

HSS Employment Survey, 1993-1994: "A serious problem facing new graduates and scholars"

*By Julie R. Newell, Southern College of Technology,
with assistance from Moran Tompkins*

This report covers searches made during the 1992-93 academic year for positions beginning before the fall of 1994. In previous years, searches were included in the HSS employment survey report on the basis of their having been advertised since the last report. This resulted in positions from different academic years being included in a single report. Beginning with last year's report, searches are to be included in the report for the year in which the position begins. Thus, one artifact of the transition from the old system is that some of the data represented below was gathered with the old questionnaire and some was gathered with the new questionnaire. Besides differences of format, the new questionnaire accidentally excluded the question intended to gather information on the fields of training of applicants. This report is based on 22 surveys that were returned for searches related to positions beginning before fall 1994. The respondents in three of these surveys indicated that their searches did not apply to positions intended for the 1993-1994 year and these responses were omitted from the data tables and discussion below. The remaining 19 searches resulted in the hiring of 15 individuals out of a total of approximately 1,314 applications submitted. Admittedly, several individuals are likely to have applied for more than one of the positions, but even the fact that the responses document only 15 hires is cause for considerable concern. While the data-gathering mechanism is far from perfect (and under revision), the low numbers it generates reflect the anecdotal evidence provided by numerous of our colleagues searching for ways to apply their graduate training to making a living.

Last year's report could only be attempted with the caveat that the small numbers of returns made extrapolation from the figures and comparisons of percentages extremely problematic, and this year's report suffers a similar but exacerbated difficulty. As I pointed out then, "the numbers are so small that small errors, uncertainties, or ambiguities easily generate large swings in percentages. . . . Errors, uncertainties,

and ambiguities abound." In addition, both reports are skewed to a greater or lesser degree by the change in the period covered and the revisions in the questionnaire. The 1990-91 report included 42 positions, the 1991-92 report included 48 positions (although focusing on the 37 United States positions), and last year's report included 22 searches and 23 positions. The numbers are down yet again with this year's 19 searches/positions and 15 hires. In what follows, the numbers in square brackets are carried forward from last year's report for comparison purposes.

Excluding the one search for which no information on applicants was available and remembering that several respondents provided estimates rather than actual counts, 1,314 applications were received for 18 positions (an average of 73 [60.3]). The 14 permanent positions drew 1,168 applications (or an average of 83.4 [67.4]). The 5 temporary positions together attracted 146 applications (or an average of 29.2 [15—over half for a single position]).

The form used to gather data for this report asks for the number of male applicants, female applicants, and minority applicants. In an attempt to increase both the number and the accuracy of responses to this question, the new version of the survey instrument is divided into two parts and asks that the second part be forwarded to the campus affirmative action office if necessary. Still, responses tend to be incomplete or lacking entirely. Often respondents can provide gender and protected class information only for their short-list candidates, and even that may be incomplete. For the 14 positions for which applicants were identified by gender, there were a total of 906 applications. 654 (72.2%) [71.2%] came from males. For the permanent positions, the disparity is almost identical with 560 (73.7%) [71.9%] males among 760 applicants. The 15 filled positions went to 7 (46.7%) [36.8%] male candidates and 8 (53.3%) [63.2%] female candidates. For the 13 permanent positions, 61.5% [75%] (8) of the successful candidates were women.

The applicants reflected in these

survey responses were predominantly Ph.D.s and 16 of the 19 searches required that applicants hold the Ph.D. Recent graduates did particularly well among the hires, however, with at least 6 individuals who received their degrees in or after 1991 hired for these positions beginning in the 1993-1994 academic year.

Even with the lack of continuity caused by revising the data gathering system for these annual reports, the constant decrease in number of positions coupled with the increase in the number of applications per search indicates a serious problem facing both new graduates and scholars in the history and philosophy of science, technology, and medicine who have not yet secured permanent positions. Three of the survey respondents seem to have described the situation fully. "There is an oversupply of excellent candidates," commented the first. "Application pool with Ph.D.'s in History of Science was highly qualified, and few had permanent positions," added the second. But many of us can identify with the frustration of the third respondent: "We had a number of strong candidates, both with history of science credentials and without. I'd like to think they all ended up with good positions, but that doesn't seem the way things go these days."

Job listing available on internet

Positions open are announced below, on pages 30 - 31. Notices of job announcements are available on HSSJOBS, an electronic bulletin board accessible via the Internet Anonymous File Transfer Protocol (FTP). This file is available for anonymous ftp at the site of ftp.u.washington.edu, in the directory/pub/user-supported/hss, under the filename hssjobs. Contact your local computer network department for detailed instructions on how to log on to the HSSJOBS electronic bulletin.

1993-1994 Employment Survey: Tabulated Results

Category I: HP/STM was the Desired Area of Expertise									Successful Candidate
Job Description					Applicant Pool				Gender, Protected Class, Degree: Date, Field
Fields	Back-ground	Rank	Advertising Media	Total	Male, Female, Protected Class	Degrees: D, ABD with D by start, ABD, other	Fields: HP/STM Hist, not Hist		
Armstrong St College	S,T	D,T ₁ ,T ₂	Asst Prof	1,2,4	24	17,7,2	17,0,7,0	NR	M,no,D:NR,HP/STM
U Manchester	S,T,M,PS	D	Lecturer	6	12	NR	NR	NR	M,no,D:NR,NR
Southern Tech	S,T	D, T ₁	Asst Prof	1,2,6	34	NR	NR	NR	F,no,D:1993,HP/STM
U Mass, Lowell	S	D, T ₁	Asst Prof	2,4,6	63	49,14,2	56,2,2,3	52,9,2	F,no,D:1993,HP/STM
U New Mexico	S	D,T ₁	Asst Prof	1,2	56	46,10,6	42,14,0,0	44,5,7	M,yes,D:1992,HP/STM
U Sydney	N	D	Lecturer	6	NR	NR	NR	NR	M,NR,D:1992,btology
TEMPORARY									
Isis	S,T,M,PS	D,A,PH	Mng/Asst Edtr	1-5	30	11,19,NR	NR	14,4,12	M,no,MA:1987,HP,STM
Inst. for Med & Hum	M	D	Visiting Prof	2,6	14	12,2,0	14,0,0,0	NR	NR
U Oklahoma	S	D	Visiting Asst Prof	4,6	17	12,5,NR	15,2,0,0	NR	M,no,D:1991,HP/STM
U Pittsburgh	S,M,PS	D	Asst Prof	2,6	69	53,16,6	54,15,0,0	0,0,69	no suitable applicant
Category II: HP/STM was the Desired Secondary Area of Expertise									
PERMANENT									
none									
TEMPORARY									
none									
Category III: HP/STM was One of Several Possible Areas of Expertise									
Job Description					Applicant Pool				Successful Candidate
Fields	Back-ground	Rank	Advertising Media	Total	Male, Female, Protected Class	Degrees: D, ABD with D by start, ABD, other	Fields: HP/STM Hist, not Hist	Gender, Protected Class, Degree: Date, Field	
PERMANENT									
California Inst Tech	N	D	Asst Prof	1,4	294	191,103,8	NR	NR	F,yes,D:1993,HP/STM
NEH	S,PS	D,T ₁ ,T ₂	Program Officer	2,6	60 (approx)	NR	NR	NR	F,no,NR:NR,NR
Northwestern St U (LA)	N	D,A,M,PH	Dept Head	1,2	17	15,1,1	13,0,0,4	0,10,7	F,yes,D:1976,Anthropology
Oregon State U	N	D	Professor	1,2,4,6	92	80,12,4	92,0,0,0	NR	1st-F,no,D:NR,HP/STM
PA Hist Comm	N	M,PH	Historian	6	20	15,4,2	7,4,0,9	NR	2nd-M,no,D,NR,History
Rensselaer	N	D	Asst Prof	2,4-6	171	123,48,5	NR	NR	F,no,D:1989,HP/STM
Stanford	T	D,T ₁ ,T ₂	Assoc Prof	5,6	25	24,1,2	23,2,0,0	18,3,4	F,no,D:NR, PolSci,Anthro
Washington St U	NR	NR	Historian	1,2	300(approx)	NR	NR	NR	not yet filled position canceled
TEMPORARY									
NMHHMF*	S,T,M	M	Project Manager	5,6	16	6,10,NR	NR	2,5,9	not yet filled
*National Museum of Health and Medicine Foundation									
Key to the Tables									
Fields:		Background:		Advertising Media:		NR: No Reply			
S	History of Science	D	Ph. D Required	1	AHA Newsletter				
T	History of Technology	A	Archival Training, Experience	2	Chronicle of Higher Education				
M	History of Medicine	M	Museum Training, Experience	3	AAHM Newsletter				
PS	Philosophy of Science	PH	Public History	4	HSS Newsletter	Degrees:			
N	none of the above	T ₁	Teach American or Western History Survey	5	SHOT Newsletter	D Ph.D.			
		T ₂	Teach World History or Non-Western Cultures	6	Other	ABD All But Dissertation			
		MD	Medical Doctor						

The employment survey is compiled annually by Julie R. Newell. Questions may be addressed to her at the Humanities and Social Sciences Department, Southern College of Technology, 1100 South Marietta Parkway, Marietta, GA 30062; phone (404) 528-7481; E-mail: jnewell@sct.edu.