

study is completed will be given preference.

- Applicants are not eligible for awards if they are receiving any U.S. government funds for either travel or academic expenses.
- Previous grant recipients are not eligible.
- The maximum award to an individual is \$300.

Applicants must complete a form available from the APSA national office and must have their department chair write a letter of support for their application. Applications without a letter of support *will not* be considered.

The deadline for the receipt of the complete application for a travel grant to the 1995 Annual Meeting is July 7. Application forms and further information are available by writing to: Foreign Advanced Graduate Student Travel Grants, APSA, 1527 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036-1290; or call (202) 483-2512.

## Placement Report: New Political Scientists on the Job Market in 1994

Michael Brintnall, APSA

The job market is always a subject of intense interest. This year has attracted more attention than usual. The travail of finding academic employment has been highly publicized lately, with the *Wall Street Journal* headlining that “Job Competition Is Fierce” and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reporting the “Job Market Blues.” All accounts report a vastly more competitive market throughout academia, with stories of up to 700 applicants per job opening.

This report examines the placement success of Ph.D. and A.B.D. students in political science for 1993–94. Information for this report is drawn from many sources, but relies largely on a recent survey of graduate placement directors regarding the job search experiences of the 1993–94 Ph.D. placement class.

Highlights are as follows:

- last year far more new political scientists were on the market searching for jobs than at any time in the last decade—a whopping 36% increase from two years ago;
- yet placement success has not dropped dramatically—69% of the searchers found positions, off 5 percentage points from two years ago, but equal to the rate six years ago;
- job searchers with the Ph.D. in hand—59% of the class—were as successful as any placement class in the last decade, with 82% finding positions;
- 29% of placements were in temporary positions—fewer than has typically been the case in the last decade. Men and women on the job market landed temporary jobs at similar rates;
- placement rates for women exceeded those of men—74% of women in the placement class found positions, and unlike the last survey two years ago a greater proportion of the placements for women were in Ph.D. institutions than for men;
- placements in American government increased to their highest share of all fields in the last decade.

### The Placement Class

APSA obtains its information about placements from a survey of graduate placement directors in political science departments in Ph.D.-granting institutions. The placement class represents all students completing or nearing completion of the doctoral programs and entering the job market. These

students are typically seeking academic or related positions to begin the following academic year. One hundred and five departments (80%) responded to the survey; the largest universities are routinely included among the respondents for the placement surveys, which is why we rely on actual numbers rather than weighting for missing cases.

The 1993–94 placement class is significantly larger than previous years, with 1,037 new political scientists seeking jobs. By comparison, in 1992, 763 students were in the placement class, 823 two years before that, and 740 two years earlier. This alone corroborates anecdotal evidence that there seem to be more competitors than ever for each position.

Several factors may be contributing to the dramatic increase in size of this placement class. First of all, it continues a trend of increasing numbers of new graduates on the job market throughout the decade—up from a count of 611 in 1982.

Graduate student enrollments have been steadily increasing too. Numbers of students in Ph.D. programs in political science in 1994 have increased by more than 50% over students enrolled in 1984. This “filling of the pipeline” has evidently started to produce. Numbers of new students accepted to start work in Ph.D. programs are continuing to increase, suggesting that production of new Ph.D.’s will stay high for some time to come.

A suspicion as well is that students are entering the job market earlier—without the Ph.D. in hand—to get an early start on what is suspected to be a difficult and lengthy search. Over the longer run

TABLE 1  
Trends in Placement\*

	1982	1984	1986	1987	1988	1990	1992	1994
Number of firm candidates	611	672	690	604	740	823	763	1037
% repeats	36	38	32	36	32	32	33	40
% Ph.D.	64	64	69	76	64	59	59	59
% women	21	25	26	27	25	26	30	27

\*Figures are from 91 departments for 1982 (76% response rate), 83 departments for 1984 (71% response rate), 83 departments for 1986 (70% response rate), 103 departments for 1987 (86% response rate), 115 departments for 1988 (92% response rate), 118 departments for 1990 (93% response rate), and 110 departments for 1992 (87% response rate), and 106 departments for 1994 (81% response rate).

there has been such a trend. In the mid-1980s, a much larger share of the placement class had completed the Ph.D. degree than is the case today. But an influx of A.B.D. students does not account for the recent increase in students on the market. The 1994 class is no different from two and four years ago in this respect.

What is different this year is that the number of "repeats" in the placement class—people who were on the market the year before and are trying again—has increased to 40% from a third in earlier years. The increase in repeat job seekers is greater among those holding the Ph.D. than those currently A.B.D. Two years ago, 35% of job seekers with the Ph.D. in hand had been on the market before; this time, 46% of those with the Ph.D. had already been looking. Most likely they had already been on the market as A.B.D., but we do not have data to determine this. One-third of the A.B.D. students on the market this time, have been looking as well in previous years, up from 29% two years ago.

The upsurge in numbers of job seekers has altered the population of departments with the largest classes as well. The University of Chicago and the University of California at Berkeley produce the largest numbers of Ph.D.'s in political science, 20 and 19 respectively last year. In the present placement class, they are joined by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Missouri at Columbia as having the largest numbers of students on the job market. Harvard, MIT, Southern California, Cornell, Ohio State University, and Princeton also reported very large placement classes this year.

### Placement Success

Sixty-nine percent of the new political scientists on the job market in 1993–94 found employment—fewer than in the last four years but comparable to many years in the 1980s. Students with the Ph.D. in hand did as well as any year in the last decade, with 82% finding

**TABLE 2**  
Placement Success\*

	1982	1984	1986	1987	1988	1990	1992	1994
Overall	62	72	69	72	69	72	74	69
Ph.D.	68	77	83	80	83	78	79	82
A.B.D.	55	68	57	68	53	63	66	50
Men	61	72	67	70	70	73	73	67
Women	64	71	74	75	67	70	75	74
Percent placed in temporary positions	36	33	38	27	38	21	32	29
Men	37	33	38	27	38	NA	34	29
Women	36	34	35	24	33	NA	28	29

\*Placement success measures number placed within each category as a percentage of the total candidates within each category.

placement. Half of the A.B.D. students found placement.

Forty percent of all job seekers found permanent tenure-track positions or their equivalent, and 29% found temporary positions. In spite of reports of increasing use of part-time and other nonpermanent faculty in colleges and universities today, there is no evidence of increasing rates of temporary hiring. A larger share of positions filled in 1994 were permanent positions than was the case a decade before. Having the Ph.D. in hand significantly increases the chance of landing a permanent position. Over half of Ph.D. holders on the market landed permanent jobs, compared to 22% of the A.B.D.'s.

### Fields of Political Science

Most placements were made in the field of American government in 1994—followed by comparative politics and by international relations. There are no compelling trends over recent years in which fields are most popular, however. Prospects in American government do show a slight upswing, however, and many placement directors reported to us they see American government as a growth field.

Among the large fields—American, comparative, and international relations—placement success was greatest for Americanists, with 74% finding positions this year. Sixty-nine percent of comparativists and 63% of IR prospects found placement. Public policy and public administration specialists—who together account for 9% of all jobs—had the best success, placing about

80% of the time. The share of openings in political theory remained steady, but it continues to remain a heavily competitive field, with a 61% placement rate.

### Hiring Institutions

Forty-two percent of all placements were in departments awarding the Ph.D. degree—down slightly from two years ago but within the range reported over the last decade. Just under a third of the placements are in undergraduate institutions of various sizes. This distribution is the same for permanent and temporary positions.

About a tenth of all placements are in nonacademic positions—a rate that has also held steady. We asked graduate placement officers if they expected to increase (or decrease) the emphasis they place on directing students to nonacademic positions, and they consistently replied that they foresaw no swing in either direction.

### Women and Minorities on the Job Market

Women are 27% of the placement class. This share has stayed about the same for the last decade. It is slightly less than the proportion of women in the class entering Ph.D. programs in political science 10 years ago, which was 30%. (Today, women are 40% of the entering Ph.D. classes.) Women on the placement market are slightly less likely than men to have the Ph.D. in hand, and, perhaps for this reason, are less likely to be repeats.

**TABLE 3**  
Placement Success by Field of Specialization, 1986–92 (%)

	Total				
	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994
Placement Success <sup>a</sup>					
American Government	86	74	71	78	74
Public Policy	95	82	74	78	80
Comparative/Area Studies	65	63	74	77	69
International Relations	54	65	71	68	63
Public Administration	80	77	74	77	79
Political Theory	73	59	61	70	61
Methodology	100	100	83	50	50
Percentage of Those Placed <sup>b</sup>					
American Government	29	23	21	25	31
Public Policy	8	6	6	6	5
Comparative/Area Studies	25	26	28	27	25
International Relations	18	19	25	23	19
Public Administration	5	6	5	4	4
Political Theory	12	12	10	13	13
Methodology	1	2	1	0	0
Other	2	7	4	2	3

<sup>a</sup>Placement success measures number placed in a field as a percentage of total candidates in each of the respective fields.

<sup>b</sup>Percentage of those placed measures the total number placed in a particular field as a percentage of the total number placed in all fields.

Placement success for women is greater than for men—almost three-quarters of women on the market find a position compared to two-thirds of the men. This differential is the same whether or not the candidates have the Ph.D. in hand. Eighty-seven percent of women on the job market with the Ph.D. completed were placed in 1994, compared to 81% of men. In 1994, a slightly higher proportion of women than men specialized in comparative politics, and fewer in American government—but this relationship varies over the years and does not show a consistent pattern.

African American students are 5% of the placement class—equal to the proportion of African American students enrolled generally in political science Ph.D. programs. Ten years ago, 7% of entering students were African American. Two-thirds of the African American students on the market have their Ph.D. in hand—more so than the class as a whole.

Three-quarters of the African American candidates in the placement class are placed—most in permanent positions. Eighty-one percent with the Ph.D. in hand are placed, comparable to all job seekers. Only 16% of African American job seekers end up in temporary positions. African American candi-

dates are most likely to specialize in American government—37% found positions in American. Only 3% of all African Americans on the market were hired in political theory, compared to 13% of all candidates.

Latino candidates comprise 3% of the job market. Three-quarters of all Latino candidates on the market were placed. Less than half of the Latino candidates had the Ph.D. in hand; 93% of those who did found a position. More Latino candidates specialize in comparative politics—36%—than the placement class as a whole.

### Completion Rates

The road to employment in political science does not begin with

completion of the degree, but first with entrance into graduate school. While systematic studies of completion of graduate study have not been done, some estimates are possible from the annual data collected by APSA on numbers of new students in Ph.D. programs, annual enrollments, and degrees awarded. These data indicate that about 58% of all new Ph.D. program entrants complete their degree.

Current data show positive opportunities for women and minorities leaving graduate school in finding employment in political science. Completion rate information, however, shows that their experience in reaching the placement class is different. The estimated completion rate for women in political science graduate programs is 49%, compared to 62% for men. For African American students (men and women), 43% are estimated to complete Ph.D. programs.

We have no direct information on what may explain these absolute or differential rates—whether it be different life choices, finances, “chilly climate,” or something else. A future discussion of these issues may well be warranted.

### Job Prospects

Job openings for 1994–95, based on listings in the APSA *Personnel Service Newsletter*, are about on course with the prior three years. They show no loosening from the tight markets of recent years. Listings in 1994 in the peak advertising month of October were as high as they have been since 1990–91—when the market was much stronger. But later in the hiring year, in

**TABLE 4**  
Placement by Type of Hiring Institutions, 1986–92 (%)

	Total				
	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994
Ph.D. department	41	40	41	45	42
M.A. department	16	17	16	11	14
Undergraduate political science or combined	32	33	32	31	31
Two-year college	1	2	2	2	2
Nonacademic	9	8	10	10	11
Total	99	100	101	99	100

## What About Retirements?

The promise of significant job openings arising because of retirements has been widely discussed for some time. Indeed the promise is still there, academia-wide. Two-thirds of colleges and universities responding to the *ACE Campus Trends* survey indicated that they expected an increased pace of retirements among full-time faculty in the next five years, and that 11% of the regular full-time faculty are likely to retire in that period.

Political science is a slowly aging discipline. It may still be several years before there is a likelihood of substantial retirements. Adapting data from the 1992–93 academic year departmental survey (and adding two years to ages), the median age of the professoriate in political science is 48 years and the modal age is 51.

## Advice from the Front Lines

Finally, we asked graduate placement directors to provide advice about the job market and placement success. They consider the placement process to be difficult these days—but are generally optimistic that the situation will soon improve. They advised students to be trained broadly, emphasizing training in statistics and methodology, avoiding over-specialization, developing verbal skills, and adding credentials both in research and teaching. An exemplary piece of advice from one placement director is: “don’t overspecialize! Take a wide spectrum of courses in diverse fields. Work hard on verbal skills and math. Look to unfolding trends in national and global policy.” Finally, placement directors’ fundamental advice is that success requires a “passionate interest in political science,” and that a student should “do what you enjoy—or sell shoes.”

**TABLE 5**  
Placement Experience by Sex and Race (%)

	Men	Women	African Americans	Latinos
Percent:				
In Placement Class	73	27	5	3
With PhD	60	56	67	48
Repeating	43	33	44	24
Placed:				
In Temporary Position	67	74	75	75
Placed with PHD	29	29	16	28
	81	87	81	93
Percent Placed In:*				
Ph.D. Department	40	43	38	37
M.A. Department	14	13	19	11
Undergraduate political science or combined	30	30	32	30
Two-year College	2	1	0	7
Non-academic	14	13	11	15
Percent Placed by Field:*				
American Government	33	27	37	28
Public Policy	3	7	5	3
Comparative/Area Studies	24	27	22	36
International Relations	18	19	20	10
Public Administration	4	3	5	5
Political Theory	14	12	3	13
Methodology	1	1	2	0
Other	3	4	7	5
Total	100	100	100	100

\*Data for African American and Latino faculty in these categories are combined from the 1992 and 1994 surveys to increase the N.

December and January, fewer listings appeared.

The APSA departmental survey asked department chairs about hiring prospects in their programs—and the latest reports have been encouraging. When asked in fall of 1993 about prospects for hiring in 1994–95, chairs reported they expected a 7% increase in overall hiring. They anticipated that numbers of net new positions would increase by half. These figures may reflect optimism that departments can start to build their way out of a period of deferred hiring since the start of this decade.

These data are just part of a jumble of conflicting signals about the future academic job market. On the one hand, there are severe pressures on universities likely to impact future employment opportunities. Recent *Campus Trends* reports of the American Council on Education (ACE) document the pervasive financial pressures facing American higher education, with state systems, such as in New York, California, and Virginia, particularly under severe constraints.

Most institutions report no real increases in operating budgets after inflation for several years running.

Administrators report plans to reduce numbers of faculty through attrition and to increase numbers of part-time hires to respond to these financial pressures. On the other hand, evidence from *Campus Trends* shows that growth still is the norm for numbers of faculty and academic programs. In 1994, 49% of colleges and universities reported increasing numbers of regular faculty, and 17% reducing them—though 38% of research and doctoral institutions said they expected faculty cutbacks. Fifty-four percent of schools said they expected to increase the size of academic programs, compared to 34% expecting reductions.

An important longer-term trend is the growing number of high school graduates, following from the baby “boomlet” of the mid-1970s. Numbers of private and public high school graduates should grow 32% between 1992 and the year 2009, according to data compiled by the *Wall Street Journal*.