

Q4 & Annual 2018

# HIGHER EDUCATION Employment Report



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# Executive Summary

**The number of jobs in higher education increased by 0.5 percent, or 21,900 jobs, in Q4 2018**, which was less than the growth observed one year earlier in Q4 2017 when the number of higher education jobs also increased by 0.6 percent or about 24,800 jobs.

On an annual basis, higher education jobs increased 0.4 percent, or about 15,100 jobs, in 2018, and this was also less than the 0.6 percent increase, or about 24,300 jobs, in 2017. However, as also noted in previous reports, a continuing decline in community college employment negatively impacted overall growth in higher education jobs.

Meanwhile, the number of postings for open positions in higher education increased by 8.1 percent in Q4 2018, which was greater than the increase in Q4 2017. On an annual basis, job postings increased by 10.4 percent in 2018, and this was also greater than the 3.0 percent growth observed in 2017. For the first time, this report examines postings from public institutions in comparison to private, non-profit ones. Although private, non-profit institutions are responsible for a vast majority of overall higher education employment growth, public institutions were responsible for the majority of job postings. Job postings for all types of full-time positions increased at a greater rate than for part-time positions in the two most recent fourth quarters. Meanwhile, postings increased for full-time faculty but decreased for part-time faculty positions.

Fourth quarter 2018 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 increased at a slower rate in all of 2018 and Q4 compared to one year earlier. [p.2](#)

Higher education job postings increased at a faster rate in both Q4 2018 and annually than one year earlier. [p.3](#)

Overall, job postings at private and public institutions generally followed similar trends, although at different rates of change. [p.4](#)

Both faculty and non-faculty job postings continued to increase at a slightly higher rate in Q4 2018 and at a much higher rate annually. [p.5](#)

Job postings for full-time positions increased at a greater rate than for part-time positions in the two most recent fourth quarters. [p.6](#)

Job postings increased for full-time faculty but decreased for part-time while both types of administrative job postings increased. [p.7](#)

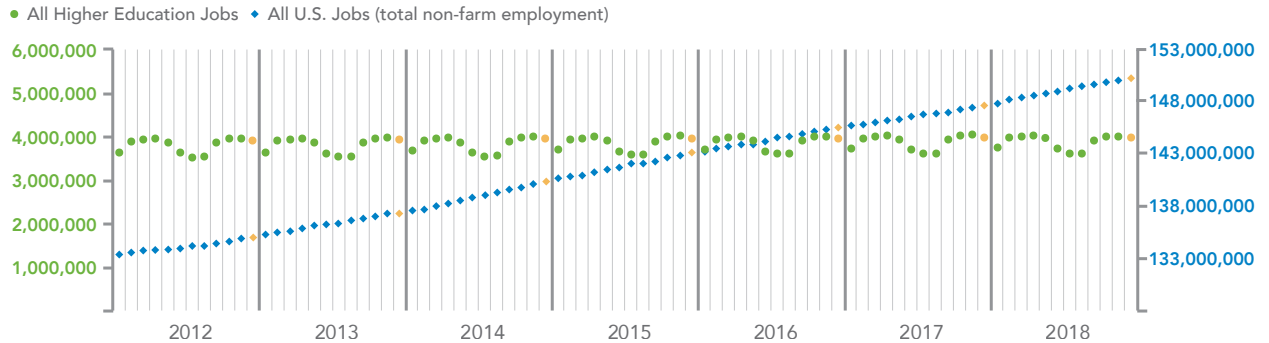
Job postings at community colleges increased as employment continued to decline. [p.8](#)

**SPECIAL FOCUS:**  
Postings for jobs in student affairs experienced an accelerating growth rate that was similar to all higher education job postings.

## Finding

The number of jobs in higher education increased at a slower rate in all of 2018 and Q4 compared to one year earlier.

### Higher Education Jobs Compared to All U.S. Jobs (Monthly)



Source: HigherEdJobs, based on U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics data, which are subject to revisions. (Note: December data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparison.)

Higher education employment — which this analysis defines as all jobs at public as well as private colleges and universities, community colleges, technical and trade schools, as well as business, computer, and management training schools — increased by 0.55 percent, or about 21,900 jobs, in Q4 2018 to slightly more than 4 million jobs. That increase was less than the 0.62 percent growth observed one year earlier in Q4 2017 when the number of higher education jobs increased by almost 24,800. On an annual basis in 2018, all higher education jobs increased by 0.39 percent, or about 15,100 jobs, and this was less than the 0.63 percent increase in 2017 when higher education increased by 24,300 jobs.

Although the majority — 62.4 percent — of all higher education jobs in Q4 2018 were at public institutions, private institutions generated 73.4 percent, or about 16,100 jobs, of higher education job growth while public institutions contributed about 5,800 jobs. On an annual basis, despite 62.5 percent of all higher education jobs being at public institutions in 2018, they only generated 13.1 percent, or about 1,980, of the job growth while private institutions were responsible for 86.9 percent, or about 13,100 jobs, in 2018.

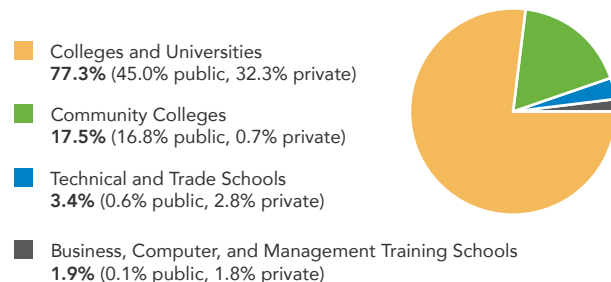
Higher education jobs represented 2.69 percent

of all jobs in the U.S. during Q4 2018 and 2.61 percent during 2018.

#### Year-Over-Year Percent Change in:

Year	Higher Education Jobs		Total Overall Non-Farm Jobs	Higher Education Jobs as Percent of All Jobs	
	Annual	Q4	Q4	Annual	Q4
2018	0.4	0.5	1.80	2.61	2.69
2017	0.6	0.6	1.49	2.64	2.72
2016	0.2	-0.2	1.67	2.67	2.74
2015	0.6	0.6	1.93	2.71	2.79
2014	0.3	0.5	2.09	2.75	2.83
2013	0.2	0.2	1.76	2.79	2.88
2012	0.7	0.8	1.61	2.83	2.92

#### All Public and Private Higher Education Employment, 2017



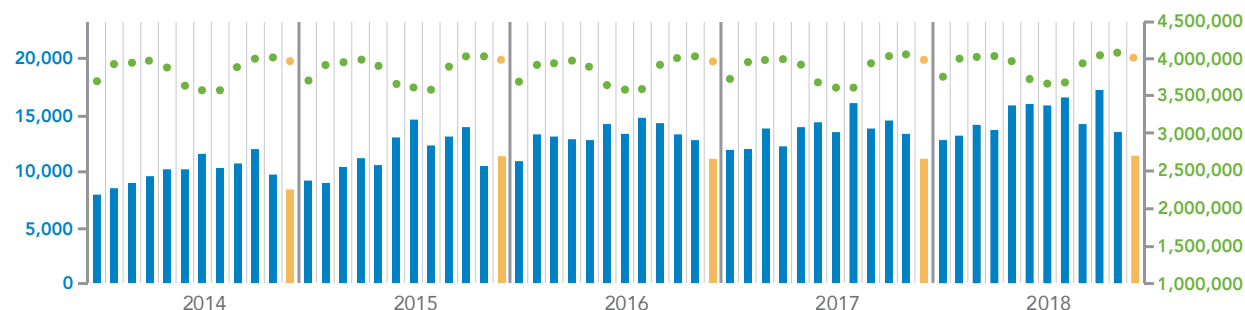
Source: HigherEdJobs analysis of U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics data. (Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.)

## Finding

Higher education job postings increased at a faster rate in both Q4 2018 and annually than one year earlier.

### HigherEdJobs' Postings Compared to All Higher Education Jobs

● All Higher Education Jobs ■ All Postings from Continuing Subscribers on HigherEdJobs



Sources: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers; higher education jobs based upon HigherEdJobs analysis of U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics data. (Note: December data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparisons.)

The number of advertised job openings in academia increased by 8.1 percent in Q4 2018, which was more than in both Q4 2017 as well as Q4 2016 when they increased 6.7 percent and 4.3 percent, respectively.

On an annual basis, the 10.4 percent increase in the total number of job postings in 2018 far exceeded the 3.0 percent increase observed in 2017 but was less than the 12.7 percent or 17.3 percent increases in 2016 and 2015, respectively.

There does not appear to be much, if any, direct correlation between the trends for job postings and higher education jobs. This apparent disconnect could be attributed to the fact that advertising job openings likely occurs on a different timeline than actual hiring, which is only recorded in government data when the hire actually receives a paycheck.

The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reports that overall postsecondary enrollments declined by 1.7 percent in fall 2018 from the previous fall and also declined by 1.7 percent in spring 2019 from the previous spring. And although enrollment at four-year,

private non-profit institutions increased by 2.4 percent and 3.2 percent in the fall 2018 and spring 2019, respectively, enrollment at four-year, public institutions was flat and declined by 0.9 percent in the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019, respectively. As discussed in the previous finding, private colleges and universities — which are responsible for only slightly more than one-third of all higher education jobs — far exceeded their public counterparts in terms of job growth.

#### Year-Over-Year Percent Change in:

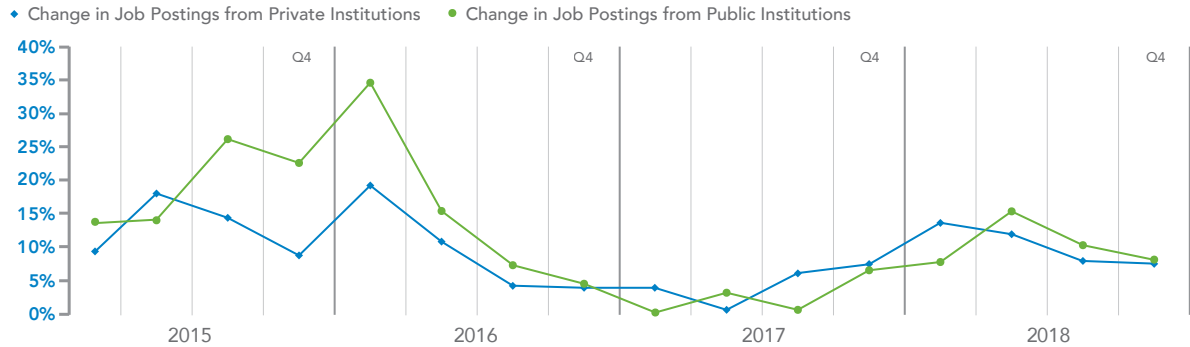
Year	HigherEdJobs Postings		Total Higher Education Jobs	
	Annual	Q4	Annual	Q4
2018	10.4	8.1	0.4	0.5
2017	3.0	6.7	0.6	0.6
2016	12.7	4.3	0.2	-0.2
2015	17.3	18.2	0.6	0.6

Sources: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers; Higher education jobs based on HigherEdJobs analysis of U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

## Finding

Overall, job postings at private and public institutions generally followed similar trends, although at different rates of change.

### Changes in Jobs Postings from Private and Public Institutions



Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers.

The changes in the number of higher education job postings by private, non-profit institutions and public institutions, follow roughly the same trend, albeit at different rates of change.

Although the first finding in this report reveals that private institutions generated more than 85 percent of higher education job growth in 2018, almost two-thirds of all higher education employment is with public institutions.

In 2018, private institutions posted 32.4 percent and public institutions posted 67.6 percent of all higher education job postings. On a quarterly basis, this ratio does not vary much sequentially or from year-to-year, but there is some differentiation over a longer time period.

On the low end, private institutions posted 31.0 percent of all postings in Q4 2018, and on the high end the figure is 35.6 percent in Q3 2014. Conversely for public institutions, the lowest percentage is 64.4 percent in Q3 2014 and the highest is 69.0 percent in Q4 2018. Therefore, there has been a slight shift over the five-year period analyzed.

One possible explanation for why private institutions are responsible for a vast majority of employment growth but only a minority of job postings is that since total employment at private institutions is smaller, they have fewer positions to fill and therefore require fewer postings.

### Year-Over-Year Percent Change in Job Postings from:

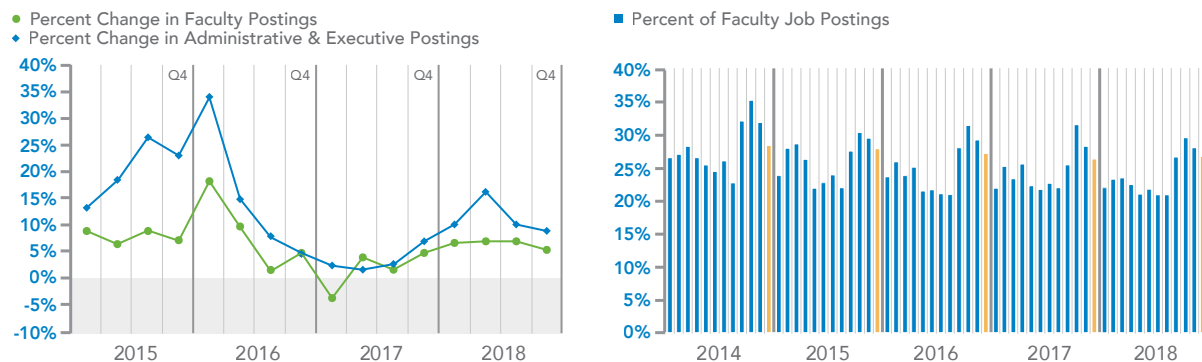
Year	Private and Public Institutions		Private Institutions		Public Institutions	
	Annual	Q4	Annual	Q4	Annual	Q4
2018	10.4	8.0	10.2	7.7	10.5	8.1
2017	3.2	6.8	4.4	7.3	2.7	6.6
2016	12.5	4.4	9.0	4.0	14.2	4.5
2015	17.3	18.1	12.9	8.9	19.6	22.8

Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers. (Note: The annual and fourth quarter changes of job postings for the combination of private and public institutions differs slightly from the finding on page 3 because there are a small number of institutions that have not identified themselves as public nor private; therefore, they were excluded.)

## Finding

Both faculty and non-faculty job postings continued to increase at a slightly higher rate in Q4 2018 and at a much higher rate annually.

### Faculty Job Postings Compared to Administrative and Executive Job Postings



Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers. (Note: December data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparisons.)

Job postings for faculty positions increased by 5.8 percent in Q4 2018 from Q4 2017, which was slightly greater than a year ago in Q4 2017 when they increased by 5.2 percent. Postings for non-faculty positions increased by 9.1 percent in Q4 2018, which was also greater than the 7.3 percent growth observed a year earlier in Q4 2017.

On an annual basis, faculty job postings increased by 6.5 percent in 2018 and that was much greater — about 3.25 times greater — than the 2.0 percent increase in 2017. Similarly, the 2018 increase in postings for non-faculty positions of 11.6 percent was also much greater — about 3.5 times greater — than the 3.3 percent increase observed in 2017.

Generally, from at least 2014, the changes in the number of job postings for faculty and non-faculty tend to follow similar trends although the increases in non-faculty postings tend to be greater. This is likely because faculty positions tend to be more stable as well as that there are simply more non-faculty job postings.

Although the trend with the ratio of faculty to non-faculty positions tends to vary somewhat on a quarterly basis, it is more defined on an annual

basis. For example, although the ratio of faculty postings declined in Q4 2015 from Q4 2014, it increased in Q4 2016, slightly decreased in Q4 2017, and decreased again in Q4 2018. However, this ratio of faculty job postings has been consistently decreasing on an annual basis from at least 2015.

One possible explanation regarding the fairly stable ratio of faculty to non-faculty job postings is that faculty staffing levels are more or less established well before the start of the academic year and enrollments are more or less predictable within certain parameters.

#### Percent of Job Postings That Were:

Year	Fourth Quarter		Annual	
	Faculty Positions	Administrative and Executive Positions	Faculty Positions	Administrative and Executive Positions
2018	28.4	71.6	23.8	76.1
2017	29.0	71.0	24.7	75.3
2016	29.4	75.1	24.9	75.1
2015	25.9	74.1	25.9	74.1
2014	28.1	71.9	28.1	71.9

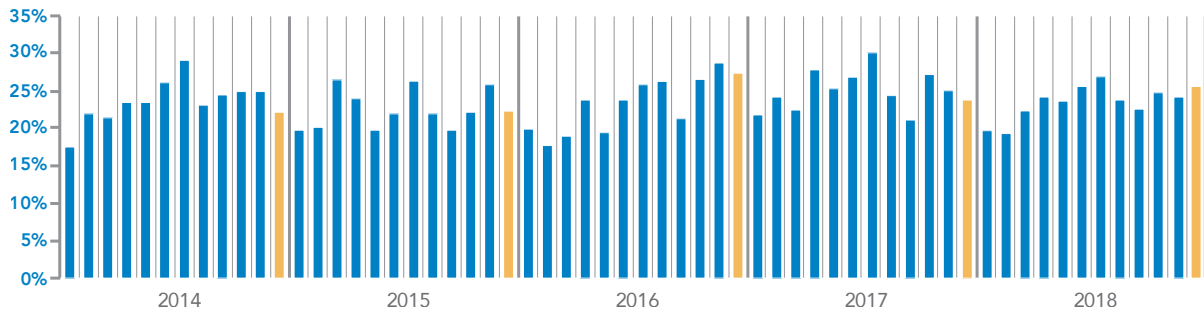
Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers (note: total may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding).

## Finding

Job postings for full-time positions increased at a greater rate than for part-time positions in the two most recent fourth quarters.

### Average Percentage of Part-Time Postings

■ Percent Part-Time Job Postings



Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers. (Note: December data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparisons.)

The number of job postings for full-time positions as well as for part-time positions in higher education increased during Q4 2018. This is a change from the trend observed in Q4 2017 when postings for full-time positions increased but postings for part-time positions incrementally decreased.

The number of job postings for full-time positions increased by 8.5 percent in Q4 2018, which was greater than the 8.0 percent increase a year earlier in Q4 2017. Clearly, the increases in these postings in the fourth quarter of 2017 and 2018 were much greater than in Q4 2016 when they increased by only 2.3 percent.

Meanwhile, the number of job postings for part-time positions increased by 6.1 percent in Q4 2018, which was a change in the trend from Q4 2017 when they incrementally declined by 0.05 percent. However, in the fourth quarter of 2015 as well as for 2016, these postings increased more than 20 percent.

In addition, the percentage of all job postings for part-time positions, declined in Q4 2018 as well as Q4 2017. On an annual basis, although the

percentage of part-time postings increased from 23.2 percent in 2016 to 24.9 percent in 2017, they declined to 23.5 percent, which is only slightly greater than the 2016 level.

As discussed in earlier reports, the more stable employment environment within academe may be allowing higher education administrators and managers to plan better for immediate and longer-term future staffing levels and feel more confident in creating and funding full-time positions and thereby need fewer part-time positions. A more predictable enrollment environment may be driving these trends.

#### Average Percentage of Part-Time Postings

#### Percent Change in Number of Postings

Year	Annual	Q4	Percent Change in Number of Postings	
			Part-Time	Full-Time
2018	23.5	24.8	6.1	8.5
2017	24.9	25.3	-0.05	8.0
2016	23.2	27.4	20.5	2.3
2015	22.5	23.4	21.1	24.9

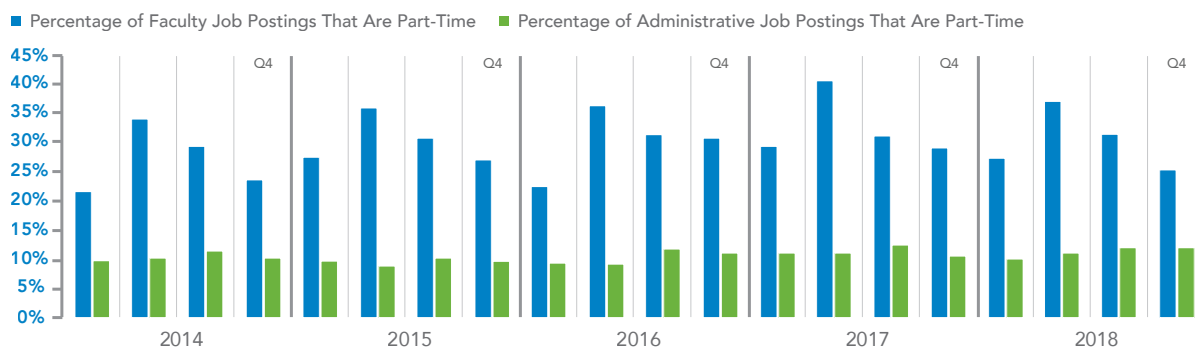
Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers.



## Finding

Job postings increased for full-time faculty but decreased for part-time while both types of administrative job postings increased.

### Portion of Job Postings That Are Part-Time



Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers.

Job postings for full-time faculty positions increased by 11.2 percent during Q4 2018 compared to a year ago, which is greater growth than the 7.9 percent increase observed a year earlier in Q4 2017. Postings for part-time faculty decreased 7.5 percent in Q4 2018, which is a greater decline than the 1.2 percent decrease observed a year earlier in Q4 2017.

There were three postings for full-time faculty positions for each part-time faculty position in Q4 2018, and in Q4 2017, there were less than 2.5 postings for full-time faculty for each part-time faculty position. On an annual basis, there were 2.3 postings for full-time faculty for each posting for part-time faculty in 2018 and in 2017, there were 2.1 postings for full-time faculty for each part-time faculty position.

Postings for full-time administrative positions increased by 8.5 percent during Q4 2018 compared to a year earlier, which is a greater growth than the 8.0 percent increase observed a year earlier in Q4 2017. The 21.5 percent increase in postings for part-time administrative positions in Q4 2018 was much greater than the 1.3 percent increase observed a year earlier in Q4 2017. (Coincidentally, the change in fourth quarter job postings for administrative positions is identical to the change for all full-time positions as described in the previous finding.)

The increase of postings for full-time faculty positions and the decrease of postings for part-time faculty could be a result of a more stable and predictable enrollment environment for which administrators and executives can plan curriculum staffing for the future. And although increases for full-time administrative job postings remained fairly stable for the past two fourth quarters, postings for part-time administrative positions greatly increased, possibly indicating uncertainty for future staffing requirements.

### Percent of Full-Time and Part-Time Job Postings

#### Faculty Job Postings

Year	Change in Full-Time Postings	Change in Part-Time Postings	Change in Q4 Full-Time Postings	Change in Q4 Part-Time Postings
2018	10.3	-0.3	11.2	-7.5
2017	-0.8	8.7	7.9	-1.2
2016	7.0	10.7	-0.6	19.0
2015	4.3	18.7	2.3	23.0

#### Administrative Job Postings

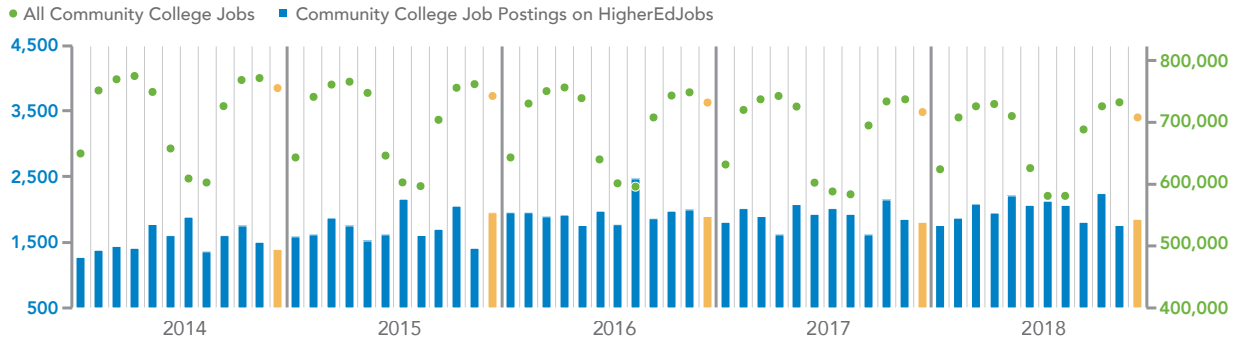
Year	Change in Full-Time Postings	Change in Part-Time Postings	Change in Q4 Full-Time Postings	Change in Q4 Part-Time Postings
2018	12.1	11.6	8.5	21.5
2017	2.5	12.2	8.0	1.3
2016	13.5	23.4	2.3	22.1
2015	22.5	13.7	24.9	19.0

Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers.

# Finding

## Job postings at community colleges increased as employment continued to decline.

### Job Postings and Employment at Community Colleges



Sources: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers; higher education jobs based on HigherEdJobs analysis of U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics data. (Note: December data highlighted in yellow for ease of year-over-year comparisons.)

The number of job postings at community colleges marginally increased just 0.2 percent in Q4 2018 after no change in Q4 2017. On an annual basis, job postings at community colleges increased 5.4 percent in 2018, which was a change in direction from the 1.9 percent decline observed in 2017.

However, employment at community colleges has decreased for five straight years, or 20 consecutive year-over-year quarterly declines of this metric. The number of jobs at community colleges declined by 1.2 percent, or about 8,800 jobs, in Q4 2018 from Q4 2017. In 2018, community college employment declined by 1.0 percent, or by about 7,050 jobs; in 2017, they declined by 1.9 percent, or about 13,600 jobs.

The job loss at community colleges is likely due in part to declining enrollments at two-year, public degree-granting institutions as estimated by the National Student Clearinghouse Research

Center. Enrollment at these institutions has decreased every semester averaging a decline of 2.6 percent for the seven semesters from fall 2015 to fall 2018, inclusive.

#### Year-Over-Year Percent Change in:

Year	Community College Job Postings (HigherEdJobs)		Community College Jobs (BLS)	
	Annual	Q4	Annual	Q4
2018	5.4	0.2	-1.0	-1.2
2017	-1.9	n/c	-1.9	-1.6
2016	11.1	7.7	-1.0	-1.5
2015	13.6	17.3	-1.4	-1.6

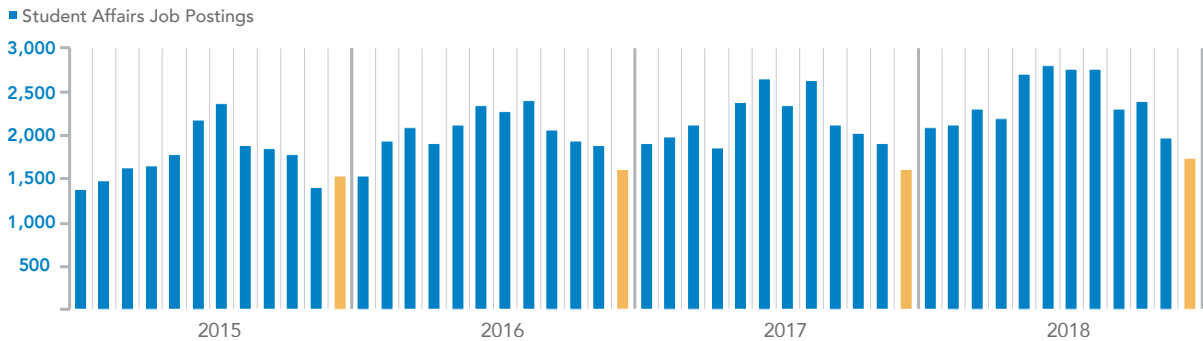
Sources: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers; Higher education jobs based on analysis of U.S. Department of Labor / BLS data. (n/c = no change)

Note: Though most two-year institutions now designate themselves as Community Colleges, the BLS still categorizes these institutions as Junior Colleges and the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center categorizes them as two-year, public institutions. To avoid confusion, both are referred to as Community Colleges in this finding and throughout this report.

## Finding

Postings for jobs in student affairs experienced an accelerating growth rate that was similar to all higher education job postings.

### Student Affairs and Services Job Postings



Source: HigherEdJobs postings from continuing subscribers since January 2015.

Postings for jobs in student affairs grew at a faster rate in Q4 2018 than in Q4 2017 and that trend was mirrored on an annual basis. It is of interest to note that the rate of increase for this subset of job postings was similar to the increases for all higher education job postings that are discussed in other findings in this report.

The number of student affairs jobs posted during the fourth quarter grew 9.8 percent in Q4 2018 and that was much higher than the 3.2 percent growth observed in Q4 2017. In comparison, all higher education job postings increased by 8.1 percent in Q4 2018 and increased 6.7 percent in Q4 2017.

On an annual basis, more student affairs jobs were posted during 2018 than in any of the preceding four years. Job postings for student affairs positions increased by 10.5 percent, 6.0 percent, and 15.2 percent in 2018, 2017, and 2016, respectively, from the prior year. In comparison, job postings for all higher education jobs increased by 10.4 percent, only 3.0 percent, and 12.7 percent in 2018, 2017, and 2016, respectively, from the prior year.

For the past couple of years, the growth rate for job postings for student affairs positions had been increasing at a greater rate than job

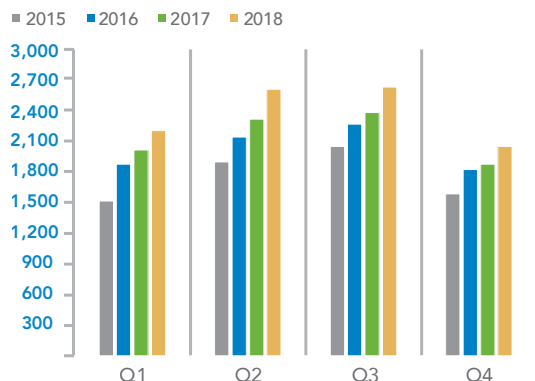
postings for administrative and executive positions as a whole. However, in Q4 2018, administrative and executive job postings increased 9.1 percent (discussed in another finding in this report), which was a slightly lesser rate of growth than the 9.8 percent increase of job postings for student affairs and services positions for the same period. Perhaps senior institutional administrators have determined that the multitude of departments providing student affairs and services have reached optimal staffing levels and require more staff and/or are experiencing a slightly elevated level of employee turnover as a result of the ongoing strong employment economy so some student affairs employees are migrating out of academe.

### Student Affairs and Services Job Postings

Year	Student Affairs Job Postings (average per month)	Percent Change in Annual Student Affairs Job Postings	Percent Change in Q4 Student Affairs Job Postings
2018	2,360	10.5	9.8
2017	2,135	6.0	3.2
2016	2,014	15.2	14.5
2015	1,749		

Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers since 2015.

### Number of Student Affairs Job Postings (Quarterly Average)



Source: HigherEdJobs posting data from continuing unlimited posting subscribers since 2015.

In previous reports, this Special Focus section selected the first and third quarters for further analysis because the biggest difference occurred between those periods. The third quarter still appears to be a peak for these types of job postings as institutions prepare for the upcoming academic year. However, the trough for this category of job postings for the past three years is now the fourth quarter, so the third and fourth quarter are now selected for further analysis.

The number of postings for jobs in student affairs and services generally peaks during the third quarter, specifically between June and August, as administrators begin to adjust staffing levels

for the upcoming academic year. Then, postings in the category fall off the following quarter, ostensibly because the increased job postings in the third quarter yielded a suitable supply of candidates and/or hires and hence further job postings were not necessary.

Within student affairs, job categories that contain a certain percentage of postings in one quarter typically contain a similar portion of postings in another, but there were exceptions. As seen in past analysis of this data subset, the largest disparities between quarterly posting averages for the previous three years occurred in some of the same categories. The largest gap is with admissions and enrollment positions that averaged 20.27 percent of all student affairs and services job postings in Q4 for 2016-2018, inclusive, but 21.54 percent in Q3 for the same years, a difference of 1.3 percentage points. The next largest gap between Q3 and Q4 postings was for financial aid job postings, which averaged 7.0 percent in Q3 and 8.2 percent in Q4, a difference of 1.2 percentage points. A slightly smaller gap of 1.0 percentage points exists between Q3 and Q4 for student affairs and services job postings. For the other student affairs related job categories, the differences between Q3 and Q4 postings ranged from minus 0.1 percent (disability services) to plus 0.5 percent (registrars).

### Percent of All Student Affairs and Services Job Postings

Student Affairs and Services Job Postings Categories	Q3 2016	Q3 2017	Q3 2018	Q4 2016	Q4 2017	Q4 2018
Academic Advising	13.5	13.1	12.6	13.9	14.0	13.0
<b>Admissions and Enrollment</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>19.9</b>
Career Counseling and Placement	7.3	8.2	7.7	7.2	8.1	8.2
Disability Services	4.5	3.6	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.8
<b>Financial Aid</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Food Services	8.9	8.3	8.9	9.3	7.9	8.7
International Programs	4.8	3.7	4.3	4.6	4.3	4.0
Multicultural Affairs & Affirmative Action	2.6	3.2	3.4	2.5	3.1	3.5
Registrars	4.7	4.3	4.7	4.7	5.7	4.8
Residence Life and Housing	5.2	4.2	4.5	4.2	5.0	5.0
<b>Student Affairs and Services</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>21.0</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>19.1</b>
Volunteer Programs	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8

Sources: HigherEdJobs postings from continuing subscribers since January 2015. (Institutions may advertise the same opening in more than one category.)

## About this Report

The HigherEdJobs *Higher Education Employment Report*, published quarterly, provides summary information about employment within the higher education community. In this report, higher education employment is defined as all types of employment at four-year colleges and universities, two-year community colleges, and other types of higher educational training as well as trade schools, both public and private.

Findings on jobs in higher education are based on data from the U.S. Department of Labor / Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), specifically the *Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*. Except where indicated otherwise, findings on advertised job postings in higher education are based on posting data from non-profit U.S. colleges and universities that have been continually subscribed to the HigherEdJobs Unlimited Posting Plan since January 2013, a cohort of roughly 870 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](http://www.SteinbergEmploymentResearch.com)), an independent employment researcher.

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