

Higher Education Employment and Wage Trends in New York State (2011-2014)

By Don Sutherland

During the most recent three-year period for which data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is available (2011-2014), higher education employment in New York State rose faster than national postsecondary employment and national employment as a whole. However, the median wage for postsecondary education employees in New York State fell faster than the median wage for all such workers nationwide and in contrast to an increase in the national median wage for all workers.

Higher education employment growth in New York State increased an average of 2.9% per year. Nationally, postsecondary education employment rose 1.4% per year. The median higher education wage in New York State declined an average of 1.5% per year while the national median wage for postsecondary education occupations fell by an average of 0.8% per year. During that three-year period, total national employment rose an average of 1.7% per year and the national median wage increased an average of 1.0% per year.

The ten higher education occupation areas that saw the fastest annualized employment growth in New York State during the last three years were as follows:

Occupation	Average Annual Employment Change	Average Annual Median Wage Change
Geography	30.3%	2.5%
Social Sciences	28.6%	- 0.4%
Philosophy & Religion	23.6%	- 5.8%
Chemistry	19.4%	- 0.2%
Law	17.7%	11.4%
Physics	17.6%	1.5%
Foreign Language & Literature	16.1%	- 0.5%
Computer Science	16.0%	0.7%
Anthropology & Archaeology	15.8%	- 3.4%
Economics	14.9%	7.0%
All New York State Higher Education Occupations	2.9%	- 2.9%
All National Higher Education Occupations	1.4%	- 0.8%
All National Occupations	1.7%	1.0%

The ten higher education occupation areas that saw the worst annualized three-year change in employment in New York State, many of which grew faster than the statewide rate, were as follows:

Occupation	Average Annual Employment Change	Average Annual Median Wage Change
Postsecondary Teachers, All Other	-28.9%	- 5.5%
Forestry & Conservation Science	-13.8%	- 8.0%
Library Science	- 3.3%	1.0%
Vocational Education	- 0.1%	1.5%
Nursing	3.4%	- 0.8%
Social Work	3.9%	1.4%
Area, Ethnic, & Cultural Studies	4.1%	- 6.8%
Health Specialties	4.2%	- 4.1%
Engineering	5.8%	1.7%
Art, Drama, & Music	6.1%	- 3.0%
All New York State Higher Education Occupations	2.9%	- 2.9%
All National Higher Education Occupations	1.4%	- 0.8%
All National Occupations	1.7%	1.0%

The rapid decline in postsecondary teacher, all other may well reflect a trend away from niche teaching categories in New York State. The pronounced decline in forestry and conservation science occupations may reflect the continuing structural evolution of the New York State economy. The modest decline in library science positions may, in part, be an outcome from the continuing advance in the Internet in particular and technology in general. Research beyond the scope of this blog would be required to better understand these trends, especially as a decline in library science employment might entail a potential trade-off in information literacy outcomes among students.

All ten higher education occupations currently offering the highest median wage in New York State experienced employment growth. Those positions saw average annualized employment growth of 11.8%. Those occupations were as follows:

Occupation	Median Wage (2014)	Average Annual Employment Change (2011-2014)
Law	\$110,370	17.7%
Economics	\$109,420	14.9%
Health Specialties	\$ 98,580	4.2%
Engineering	\$ 96,530	5.8%
Physics	\$ 91,700	17.6%
Architecture	\$ 88,880	8.4%
Atmospheric, Earth, Marine & Space Sciences	\$ 85,730	8.1%
Chemistry	\$ 85,060	19.4%
Computer Science	\$ 84,530	16.0%
Art, Drama, and Music	\$ 83,830	6.1%

The ten higher education occupations currently paying the lowest median wage in New York State saw employment increase at an average rate of 8.1% per year over the past three years. Those occupations were as follows:

Occupation	Median Wage (2014)	Average Annual Employment Change (2011-2014)
Graduate Teaching Assistants	\$39,250	10.6%
Forestry & Conservation Science	\$55,320	- 13.8%
Social Work	\$57,870	3.9%
Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement	\$60,000	7.0%
Recreation & Fitness Studies	\$60,090	12.4%
Education	\$61,930	9.0%
Vocational Education	\$62,150	- 0.1%
Philosophy & Religion	\$64,610	23.6%
Communications	\$66,940	11.9%
Foreign Language & Literature	\$67,370	16.1%

The composition of New York State higher education employment differed somewhat from the composition of higher education nationwide. In New York State, there were relatively more teachers than nationwide in the following fields: Art, Drama, & Music; Business; English Language & Literature; and, Health Specialties. There were relatively fewer New York State teachers than nationwide in the following areas: Graduate Teaching Assistants; Postsecondary Teachers, All Other; and, Vocational Education.

The ten areas accounting for the highest share of New York State higher education employment in 2014 were as follows:

Occupation	% Share of New York State Higher Education Employment	% Share Of National Higher Education Employment	Median New York State Wage as a % of the National Median Wage
Health Specialties	12.4%	11.0%	109.3%
Art, Drama, & Music	8.4%	6.4%	130.4%
Postsecondary Teachers, All Other	7.6%	12.4%	113.2%
Business	6.7%	5.6%	101.7%
English Language & Literature	6.2%	5.0%	123.6%
Graduate Teaching Assistants	5.4%	8.3%	124.3%
Vocational Education	4.4%	8.0%	128.5%
Education	4.4%	3.9%	103.7%
Mathematical Science	3.8%	3.5%	118.8%
Biological Science	3.2%	3.7%	109.0%

In 2014, six fields paid a median wage in New York State that was 20% or more above the national median wage for those occupations: Art, Drama, & Music (+30.4%); Vocational Education (+28.5%); Graduate Teaching Assistants (+24.3%); English Language & Literature (+23.6%); Architecture (+20.6%); and, Economics (+20.4%). Three fields paid median wages in New York State that were below the national median wage for those occupations: Forestry & Conservation (-34.2%); Social Work (-7.3%); and, Environmental Science (-3.8%).