your foreign language and area studies specialization?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very important	76.0%	2476
Somewhat important	18.9%	615
Not important	5.1%	165

The investment of federal funding in area studies scholars pays off in ways that go beyond benefiting an individual scholar; there are ripple effects on other individuals, as well. The survey data show that on average, respondents who received federal funding at some point in their career have a broader impact than scholars who have not received federal funds to support their training and research. For example, the average number of students taught and public lectures given by a federal funding recipient is 1803 and 83 respectively, compared to the averages of 1181 and 63 among those who did not receive federal funding. Similarly, we see a multiplier effect of federal funding with federal funding recipients being 74% more successful at winning funding from their own institutions, 95% more successful at winning funding from outside institutions, and 13% more likely to find stable, satisfying employment. Finally, the government gets a direct return on its investment with these scholars, who are 46% more likely than their peers to share their expertise with government agencies on a regular basis. Table 10 below provides details about the accomplishments of those who have received different types of government funding in the past versus those who did not receive government funding (in the last column).

Table 11	Department of Education programs		Department of State programs		Department of Defense	None
Public impact	FLAS recipients (n=1335)	Fulbright-Hays recipients (n=704)	Fulbright recipients (n=618)	Title VIII recipients (n=482)	The Language Flagship & others (n=242)	Never received federal funding (n=1240)
Average # students taught	1502	2632	2099	1841	2213	1181
Average # public lectures delivered	74	117	105	83	89	63
Average # books/articles published	17	30	28	28	23	28
Multiplier effects						
Won funding from their own institution	70%	70%	72%	70%	58%	39%
Won funding from an external institution	38%	40%	24%	40%	30%	19%
Non-students in stable, satisfying employment	69%	70%	71%	75%	64%	61%
Return on government investment						
Work in academia but share their expertise with government several times a year or more often	17%	21%	22%	25%	30%	13%
Work in government	3%	2%	4%	6%	12%	4%

Despite the qualities and accomplishment of area studies specialists, university departments, especially in the social sciences, have their own priorities and university administrations increasingly allow student demand to drive curriculum decisions, resulting in conditions that are not favorable for area studies or for developing national resources that produce global cultural competence in the next generation. We asked respondents open-ended questions about best practices in advanced language and in-depth area studies training. More than 20% of respondents mentioned the ways that federal programs have an impact on the quality of education and scholarship, and on the infrastructure of the long “pipeline” that produces specialist with deep knowledge of language and culture. Foremost among the benefits mentioned were language training at advanced levels and in less-commonly-taught languages (LCTLs).

I worry that without these programs, research in South Asian vernacular languages will be limited to researchers who learned languages at home--that such research will be out of reach to anyone not native already in a South Asian language.

- Female anthropology Ph.D. student at a private university

Several respondents reflected the point of view that only the U.S. government can support in-depth training in language and area studies due to the budget constraints state governments impose on public universities (“My university is a public university in a poor state. There are declining funds for higher education. [Without federal funding] we could not maintain anywhere near the programs we have and support for language and area studies”), the narrow definition of what counts as a “globalized” education at many universities, or the equation of students with customers and determining curriculum by measuring student “demand.”

My institution is one that is being run like a business. Where there is money to support students, there are students; where there are students, there are dollar signs in the administration's eyes, and so they encourage and support those classes that draw enrollments. Small courses, which are inevitable given the specialty aspect of area studies training, set off administrative red flags, and the lack of support for graduate students to do area studies is only going to make that worse at institutions like mine.

- Female Ph.D. candidate in art/art history at a public institution,
Central/East Asia specialization

Sustained, reliable federal funding helps universities and donors to overcome provincialism and bias, allowing a more balanced development of scholarship that is not subject to the whims of current events or donors from wealthier countries. For these reasons, federal funding for African studies is especially important.

Compared to area studies on other world regions, African Studies finds few long-term other, outside funders for its missions. We'd attract fewer of the most highly qualified grad students; gradually the work of Outreach and the number of African languages taught would wither.

- Female elementary/secondary school educator with a Ph.D. in political science

Federal funding also helps promote socio-economic diversity among the graduate student population, specifically the recruitment of graduate students who do not come from an affluent background:

Without the funding, we drastically limit the pool of potential talent to a very specific social economic status, directly impacting the scope and diversity of research perspectives available.

- Male area studies M.A. student at a private university, specializing in East Asia

Another 21% of respondents discussed the importance of federal funding for research, such as the Fulbright-Hays dissertation research abroad grant and other programs that are part of a developmental sequence for future scholars, and another 11% mentioned the importance of federal funding for ongoing faculty research and collaborative international projects. Federal funding also currently plays a key role in staff infrastructure, incentivizing tenure track positions and library acquisitions in foreign languages. In sum, the question of the state of area studies is inseparable from the current concerns about continued federal funding for area studies centers and specialists.

However, we must not let university administrations off the hook in playing their part to sustain and deepen area studies expertise. Several respondents, mostly in higher education administration themselves, explained how the receipt of federal funding was received as a signal to their university's administrations that their program was worthy of further institutional support. Conversely, the de-funding of their center's activities was seen by their university's administration as a signal that support for studies of their world region was waning. Thus cuts to federal funding programs, rather than being interpreted by university administrations as a signal that they need to step up their efforts to support language and area studies, are instead functioning to justify further cuts by an already hostile or indifferent university administration. But even if universities or donors picked up the tab, our respondents pointed out that federal

programs can do some things better than private funding. At the top of the list are outreach programs, which are currently mandated by Title VI and promote connections between the university and the broader public, especially K-12 educators. Universities and private donors have little incentive to ensure such a broad reach for the impact of area studies centers.

Finally, to link back to our earlier discussion about the shrinking cohort of social scientists who are also members of area studies associations, federal funding is important to give incentives for area studies experts with an institutional home in their disciplinary departments or professional schools to come together and work collaboratively, and to attract social science graduate students and professional school students to study foreign languages and regions outside of North America. One student responded “I’m a public health student and I am taking Uzbek only because I have a FLAS--the FLAS has made it possible for me to integrate a language into my studies.” Area studies often comes under fire for lacking disciplinary training, while at the same time disciplinary departments, especially social science departments, often take little interest in the language and area knowledge of their faculty members. Thus the role that federal funding plays in strengthening discipline-based area studies experts is a key issue, but one that is often overlooked in the debates about language training. Several respondents noted important features of how Title VI programs, specifically NRC grants, allow universities to build on existing departmental strengths and to bring experts together in research centers.

[Federal] funding is especially essential to scholars and teachers who work in discipline-based programs, often as the only, or as part of a minority cohort of East Asianists. The needs and accomplishments of these sub-sets of the larger department are often under-appreciated by the department as a whole, which makes moral and financial support through area studies centers, and Title VI funding, so crucial.

- Tenured faculty member in arts/art history at a public university, East Asian specialization

Having such a collaborative environment, respondents point out, is key to enriching their own area expertise as well as to training their students, educating the broader public, and advising outside entities and governments on issues related to the part of the world that they study.

Conclusion

Area studies needs institutions of higher education to partner with outside funders in order to ensure the best quality research and education. External funding can help influence disciplinary departmental hiring of area experts, enhance the prestige of an area studies program within the university, and attract the most talented graduate students regardless of their financial situation. Universities need to commit to programs that support high quality language instruction and library resources in foreign languages, and provide incentives for social scientists to pursue advanced language study and to enrich their research with cross-disciplinary collaboration.

Stable, high quality area studies programs require both transportable external funding-and deep institutional commitment, including matching funds from the university, a commitment to tenure-eligible or long-term contract positions for professionally qualified language teachers and librarians, and support for area studies specialists in disciplinary departments. These commitments need to be based on existing faculty strengths, not just on student demand, and should not be subject to trends inspired by current events because the preparation of experts requires a long time horizon. Instead, we should build on the strengths of Title VI's NRC model: external resources should be concentrated at universities that have a concentration of expertise in a particular world region with the aim of building a long-term program. And when certain regions (such as sub-Saharan African studies) are under-represented overall in higher education, external funding should be used as an incentive for universities to nurture what might be a few isolated faculty members and grow an area studies program that includes less-commonly-taught

languages and study abroad programs to cultivate student interest in studying the region. Such a system would not be subject to supply and demand but would instead ensure a consistent cohort of experts and a small cohort of students constantly being trained in that region's languages and culture. The time horizon for a program should be in the range of 6-10 years, an academic generation. Students should not have to enter a program only to see it close before they can finish their Ph.D. These efforts should be concentrated on less commonly taught languages and on building up a diverse range of national centers for any given world region, so that programs on the same world region can cultivate a healthy competition for excellence.

Appendix A: Methods

The survey was created in Survey Monkey and the invitation to participate was sent out to the mailing lists of the NCASA member associations, with the exception of the Latin American Studies Association. The Modern Languages Association also participated in sending out the survey so we could increase the number of foreign language teachers in our sample, and some NRCs also circulated the invitation to their mailing lists. It is difficult to determine exactly who got the invitation and what the response rate was because other scholarly associations also circulated the invitation to their members and the announcement was posted to social media websites such as Facebook.

The survey was open from January 16 to February 14, 2014 and 4,162 people responded to the survey, but we cannot calculate a precise response rate. Based on membership data, it appears that we got between a 13% and 31% response rate. Respondents were screened out if they did not have a foreign language or area studies background and if they were not currently working in the U.S. and did not plan to do so in the future. Respondents who skipped most of the questions were not included in the analysis (n=153). These dropped respondents were more likely to be students and people who indicated that they were members of the MLA, so perhaps they decided the survey was not relevant to them. In the end, there was a total of 3,756 respondents who completed at least part of the survey.

Table 12: Professional association membership (possible to choose more than one)	Response Percent	Response Count	Response as % of membership*
African Studies Association	8.5%	321	
Association for Asian Studies	28.2%	1060	13%
Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies	25.5%	957	31%
Latin American Studies Association (did not participate in sending out the survey)	4.0%	149	
Middle East Studies Association	14.6%	550	20%

Modern Languages Association	8.5%	321
I do not belong to a professional association	11.5%	432
Other (please list your primary affiliations)	34.9%	1310

*Real response rates are higher than these numbers indicate due to the international composition of members in these associations. The eligibility questions on the survey screened out 340 potential respondents who were living and working outside the U.S. and many others likely did not even respond to the request because they knew they were ineligible.

How the projected deficit score was calculated^{xvii}

The projected deficit score is an attempt to take into account the facts that our data are not representative, changes in the academic job market are unpredictable, and yet we want to be able to say something about what we should pay attention to in our analysis. It is fairly simple model, assuming that the number of jobs available in 2025 will equal the number of retirements plus an additional 15 percent of the number of respondents in that category who have an academic job (based on the Department of Labor’s projection of 15% increase in new jobs by 2020.)

The calculation of “incoming academics” for those jobs was only slightly more sophisticated, taking into account that a lower proportion of students than faculty answered the survey and that nearly none of the graduates of 2025 are yet in the sample. The model takes the average of a low estimate (based on the number of students graduating per year in our 2016-2024 cohort – of which there were few who answered the survey) and a high estimate (based on the number of students graduating per year in our 2014-2015 cohort) of job candidates. These are not the raw numbers of students in our sample, but rather the numbers of those students who said they plan to go into academia. To that average we added a small proportion of those “available for work” now, assuming that the un/under-employment rate will stay relatively constant until 2025 and that a proportion of those who cannot find satisfactory work will cycle out of the profession about every four years.

Since the absolute number of jobs based on these data doesn’t mean anything in reality, there were two additional operations that converted this number into something that could be

reliably analyzed. First, the difference between the “outgoing” and the “incoming/available” academics was then calculated as a percent of the total n for that category in our survey in order to get a sense of the relative size of that number. Second, so as not to exaggerate small differences in what is already a shaky projection, the percentage was converted to three categories (deficit in jobs, deficit in candidates, and no prediction) so that the categories on the extremes of the spectrum (greater than half a standard deviation above or below the mean of all the categories) could be compared to each other.

ⁱ This research was conducted with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Henry Luce Foundation, and several members of the National Council of Area Studies Associations (NCASA). Lynda Park, Miriam Kazanjian and Todd Horowitz provided valuable feedback along the way, but the author is solely responsible for the contents of this text.

ⁱⁱ John W. Curtis and Saranna Thornton, “Here’s the News: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2012-13,” *Academe*, April 2013, <http://www.aaup.org/our-work/research/annual-report-economic-status-profession>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Suzanne B. Clery, “Faculty Salaries: 2011–2012,” *NEA Almanac of Higher Education*, 2013, 10, http://forums.thescea.org/assets/docs/2013_Almanac_Clery.pdf.

^{iv} House Committee on Education and the Workforce and Democratic Staff, *The Just-in-Time Professor: A Staff Report Summarizing eForum Responses on the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education*, January 2014.

^v National Council of Area Studies Associations, “Prospects for Faculty in Area Studies,” 1991.

^{vi} William G. Bowen and Julie A. Sosa, *Prospects for Faculty in the Arts and Sciences: a Study of Factors Affecting Demand and Supply 1987 to 2012.*, accessed March 24, 2014, <http://www.popline.org/node/365081>.

^{vii} Clery, “Faculty Salaries,” 25.

^{viii} Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2014-15 Edition, Postsecondary Teachers, <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/postsecondary-teachers.htm> (visited March 27, 2014).

^{ix} House Committee on Education and the Workforce and Democratic Staff, *The Just-in-Time Professor: A Staff Report Summarizing eForum Responses on the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education*.

^x National Science Foundation, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2014*, February 2014, <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind14/index.cfm/chapter-3/c3s3.htm>; Curtis and Thornton, “Here’s the News: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2012-13.”

^{xi} House Committee on Education and the Workforce and Democratic Staff, *The Just-in-Time Professor: A Staff Report Summarizing eForum Responses on the Working Conditions of Contingent Faculty in Higher Education*.

^{xii} Clery, "Faculty Salaries," 25.

^{xiii} We ran a logit regression analysis on the dependent stability variable and in all the models, the only independent variables that were significant at or below the .05 level of significance were student status and focusing on South/Central America/Caribbean studies (which had a negative effect on stability), and time since degree, being employed in academia, and having a doctorate (which had a positive effect on stability).

^{xiv} Coalition on the Academic Workforce, *A Portrait of Part-Time Faculty Members A Summary of Findings on Part-Time Faculty Respondents to the Coalition on the Academic Workforce Survey of Contingent Faculty Members and Instructors*, June 2012, http://www.academicworkforce.org/CAW_portrait_2012.pdf.

^{xv} Elizabeth B. Welle, *Supply and Demand for PhDs in Modern Languages in Higher Education: Present Circumstances and Future Directions* (Global Challenges & US Higher Education, Duke University, 2003), <http://ducis.jhfc.duke.edu/archives/globalchallenges/pdf/welles.pdf>.

^{xvi} This result was foreseen in the 2003 report on MESA membership. See Anne H. Betteridge, *A Case Study in Higher Education International and Foreign Area Needs: Changes in the Middle East Studies Association Membership from 1990 to 2002* (Global Challenges & US Higher Education, Duke University, 2003),

<http://ducis.jhfc.duke.edu/archives/globalchallenges/pdf/kennedy-paper.pdf>.

^{xvii} For details of the how these numbers were calculated, please contact the author:

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