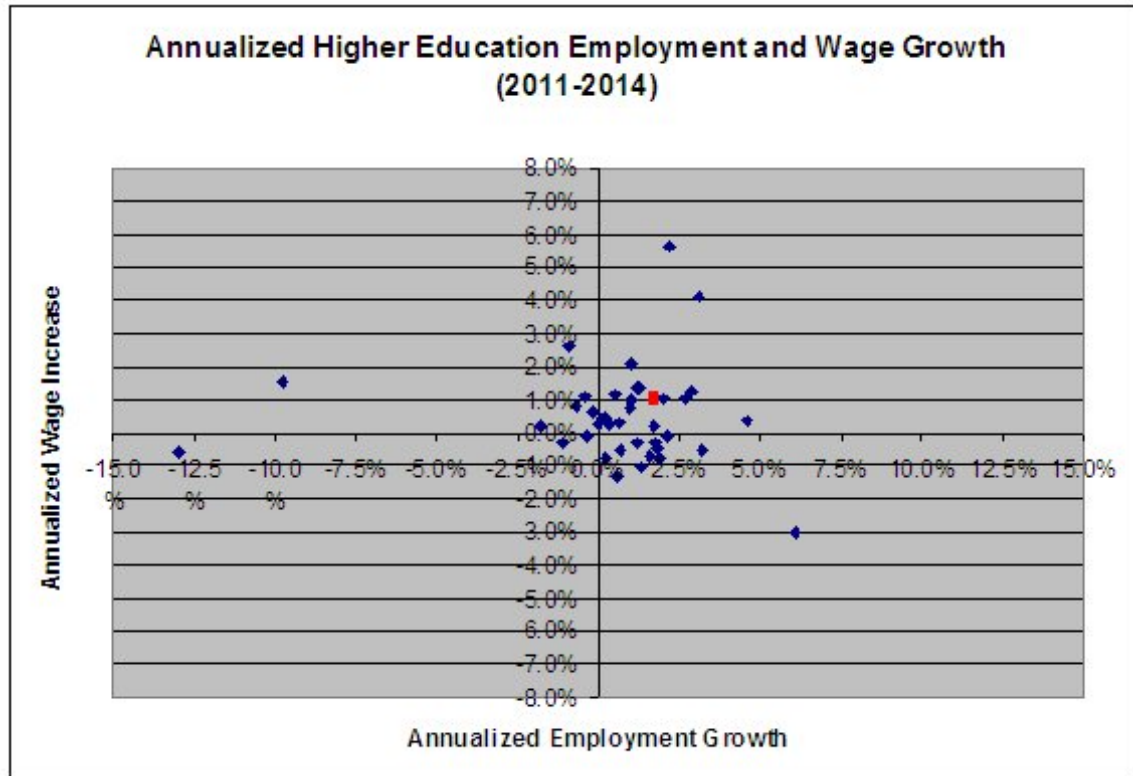


Higher Education Employment and Wage Trends (2011-2014)

By Don Sutherland

During the most recent three-year period for which data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics is available (2011-2014), higher education employment growth and median wage growth lagged the national figures. During that three year period, national employment increased 1.7% per year and the national median wage rose 1.0% per year (red point).



During 2011-14, 31% of higher education occupations saw employment increase at a rate that was faster than the average national employment growth rate while 69% saw relatively slower employment growth. Nearly a quarter (23%) of such occupations saw employment shrink over the three-year period.

In terms of wage growth during 2011-14, 31% of higher education occupations also saw the median wage increase at a rate that was faster than the national average for median wages, while 69% saw relatively slower growth in the median wage. Nearly two-in-five occupations (39%) saw a decrease in the median wage during the three-year period.

Overall, wage inequality in higher education was nearly the same as for all occupations. In higher education, the 75th percentile wage was 2.2 times the 25th percentile wage and the 90th percentile wage was 4.8 times the 10th percentile wage. Nationally, the 75th percentile wage was 2.5 times the 25th percentile wage and the 90th percentile wage was 4.9 times the 10th percentile wage.

The 10 higher education occupation areas that saw the fastest annualized employment growth over the past three years were as follows:

Occupation	Average Annual Employment Change	Average Annual Median Wage Change	2011 Ratio 75 th Percentile vs. 25 th Percentile	2014 Ratio 75 th Percentile vs. 25 th Percentile
Social Sciences, All Other	6.1%	-3.0%	1.8	2.1
Graduate Teaching Assistants	4.6%	0.4%	2.2	2.0
Social Work	3.2%	-0.5%	1.7	1.8
Health Specialties	3.1%	4.1%	2.4	2.5
Engineering	2.9%	1.3%	1.8	1.8
Art, Drama, and Music	2.7%	1.0%	1.9	1.9
Law	2.2%	5.6%	2.6	2.6
Foreign Language and Literature	2.1%	-0.1%	1.8	1.8
Environmental Science	2.0%	1.1%	1.9	1.9
Philosophy and Religion	1.9%	-0.8%	1.8	1.9
All Occupations	1.7%	1.0%	2.5	2.5

The 10 higher education occupations that saw the worst three-year employment growth over the past three years were as follows:

Occupation	Average Annual Employment Change	Average Annual Median Wage Change	2011 Ratio 75 th Percentile vs. 25 th Percentile	2014 Ratio 75 th Percentile vs. 25 th Percentile
Home Economics	-13.0%	-0.6%	2.0	1.9
Forestry & Conservation Science	- 9.8%	1.5%	1.8	1.8
Education	- 1.8%	0.2%	1.8	1.8
Vocational Education	- 1.1%	-0.3%	1.8	1.8
Agricultural Sciences	- 0.9%	2.6%	1.8	1.8
Sociology	- 0.7%	0.8%	1.8	1.8
Political Science	- 0.4%	1.1%	2.0	1.9
Area, Ethnic, & Cultural Studies	- 0.4%	-0.1%	1.9	1.8
Communications	- 0.2%	0.7%	1.8	1.9
Recreation & Fitness Studies	0.0%	0.3%	2.0	2.0
All Occupations	1.7%	1.0%	2.5	2.5

The ten occupations paying the highest median wage saw employment grow an average of 2.4% per year during 2011-14, bringing total employment to 282,630. Those occupations were as follows:

Occupation	Median Wage (2014)	Average Annual Employment Change (2011-2014)
Law	\$109,980	2.2%
Engineering	\$ 94,130	2.9%
Economics	\$ 90,870	1.0%
Health Specialties	\$ 90,210	3.1%
Agricultural Sciences	\$ 86,260	-0.9%
Forestry & Conservation Science	\$ 84,090	-9.8%
Atmospheric, Earth, Marine, & Space Sciences	\$ 81,780	0.7%
Physics	\$ 80,720	1.3%
Environmental Science	\$ 77,470	2.0%
Anthropology & Archaeology	\$ 74,750	1.8%

The ten occupations paying the highest median wage saw employment grow an average of 1.1% per year during 2011-14, bringing total employment to 677,880. Those occupations were as follows:

Occupation	Median Wage (2014)	Average Annual Employment Change (2011-2014)
Graduate Teaching Assistants	\$31,570	4.6%
Vocational Education	\$48,360	-1.1%
Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement	\$57,200	0.6%
Recreation & Fitness Studies	\$58,280	0.0%
Foreign Language & Literature	\$59,490	2.1%
Education	\$59,720	-1.8%
English Language & Literature	\$60,160	1.6%
Postsecondary Teachers, All Other	\$62,330	1.3%
Social Work	\$62,440	3.2%
Communications	\$62,550	-0.2%