



# Higher Education Employment Report

Fourth Quarter, 2009 / Published February 2010

## Executive Summary

The number of jobs in higher education grew incrementally in December 2009 (21,400 or 1.2 percent) in relation to December 2008, consistent with long-term trends in the industry. Despite the downturn of the current economic cycle, the trend in the number of jobs in higher education continues to be relatively stable.

As of the fourth quarter of 2009, analyses of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on higher education employment as well as job posting trends on HigherEdJobs.com show:

- Despite the economic recession, the total number of jobs in higher education continues to follow regular historical patterns and therefore can be characterized as stable. In Q4 2009, they rose 1.3 percent from Q4 2008.
- Although the number of advertised job openings in higher education has decreased significantly since the end of 2008, Q4 2009 showed signs of possible growth.
- The percentage of faculty job postings increased significantly during the first half of 2009 compared to previous years. During the fourth quarter, the percentage remained flat throughout the quarter instead of following historical patterns of decreasing as the quarter progressed.
- Although community college jobs and job postings have trended upward lately, future growth may be more moderate.
- The ratio of part-time postings in higher education continued to rise in Q4 2009. This ratio declined during the economic expansion until 2006, but then started to increase in 2007 as the recession took hold.

### SPECIAL FOCUS ON STUDENT AFFAIRS JOBS

Job openings for student affairs are seasonal to some extent, peaking in May/June. Although job postings for these positions dropped off in early and mid-2009, they appear to be poised for growth in 2010.

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## About HigherEdJobs.com

HigherEdJobs.com is the leading source for jobs and career information in academia. During 2009, more than 2,600 colleges and universities posted over 55,000 faculty, administrative and executive job postings to the company's web site. HigherEdJobs.com is visited over two million times a month by 700,000 unique visitors.

Founded in 1996, HigherEdJobs.com's mission is to help higher education candidates and employers connect with one another to find their dream job, or employee, as quickly as possible with the least amount of effort.

HigherEdJobs.com is published by Internet Employment Linkage, Inc. (IEL). IEL is headquartered in State College, PA, and has an accounting and operations office in Oak Park, IL.

## About this Quarterly Report

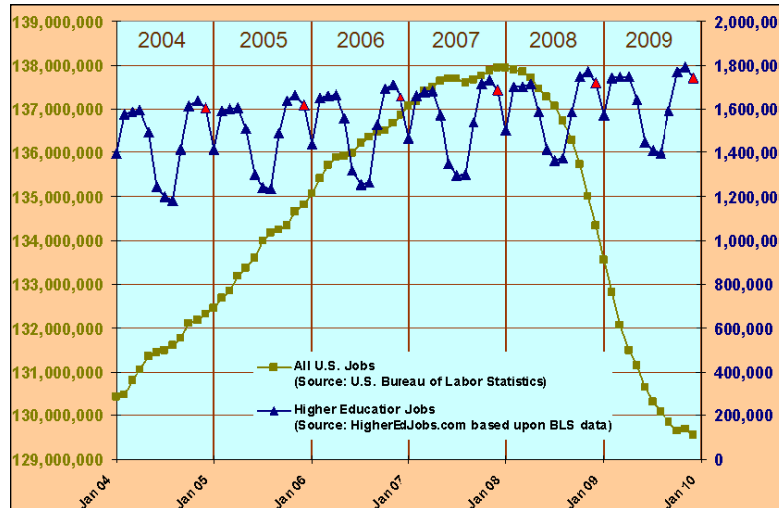
The HigherEdJobs.com Higher Education Employment Report, which is published quarterly, provides summary information about employment within the higher education community. The goal of the report is to help academic leaders and policy makers better appreciate real-time trends we are experiencing with employment. Those seeking jobs will appreciate these same data.

As background to some of the statistics we are reporting here, we define Higher Education Employment to include all types of employment at four-year colleges and universities, as well as two-year community colleges and technical schools.

HigherEdJobs.com has over 1,000 colleges and universities subscribed to its unlimited posting plan, a relevant point for this report since these schools have no financial deterrent to posting their jobs.

This Higher Education Employment Report was produced by HigherEdJobs.com with critical analysis and expertise provided by Bruce Steinberg ([www.brucesteinberg.net](http://www.brucesteinberg.net)), an independent employment researcher. Steinberg evaluated information from our data files at HigherEdJobs.com as well as data published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor.

**Finding:** Despite the economic recession, the total number of jobs in higher education continues to follow regular historical patterns and therefore can be characterized as stable. In Q4 2009, they rose 1.3 percent from Q4 2008.



Following historical patterns, the number of jobs in higher education rose in the fourth quarter of 2009, albeit at a slightly lower rate than in the recent past.

The number of higher education jobs in December 2009 grew 21,400, or 1.2 percent, from December 2008; and Q4 2009 was up 1.3 percent from the same period a year previous. While still increasing, growth in higher education jobs may be abating, suggesting the recession may have affected academe at least on a short-term basis. Since 2005, fourth quarter growth has averaged 1.8 percent.

On an annual basis, growth in higher education jobs during 2009 was relatively consistent with recent years. The average number of jobs in higher education was up 2.2 percent in 2009, up 2.7 percent in 2008, up 1.5 percent in 2007, up 2.7 percent in 2006, and up 2.1 percent in 2005.

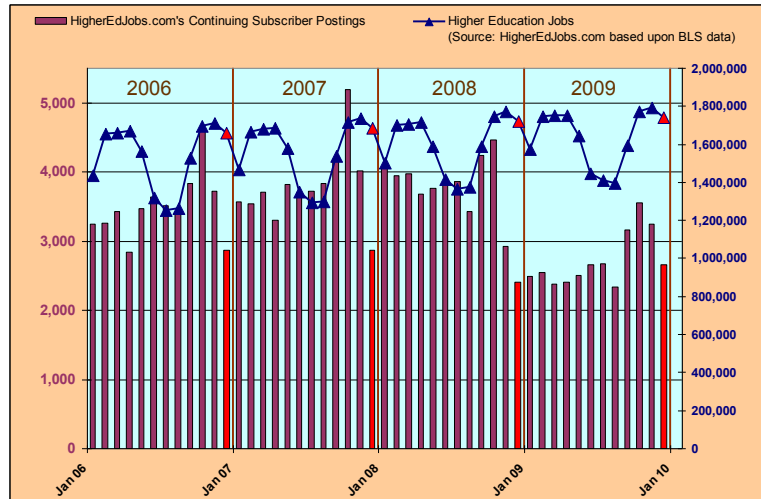
The blue line in the chart signifies all jobs in higher education (December data is denoted by a red marker to discern year-over-year trends), according to an analysis by HigherEdJobs.com of BLS data (see note at the end of this section). This analysis shows a clear decrease in the number of jobs in higher education during the summer months, a pattern consistent with nine-month employment contracts for many academic employees, but

dramatically rising in the last month of Q3 (September) as institutions start new academic years, and into the first two months of Q4 (October and November) before retreating slightly in the last month of the year (December). The green line signifies all U.S. jobs across the entire economy; overall employment has been rescaled to illustrate the recent decline starting in January 2008.

From December 2008 to December 2009, the total number of jobs in the U.S. economy declined 3.6 percent while the number of higher education jobs was up 1.2 percent (as previously noted). On a quarterly basis, overall U.S. jobs declined 4.0 percent in Q4 2009 from Q4 2008 compared to a gain of 1.3 percent for higher education jobs.

*Note: The federal government does not define "higher education" per se. The term as used in this report is the combination of two NAICS (North American Industry Classification System, the program that tracks jobs by sector) sectors: Junior Colleges (NAICS 611200), and Colleges and Universities (NAICS 611300). The data were collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor.*

**Finding:** Although the number of advertised job openings in higher education has decreased significantly since the end of 2008, Q4 2009 showed signs of possible growth.



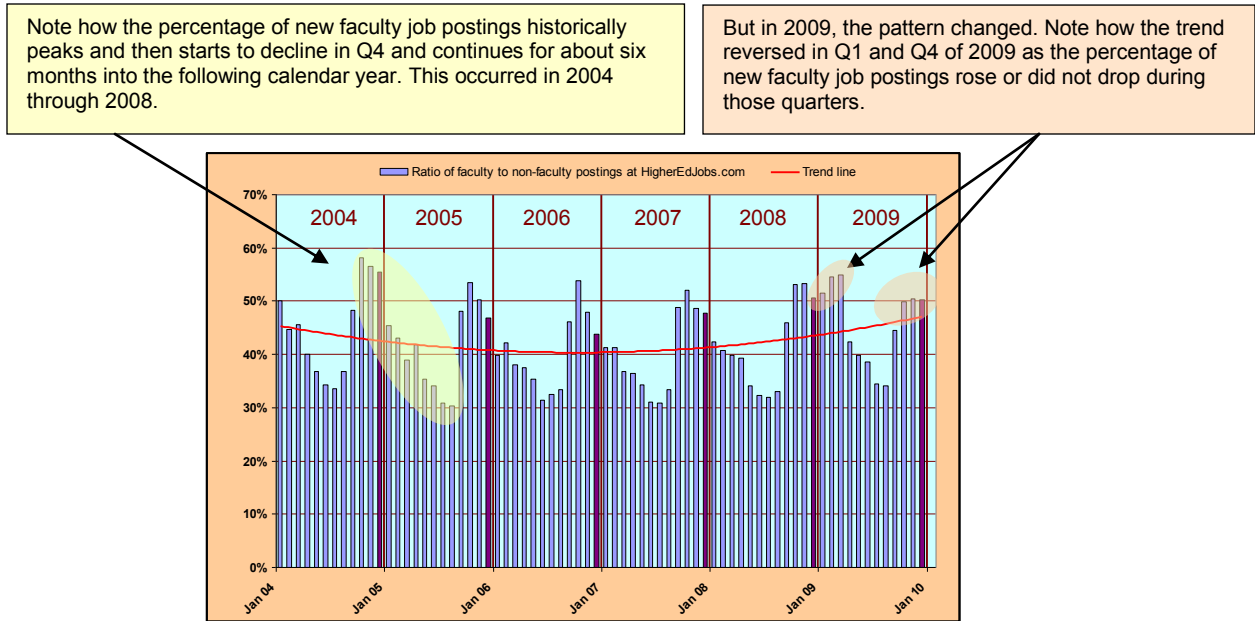
Hiring for open positions in higher education, which has been down significantly since late 2008, may have begun to recover at the end of 2009.

The purple bars in the chart above signify monthly job openings posted to HigherEdJobs.com by U.S. colleges and universities that have continuously subscribed to the company's unlimited posting plan since January 1, 2006 (roughly equating to the retail sector's reporting of annual changes of "same-store sales"). This group consists of about 700 colleges and universities. Since these schools pay a flat annual fee for unlimited recruitment advertising on HigherEdJobs.com, they have no financial deterrent to discourage them from posting their job openings. As a result, changes in their total postings can be seen as a proxy for hiring trends in higher education.

During Q4 2009, advertised job openings from "continuous subscribers" to HigherEdJobs.com were down 3.6 percent from the prior year. This is a substantial improvement compared to Q3 2009 when advertised postings were down 29 percent. Furthermore, December 2009 postings were up 10.4 percent from the year before and November was up 10.9 percent (October 2009 postings were down 20.5 percent). These findings suggest academe may be preparing to increase staffing levels as the recession concludes.

While the number of advertised job openings in higher education has decreased significantly since late 2008, the actual number of jobs in the industry has remained relatively stable. This suggests the collective efforts of colleges and universities to reduce their payrolls (hiring freezes, early retirement, targeted layoffs) have had minimal effect at a macro level.

**Finding:** The percentage of faculty job postings increased significantly during the first half of 2009 compared to previous years. During the fourth quarter, the percentage remained flat throughout the quarter instead of following historical patterns of decreasing as the quarter progressed.



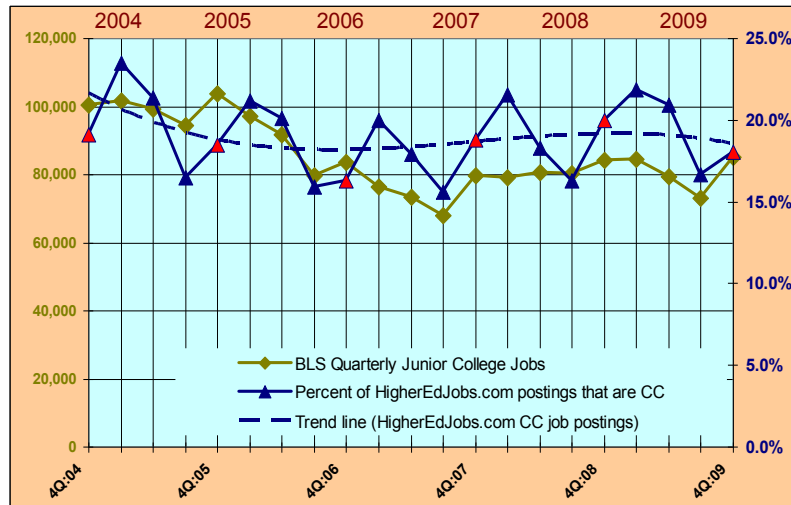
The blue bars in the chart above show the monthly ratio of faculty to non-faculty job openings posted to HigherEdJobs.com. (The purple bars are presented to signify December data for ease of year-over-year comparisons.) The red line signifies the trend line for all the data. Typically, the ratio of faculty to non-faculty jobs peaks early in the fourth quarter (early in the academic year) as departments firm their hiring plans for the year, and then decreases later that same academic year.

But during 2009, the trend changed as faculty job postings increased during the first quarter. And, during Q4 2009, the ratio of faculty postings remained flat throughout the quarter instead of following historical trends of decreasing as the quarter progressed.

One possible explanation is that as institutions cope with shrinking budgets, they are directing their valuable budget dollars to maintain academic excellence in the face of school-wide staffing cutbacks by concentrating on recruiting academic faculty relative to non-academic faculty.

From 2004 to 2008, the ratio of faculty job postings in the beginning of the academic year fell from a peak between just less than 50 and 60 percent to just over 30 percent during the summer. But in 2009, the ratio of faculty job postings rose in Q1 and only dropped to a trough in the mid-30 percent range. And the ratio slightly rose throughout calendar Q4 2009, whereas for the past several years it declined considerably during that time period.

**Finding:** Although community college jobs and job postings have trended upward lately, future growth may be more moderate.



The posting data from HigherEdJobs.com for community college jobs, which tracked with the downward trend in BLS data reported in junior college jobs from 2005 to 2006 as well as tracked the upward and stable trend in 2008 and most of 2009, are now showing more moderate growth.

Although the latest data from BLS indicates community college employment has increased in Q4 2009 in keeping with historical Q4 patterns, that growth may be due to Q3 2009 declining more than usual and therefore organizations needing to make up for a slight prior hiring deficit.

However, Q4 2009 community college job postings as a percentage of all job postings declined slightly to 18.0 percent from 20.0 percent in Q4 2008, which was a peak. This movement does not suggest that community college jobs are declining in number, but rather are only moderating as a percentage of all job postings, which also includes four-year institutions.

The actual number of community college job postings in Q4 2009 was down 8.6 percent compared to the year before. This contrasts with previous trends. From 2006 to 2008, Q4 postings averaged a 7.3 percent increase from the year before.

Decreases in both the percentage and actual number of community college job postings suggest community college hiring may be trending downward. However, community college employment has increased slightly since last year. Potentially, lower community college job postings today may lead to lower community college employment in future quarters.

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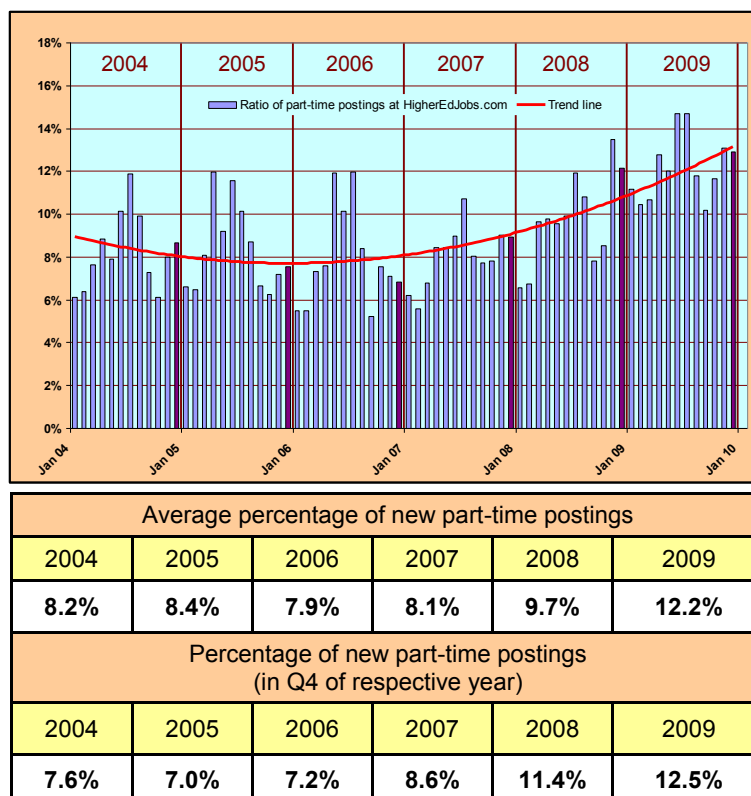
*Note: The green line in the chart above indicates jobs at Junior Colleges as categorized by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most two-year institutions have changed their name to include their designation as a Community College. The red markers indicate fourth quarter data and are presented for ease of year-over-year comparisons. The dashed blue line signifies the trend line for Community College postings as a percentage of all job postings at HigherEdJobs.com.*

**S**tarting in 2008, which perhaps is not coincidental with the start of the recession, the annual percentage of new part-time postings on HigherEdJobs.com increased dramatically to 9.7 percent and accelerated further to 12.2 percent in 2009.

**Finding:** The ratio of part-time postings in higher education continued to rise in Q4 2009. This ratio declined during the economic expansion until 2006, but then started to increase in 2007 as the recession took hold.

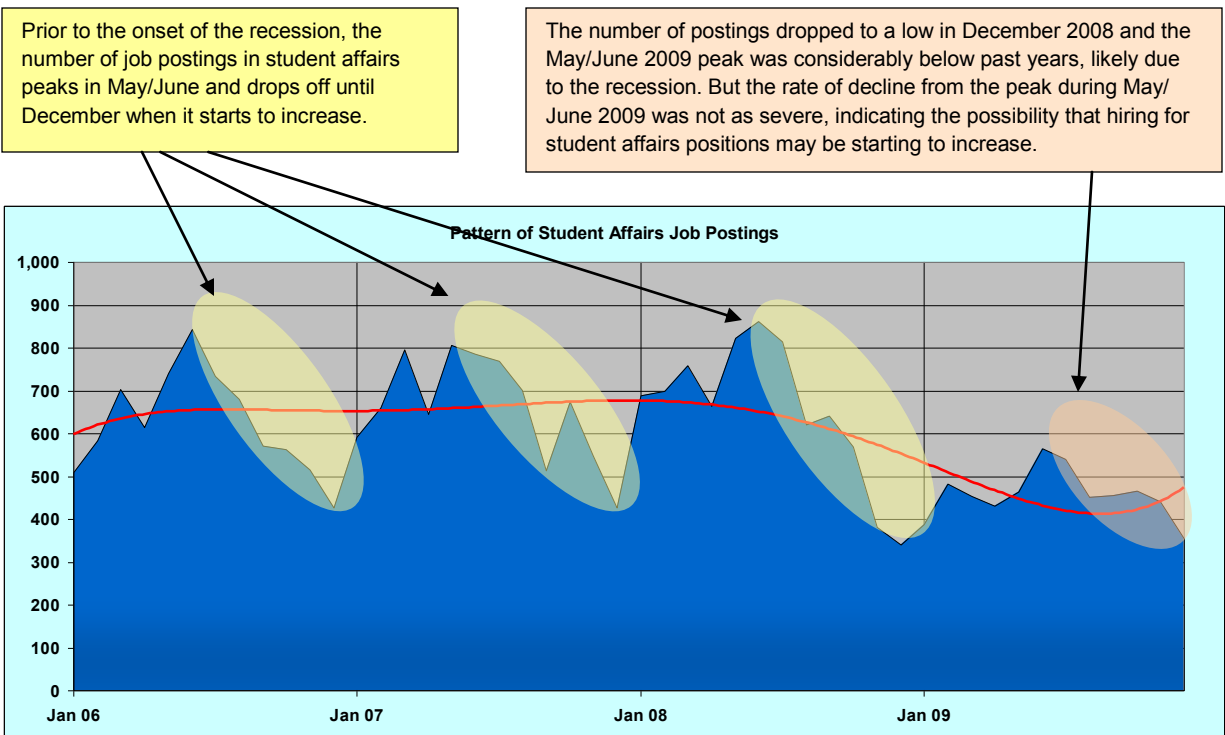
Given the seasonal nature of employment trends in academe, it is important to also examine year-over-year change in quarterly data. Data for Q4 2009 confirms the suggestion that part-time positions are on the rise; postings for part-time positions rose 20.9 percent in Q4 2009 from a year previous. However, after rising considerably in Q4 2008, growth in Q4 2009 appears to have moderated, possibly indicating that the trend is abating and/or the level of part-time positions in academe is reaching a saturation level.

From 2004 to 2007, HigherEdJobs.com observed that approximately eight percent of its posted jobs were for part-time positions. This does not necessarily reflect the overall percentage of full- and part-time positions within academe; however, changes in this percentage may infer changes in the overall balance of employment. From the data presented here, it appears higher education institutions today may be relying more on part-time employees as a response to financial pressures from the recession.



## \*\*\*SPECIAL FOCUS ON STUDENT AFFAIRS JOBS\*\*\*

Job openings for student affairs are seasonal to some extent, peaking in May/June. Although job postings for these positions dropped off in early and mid-2009, they appear to be poised for growth in 2010.



An analysis of posting data for student affairs positions on HigherEdJobs.com over the past few years reveals trends that may be helpful to higher education administrators as a means to compare their own organization's hiring patterns to those taking place within academe.

Note that data presented are monthly job postings by U.S. colleges and universities that have continuously subscribed to HigherEdJobs.com's unlimited posting plan since January 1, 2006 (roughly equating to the retail sector's reporting of annual changes of "same-store sales" and therefore eliminating growth trends that may have been influenced by the company's growth and/or marketing efforts). This group consists of about 700 colleges and universities. Since these schools pay an annual flat fee for unlimited recruitment advertising on HigherEdJobs.com,

they have no financial deterrent to discourage them from posting their job openings. As a result, changes in their total postings can be seen as proxy for overall hiring trends in higher education.

As the data show, the number of postings for student affairs jobs peaks in May/June at the end of the academic year likely as administrators prepare for the next year. Then, postings steadily decline in number until the trough in December of the next academic year as hiring plans are finalized.

But, the trend changed as the recession impacted higher education starting in 2009 when the May/June peak was considerably lower than past years, perhaps indicating that new job formation for these positions had slowed.

(cont.)

## \*\*\**(cont.)* SPECIAL FOCUS ON STUDENT AFFAIRS JOBS\*\*\*

The December 2009 trough, despite being followed by a much lower peak at the end of the previous academic year, was consistent with historical troughs. This may indicate that the number of jobs for student affairs positions will not decline further. It may also indicate that the next peak will be higher.

Although the sheer number of job postings for student affairs may vary over time due to seasonal and economic factors, the categories in which these jobs are posted has remained quite consistent over time.

The ratio of different types of student affairs job postings changes little over the course of the year. The data for June 2006, when the economy was growing, and June 2009, when the total number of student affairs job postings was greatly diminished due to the recession, look remarkably similar. Likewise, the data for December 2006 and 2009 are similar as well.

But there are subtle changes between the June and December data. Mainly, the percentage of postings by category, which can be interpreted as increased recruiting efforts, appears to rise in

Student Affairs and Services Job Postings Category	June 2006	June 2009	December 2006	December 2009
<i>percentage of all student affairs and services job postings</i>				
<b>Academic Advising</b>	10.9	13.1	14.8	15.8
Admissions and Enrollment	21.0	19.9	16.7	17.5
Career Counseling and Placement	6.2	8.5	5.4	6.5
Disability Services	3.7	2.5	4.9	3.1
<b>Financial Aid</b>	6.0	6.2	9.9	11.6
Food Services	1.9	4.3	2.6	3.1
International Programs	2.7	2.7	4.0	2.8
Multicultural Affairs & Affirmative Action	3.9	2.1	2.3	2.5
Registrars	4.0	4.3	4.7	7.6
Residence Life and Housing	9.7	10.6	8.5	8.2
Student Affairs and Services	29.3	25.0	25.4	20.3
Volunteer Programs	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.8

The table above shows the percentage of job postings for all student affairs related job categories on HigherEdJobs.com. (Note, approximately 25 percent of postings are listed in more than one category).

Although the trend for the total number of student affairs job postings is somewhat seasonal as seen in the chart on the previous page, there are some variations.

December for Academic Advising (11 and 13 percent in June of 2006 & 2009 respectively, compared to 15 and 16 percent in December of 2006 and 2009) as well as Financial Aid (6 percent in June of 2006 and 2009 compared to 10 and 12 percent in December of 2006 and 2009).

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*This Special Focus on Student Affairs Jobs was prepared for The Placement Exchange 2010, a partnership between HigherEdJobs.com, NASPA, ACUHO-I, NACA, NODA, ASCA, and AFA. ([www.theplacementexchange.org](http://www.theplacementexchange.org))*

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