Foreword

APSA analyzes the advertisements for positions posted on APSA’s eJobs site every six months and annually for trends in the political science job market. We calculate key metrics regarding the number of positions advertised, currently and over time, and on the salient characteristics of those positions. These include academic subfields or areas of expertise, the rank of the positions, the duration of the positions (temporary or permanent employment), and the duration of funding for the positions (temporary or dedicated), as well as their location.

APSA eJobs reports contain findings regarding notable changes in these key metrics, as well as on current topics of interest vis-à-vis the eJobs advertisements data at the current time. Below please find the APSA eJobs Report for the 2018-2019 Academic Year.

Between July 2018 and June 2019, a total of 1,220 advertisements were posted to the eJobs platform. While this number was lower than the total for 2017-2018, it was higher than the total 1,141 jobs posted from 2016-2017, indicating a stable job market for candidates in political science. Postings were predominantly for positions in International Relations (23.11%), American Government and Politics (19.6%), and Comparative Politics (15.5%) subfields. In relation to position and rank, most postings were for junior faculty positions (89%), and of those, 58% were for tenure-stream positions.

Most positions were posted in California, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Positions posted in states in the Northeast US Census Region had by far the highest tenure track to non-tenure track ratio (50.4% to 49.6%) followed by the South (64.2% TT/ 35.8% NTT), the Midwest (65.4% TT, 34.6% NTT), the West (69.9% TT/ 30.1% NTT), and International positions (75.3% TT/ 24.7% NTT).

The academic job market is still centralized around the eJobs clearinghouse, but changes in the timing of market phases indicate that the market may be serving two pools of candidates; or rather, there are two markets serving candidates for positions in political science: an academic job market with long-term positions that peaks in August around the APSA Annual Meeting, and an academic/ non-academic job market with contingent positions that, while opening positions all year-round, also peaks once late in the fall semester, and once early in the spring semester.

Considering these findings, the APSA urges its membership to bring important topics and questions to our attention. We aim to fold in research based on this feedback from members through subsequent reports and materials on the American Political Science Association website, www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/Data-on-the-Profession. You can also contact us at surveys@apsanet.org, or by calling the main APSA office at 202-483-2512.

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1 A note about the data: Between October 2014 and June 2015, the eJobs database was on a different platform. Data for these months are excluded from this report. Starting in July 2017, duplicate job postings were tracked. A posting is considered a duplicate if the same job is advertised in multiple postings. Of the 1,292 postings made in 2017-2018, 155 were duplicates, making the true number of postings 1,137. As duplicate postings have not been identified in previous years, they are included in the total number of postings in this report when drawing comparisons over time.
Key Findings for the 2018-2019 Academic Year

Volume and Timing of Position Opening/ Advertisements

- During the 2018-2019 academic year, a total of 1,220 job advertisements were posted on APSA’s elobs site, a slight decrease from the previous year, which had 1,292 positions. However, this was an increase from 2016-2017, which had 1,141 positions advertised in total.

- Eight of ten months in the 2018-2019 academic year decreased in the number of positions posted in comparison to 2017-2018, while August, November, December, and February continued moderate increases in the number of positions for the second year in a row, at 15%, 4%, 12%, and 8%, respectively. March declined, and April continued a decline for two years in a row, May declined substantially, and June recovered only a fourth of the number of postings lost in the last academic year. July also declined, as did September and October, but only September netted negative growth since 2016-2017.

Geography and Rank/ Duration of Positions

- Postings for positions outside the U.S. comprised 13.28% of all postings from July 2018 through June 2019, predominant countries included Canada, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Most international postings were in Europe (49.38%), followed by the Americas (29.63%) and Asia (14.81%).

- Most positions were posted in California, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Of the states, California had the most positions, but had only half as many as the previous academic year (5.96%), New York had 4.36%, also a notable decrease from the previous academic year, and Massachusetts, at 3.41% had the highest number of postings. Postings for positions in the US were generally for positions in the US Northeast (32.04%) and the South (31.38%), and to a lesser extent, the West (18.53%) and Midwest (18.05%).

- Positions posted in states in the Northeast US Census Region had by far the highest tenure track to non-tenure track ratio (50.4% TT/ 49.6% NTT) followed by the South (64.2% TT/ 35.8% NTT), the Midwest (65.4% TT, 34.6% NTT), the West West (69.9% TT/ 30.1% NTT), and International positions (75.3% TT/ 24.7% NTT).

Subfields (and Candidates)

- The largest major subfield category for postings was American Government and Politics, which supplied just over a quarter of jobs at 25.57%, followed by International Relations at 23.11%. The “Other” category – one often used for specific research areas like those defined in post-doctoral positions – followed with the third highest proportion, at 21.72%. Comparative Politics held steady to 2017-2018, with 15.16% of positions advertised.

- Public Policy and Political Theory also supplied a significant number of positions, at 11.56% and 8.93%, respectively; they were followed by Public Administration (6.07%), Methodology (4.43%), and Public Law (3.44%).
What eJobs Tells Us About the 2018-2019 Job Market

1. **Job posting numbers remained steady for the 2018-2019 academic year compared to the previous two years, indicating stability in the number of jobs available to candidates.**

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Of those states, those in the Northeast region had by far the highest tenure track to non-tenure track ratio (50.4% tenure track to 49.6% non-tenure track), followed by the South (64.2% TT/ 35.8% NTT), the Midwest (65.4% TT, 34.6% NTT), the West (69.9% TT/ 30.1% NTT), and International positions (75.3% TT/ 24.7% NTT).

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2. **Candidates (and employers) for different types of positions – notably tenure-track academic positions vs. pre-docs, post-docs, visiting professorships, lectureships, adjunct positions, and non-academic positions, etc. – should target their efforts at different times of year to optimize matches for both parties.**

The academic job market is centralized around the eJobs clearinghouse, but changes in the timing of phases for the jobs indicate that the market is serving two pools of candidates. The opening of the market, and therefore the phases of hiring, differ for different types of positions. For example, evidence indicates that candidates seeking tenure-track jobs must enter the market in late summer/ early fall; while those seeking non-academic or non-tenure-track jobs like post-docs face a much more diffuse market. Although the non-tenure track/ non-academic job market continues all year long, candidates should begin their efforts in late fall/early winter, when there is a peak in positions opening, and/ or in early spring, when there is another peak (see Figure 2). Ideally, both candidates and employers would open all positions at one time during the year, and at the same time as the other jobs open for political science in August.

The eJobs website remains a clearinghouse for political science jobs, and coincides with the APSA Annual Meeting at the end of August or beginning of September, for academic and tenure line political science jobs. The cumulative monthly change in months over the academic years since 2010, when the academic political science job market contracted due to the recession, shows evidence that the tenure-track academic job market for political scientists has maintained a moderate level of centralization (see Figure 1 for a more

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2 For example, in comparison, data obtained from AcademicJobsOnline.org and analyzed by the authors indicates that in 2019, APSA had over 40 times more advertisements for positions.
The diffusion of job advertisements timing over the year could be interpreted as “market unraveling”, but when non-tenure track jobs are partitioned, the tenure-track market appears to be quite stable and centralized around eJobs and the APSA Annual Meetings. Rather than indicating that the job market is becoming more diffuse over the academic year, if we consider the type of positions advertised, it separates into two different markets, one with greater centralization and concentrated in the fall (tenure line positions), and the other diffused throughout the year (contingent positions).

Historical data show that tenure line jobs advertisements typically began in June, increased in July, peaked in August, and then decreased over the months of September, October, November, and December. When we separated these two markets we noted a secondary peaks for non-tenure-track jobs such as Visiting Professors, Lecturers, and Fellowships in both November and December, a peak on the rise in the last two academic years, and then again in February through March, April, and May, where May saw a significant decrease in postings (see Figure 1). In addition, we know that data from eJobs advertisements are biased toward tenure line and academic positions, indicating that postings for more non-tenure-track positions may be substantially greater. If these post-doc position advertisements are attempting to preempt the tenure-track job market by moving earlier and earlier away from the following August, then the market is likely to be having a detrimental effect on the tenure-track market, though that would not be seen in the volume of positions advertised, but rather the quality of the matches with respect to both of these job markets.

Figure 1. Percent Change in eJobs Advertisements, 2017-2019

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The market for tenure-line positions and that for other positions are two very different labor markets, and while the application processes for candidates are similar, the hiring practices may vary. Non-tenure-track academic jobs are less subject to more stringent regulations on hiring practices. The hiring practices for these positions are generally less codified and transparent. Of a survey of deans responding about practices concerning non-tenure-track hiring, few received “direct feedback from the board or president of [were] held accountable for the plans they develop[ed]…[indicating that] in the absence of repercussions, faculty hiring practices [were] unlikely to receive additional attention and consideration. The researchers noted that there was “…room for improvement when it comes to the processes used for making faculty hiring decisions… there is little planning, collective responsibility, or accountability for hiring decisions.”

Contingent positions often do not need as many, if any, upper-level approvals in a department or university. Efforts have been made to increase transparency in the job market to promote minimum standards in hiring practices, some more formal, like APSA’s Open Listing Policy in its Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science, and eJobs, its clearinghouse for academic jobs. Others are less formal, efforts like those on social media, where, for example, the hashtag #PSJMinfo on Twitter is being used to amalgamate information about jobs in the political science job market as an alternative to anonymous information reported on the Political Science Rumors website.

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Research shows that less transparency in hiring exerts downward pressure on minimum standards for hiring practices and the conditions of employment in general. Less regulated hiring also hampers efforts to improve diversity and inclusion in the discipline, for example, by narrowing searches for candidates, shortening timelines or hiring, and for awareness of the need to overcome implicit biases in gender, race, and sexual orientation.\(^6\)

3. **Timing matters, and may matter more so for Americanists, Comparatists, and International Relations scholars.**

Positions advertised were concentrated in the top three subfields – American Politics (26%), International Relations (23%), and Comparative Politics (15%). The next three subfields – Public Policy (12%), Political Theory (9%) – and the “Other” category (22%) also were the next subfields to list the most positions. The fields of Public Administration, Methodology, and Public Law were listed on the following proportions of job postings: Public Administration (6%), Methodology (4%), and Public Law (3%).

As shown in Figure 3 below, while scholars in the six subfields with lesser volume on the market can more successfully participate in job openings that occur almost all year long, scholars in the top three fields best target their efforts in the fall.

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