Higher Education Employment Report

First Quarter 2016 / Published May 2016

Executive Summary

The number of jobs in higher education increased during Q1 2016 by 0.68 percent, or by about 12,500 jobs, the largest first quarter increase in jobs for the sector in three years. Despite the recent growth in higher education jobs, the U.S. economy added jobs at an even faster rate. As a result, the market share of higher education jobs compared to all U.S. jobs continued to decline in Q1 2016.

Meanwhile, the number of advertisements for job postings in academia continued to increase, albeit at a slightly diminished rate in Q1 2016 compared to Q1 2015. Although postings for full-time higher education jobs in Q1 2016 outpaced increases from a year ago, postings for part-time positions continued to increase faster than postings for full-time positions. Furthermore, job postings for full-time faculty grew at a much faster pace in Q1 2016, as the number of job postings for part-time faculty was unchanged in Q1 2016, in stark contrast to recent trends.

As of the first quarter of 2016, analyses of U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on higher education employment as well as job posting trends with HigherEdJobs found:

- The number of jobs in higher education expanded in Q1 2016 at the highest growth rate for the first quarter in three years.
- While the number of jobs in higher education expanded at a slightly higher rate in Q1 2016, the number of higher education job postings increased at a slightly slower pace.
- The ratio of faculty to administrative and executive postings continued to decline in Q1 2016 and at a greater rate than the year before. However, despite the diminishing ratio of faculty job postings, the actual number of faculty job postings continued to increase.
- Job postings for part-time positions continued to increase in Q1 2016 but at a declining rate of growth. Meanwhile, job postings for full-time positions not only increased, but accelerated.
- Job postings for full-time faculty grew at a faster rate in Q1 2016 compared to the previous year while postings for part-time faculty were static.
- The number of jobs at community colleges continued to decline during Q1 2016. However, the number of advertised job openings at community colleges continued to increase during the same time period, although at a much slower rate than in previous years.
- The Northeast region experienced the largest percentage increase in higher education job postings in Q1 2016, driven by strong growth in both its divisions.

John Ikenberry, Ph.D., President and Co-Founder
HigherEdJobs
328 Innovation Boulevard, Suite 235
State College, PA 16803
media@higheredjobs.com
814-861-3080 (ext. 202)
About HigherEdJobs®

HigherEdJobs is the leading source for jobs and career information in academia. The company’s web site, www.higheredjobs.com, receives more than 1.2 million unique visitors a month. During 2015, more than 5,400 colleges and universities posted 186,000 faculty, administrative, and executive job postings to HigherEdJobs.

Founded in 1996, HigherEdJobs’ 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 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, Ill.

About this Report

The HigherEdJobs Higher Education Employment Report, published quarterly, provides summary information about employment within the higher education community. The goal of the report is to help academic leaders and policymakers better appreciate the trends we are experiencing with employment in real time. Those seeking jobs should also 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.

Findings on jobs in higher education and the U.S. economy are based on data from the U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Except where indicated otherwise, findings on advertised job postings in higher education are based on posting data from U.S. colleges and universities that have been continually subscribed to the HigherEdJobs unlimited posting plan since January 2012, a cohort of roughly 880 institutions. Each of the institutions included in this report has paid a flat fee for unlimited advertising and, consequently, has no financial deterrent to discourage it from posting any job opening on HigherEdJobs.

The Higher Education Employment Report is produced by HigherEdJobs with critical analysis and expertise provided by Bruce Steinberg (www.SteinbergEmploymentResearch.com), an independent employment researcher.

**SPECIAL TECHNICAL NOTICE:** Starting with the Q1 2016 employment report and moving forward, institutions that have recently adopted HigherEdJobs’ Automated Job Posting Service and subsequently experienced a spike in postings will be removed from the analysis since changes in postings from these institutions are likely due to changes in their posting processes, not a change in job posting trends.
Finding: The number of jobs in higher education expanded in Q1 2016 at the highest growth rate for the first quarter in three years.

Higher education employment increased 0.68 percent, or about 12,500 jobs, in Q1 2016. This is the largest first quarter growth since Q1 2013 when the number of higher education jobs grew 0.84 percent, or about 15,200 jobs.

Consistent with recent reports, the number of jobs in higher education increased despite a decrease in jobs at community colleges. An analysis of BLS data shows the community college sector lost 4,900 jobs, or 7.2 percent of its workforce, in Q1 2016. However, the number of jobs at four-year colleges increased 1.0 percent, or 17,400 jobs. (Community college employment trends discussed in further detail on page 8.)

The market share, or percentage of higher education jobs to non-farm jobs continues to decline. It is interesting to note that from Q1 2013 to the current Q1 2016, higher education jobs declined in terms of market share while their year-over-year growth on a quarterly basis was less than for non-farm jobs. The converse trend occurred from at least Q1 2010 to Q1 2012 when higher education market share increased as higher education jobs quarterly growth outpaced that of non-farm jobs.

The federal government does not measure “higher education employment or jobs” per se. The term as used in this report is the combination of two NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) sectors: Junior Colleges (NAICS 611200), and Colleges and Universities (NAICS 611300). The data are reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor.
**Finding:** While the number of jobs in higher education expanded at a slightly higher rate in Q1 2016, the number of higher education job postings increased at a slightly slower pace.

The number of advertised job openings in academia grew 13.7 percent from Q1 2015 to Q1 2016, down slightly from 14.1 percent growth from Q1 2014 to Q1 2015.

Meanwhile, the number of jobs in higher education grew at a similar but incrementally higher rate in Q1 2016 than in Q1 2015. In Q1 2016, the number of higher education jobs grew 0.68 percent, or about 12,500 jobs compared to a growth of 0.65 percent, or about 11,900 jobs, in Q1 2015.

While higher education as an industry increased its workforce in Q1 2016, the moderate growth rate in job postings suggests the number of jobs in higher education may experience moderate growth as well in the near future.

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**Year-Over-Year Change (in Percent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HigherEdJobs Postings Annual</th>
<th>HigherEdJobs Postings Q1</th>
<th>Total Higher Education Jobs Annual</th>
<th>Total Higher Education Jobs Q1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: The blue bars (March data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparisons) in the chart above signify monthly job openings posted to HigherEdJobs by U.S. colleges and universities that have continuously subscribed to the company’s unlimited posting plan since Jan. 1, 2012 (roughly equating to the retail sector’s reporting of annual changes of “same-store sales”), a cohort of roughly 880 institutions.
**Finding:** The ratio of faculty to administrative and executive postings continued to decline in Q1 2016 and at a greater rate than the year before. However, despite the diminishing ratio of faculty job postings, the actual number of faculty job postings continued to increase.

The ratio of faculty job postings to administrative and executive job postings declined in Q1 2016, and at a greater rate than in Q1 2015.

From Q1 2015 to Q1 2016, the ratio of postings for faculty versus administrative or executive positions decreased 1.5 percentage points, from 27.8 percent to 26.3 percent. This is a greater change than observed in prior periods. From Q1 2014 to Q1 2015, this ratio declined 1.0 percent; from Q1 2013 to Q1 2014, the ratio declined 1.2 percent; and from Q1 2012 to Q1 2013, it decreased 2.0 percent.

While the ratio of job postings for faculty decreased in Q1 2016, the actual number of faculty job postings increased 7.2 percent from the year before. This follows two years of increasing faculty job postings. Faculty job postings increased 10.1 percent from Q1 2014 to Q1 2015 and 6.4 percent from Q1 2013 to Q1 2014.

Similar growth trends occurred for administrative and executive positions, increasing 16.1 percent from Q1 2015 to Q1 2016, slightly faster growth than the 15.7 percent growth observed from Q1 2014 to Q1 2015.

Although the declining ratio of faculty to non-faculty positions could indicate that institutions are placing more emphasis on non-faculty hiring, it could also indicate that there is simply less employee turnover among faculty professionals. In addition, the increase in the proportion of advertisements for non-faculty could indicate these professionals are looking for and securing positions outside of academia, thereby creating more non-faculty job openings and necessitating the need for educational institutions to advertise job postings for those positions.

*Note: No distinction is made between tenure track and non-tenure track faculty positions. Administrative and executive positions cover a wide variety of jobs including academic VPs, provosts, deans, IT managers, network administrators, fundraisers, administrative assistants, counselors, comptrollers, etc.*
**Finding:** Job postings for part-time positions continued to increase in Q1 2016 but at a declining rate of growth. Meanwhile, job postings for full-time positions not only increased, but accelerated.

![Average Percentage of Part-Time Postings](image)

Although job postings for full-time and part-time positions were both up during Q1 2016, the rate of growth for part-time postings was considerably less than in Q1 2015 while the growth rate for full-time job postings was greater in Q1 2016 than the year before. The slower growth rate for part-time job postings in Q1 2016 follows a period of steady increases since at least Q1 2014. Conversely, the growth rate in postings for full-time positions has increased consistently since at least Q1 2014.

In Q1 2016, the number of job postings for part-time positions increased 8.4 percent compared to a 26.5 percent increase in Q1 2015, a 17.8 percent increase in Q1 2014, and a 4.8 percent increase in Q1 2013. However, the ratio of all job postings for part-time job postings declined slightly. During Q1 2016, 16.0 percent of higher education job postings were for part-time positions, down from 16.9 percent in Q1 2015.

Job postings for full-time positions increased 14.5 percent in Q1 2016, greater than the 12.2 percent increase of Q1 2015, the 9.6 percent increase in Q1 2014, and the 4.8 percent increase in Q1 2013.

As postulated in this report previously, the diminishing growth rate of part-time job postings may indicate that academic administrators feel more confident to create more full-time positions.

![Change in Number of Part-Time Job Postings](image)

![Change in Number of Full-Time Job Postings](image)

*Note: The identical rates of growth for the number of part-time and full-time job postings in Q1 2013 is simply a mathematical coincidence.*
**Finding**: Job postings for full-time faculty grew at a faster rate in Q1 2016 compared to the previous year while postings for part-time faculty were static.

Job postings for full-time faculty positions increased 10.0 percent in Q1 2016, considerably greater than the 2.8 percent increase in Q1 2015, but much less than the 20.6 percent growth rate observed in Q1 2014 or the 27.5 percent increase in Q1 2013. However, there was no change in the number of job postings for part-time faculty positions from Q1 2015 to Q1 2016. This is in stark contrast to the 35.0 percent increase in Q1 2015 as well as the 15.7 percent increase of Q1 2014.

Meanwhile, postings for full-time administrative positions increased 16.5 percent in Q1 2016, the same increase as the previous year in Q1 2015. And, postings for part-time administrative positions were only incrementally different in Q1 2016 at 18.1 percent growth compared to an increase of 18.3 percent in Q1 2015. The small movement in growth rates for both full-time and part-time administrative positions may indicate that institutions are comfortable with their staffing mix and approach to filling both types of administrative positions. In comparison, the large movement in growth rates for full-time faculty positions (much higher in Q1 2016 than the previous year) and part-time faculty (much lower in Q1 2016) could indicate institutions are continuing to experiment with finding an optimal ratio of part-time to full-time faculty positions.
**Finding:** The number of jobs at community colleges continued to decline during Q1 2016. However, the number of advertised job openings at community colleges continued to increase during the same time period, though at a much slower rate than in previous years.

The number of jobs at community colleges decreased 7.2 percent in Q1 2016, representing a loss of 4,900 jobs compared to the same period the year before. This is the fifth consecutive year, at least, of declining first quarter community college jobs.

This marks the 19th consecutive quarter of declining community college jobs. One possible explanation for such an extended period of declines, which perhaps is not coincidental with consistent overall job growth and a declining unemployment rate, is that some traditional community college students have been able to secure jobs with their current skill sets and those jobs have not required additional training or knowledge. Thus, an improving economy may be leading to decreased enrollment at community colleges and, consequently, fewer jobs at community colleges.

During the same time period, the number of job postings for open positions at community colleges continued to increase in Q1 2016, but at a slower rate of growth than prior first quarters, reflecting a diminishing demand for community college jobs. Advertisements for job openings at community colleges increased only 2.2 percent in Q1 2016, a much slower rate of growth than the 21.1 percent growth observed in Q1 2015, as well as the 11.8 percent increase seen in Q1 2014.

**Year-Over-Year Change (in Percent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Community College Job Postings (HigherEdJobs) Q1</th>
<th>Community College Jobs (BLS) Q1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>-10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: HigherEdJobs® posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers; community college jobs from Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics.

**Note:** Even though most two-year institutions now designate themselves as Community Colleges, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics still categorizes these institutions as Junior Colleges. To avoid confusion, Junior Colleges are referred to as Community Colleges in this finding. The red markers, and the right-hand scale, indicate Community College jobs.
**Finding:** The Northeast region experienced the largest percentage increase in higher education job postings in Q1 2016, driven by strong growth in both its divisions.

### Change in Higher Education Job Postings by Census Region and Division

**Q1 2015 to Q1 2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percent Change in Q1 2016</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Percent Change in Q1 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDWEST</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>West North Central</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East North Central</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>West South Central</td>
<td>-8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>East South Central</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Atlantic</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHEAST</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>Middle Atlantic</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New England</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The regions and divisions used for this analysis are consistent with the official U.S. Census regions and divisions. (http://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf)