

From the Editor

Jasper P. Neel, Jeanne C. Nelson

ADE Bulletin 56 (February 1978), pp. i–iv

ISSN: 0001-0898

CrossRef DOI: 10.1632/ade.56.i

Copyright © 1978 by The Association of Departments of English

All material published by the The Association of Departments of English in any medium is protected by copyright. Users may link to the ADE Web page freely and may quote from ADE publications as allowed by the doctrine of fair use. Written permission is required for any other reproduction of material from any ADE publication.

Send requests for permission to reprint material to the ADE permissions manager by mail (26 Broadway, New York, NY 10004-1789), e-mail (permissions@mla.org), or fax (646 458-0030).

FROM THE EDITOR

This year's report on the job market is based on three sources. The first and most important is the 1976-77 survey of the 139 doctoral-granting English departments. The second is an update of last year's report on the *Job Information Lists*. The third is a survey of doctoral-granting English departments made by ADE in 1972.

The 1976-77 Survey

In September 1977 a questionnaire on Ph.D. job placement was sent to the 139 doctoral-granting English departments on the MLA's computer list. All 139 departments responded. The questionnaire was designed by the MLA's Advisory Committee on the Job Market, and the survey was endorsed by both the Advisory Committee and the ADE Executive Committee. Between 1 September 1976 and 1 September 1977, 1,094 doctorates in English (Ph.D.s and D.A.s; Ed.D.s are not included) were awarded; 669 (61.2%) of the 1,094 found full-time teaching positions. The specific items on the questionnaire are listed in Chart 1.

The questionnaire speaks for itself, but the gross figures alone fail to reveal some interesting information:

- Nineteen departments granted more than 15 degrees; these 19 (13.7% of the total departments) awarded 408 degrees (37.3% of the total number of doctorates).
- Eight departments produced more than 20 doctorates, 2 more than 25, and 1 more than 30.
- The average number of doctorates granted per department was 7.9.
- Nineteen D.A.s were granted (1.7% of all doctorates); 17 of the 19 D.A.s (89.5%) found full-time academic positions.
- Twenty-two departments placed all of their graduates in full-time academic positions; 19 of the 22 departments awarded fewer than 6 doctorates. Six departments were unable to place any of their graduates in full-time academic positions. Five departments awarded no doctorates in 1976-77.

While the results of the questionnaire were more pleasing than anyone dared hope, they should be read carefully. To be sure, it is encouraging that 61.2% of last year's doctorates were able to find full-time teaching positions, but it is less than encouraging that only 42.6% were able to find tenure-accruing positions, and it is probable that no more than 35% of the class of 1976-77 will ultimately receive tenure. By the same token, it

Chart 1
MLA-ADE Survey of Ph.D. Placement

	Ph.D. Recipients	% of Total
1. Full-time tenure-track appointment	466	42.6
2. Full-time renewable appointment not leading to tenure	141	12.9
3. Full-time non-renewable appointment for one year or less	62	5.7
4. Part-time appointment	114	10.4
5. Post-doctoral fellowship	9	0.8
6. Unemployed and seeking academic employment in a specific city or area	31	2.8
7. Unemployed and seeking academic employment anywhere	81	7.4
8. In nonacademic employment but still seeking academic employment*	44	4.0
9. In nonacademic employment and not seeking academic employment*	56	5.1
10. Unknown	90	8.2
Total	1094	99.9

* For those holding nonacademic positions, please list the type of job and the employer, if known. [Sixty-two departments provided information about their graduates who had found nonacademic employment. The following jobs, or general job types, were recorded. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of times each job was recorded; no number indicates that the job appeared only once.] Editing (11), university administration (7), library work (5), secondary school teaching (5), homemaker (4), publishing (4), freelance writing (3), MBA program (3), research (3), state government (3), military (2), public relations (2), real estate (2), religious (2), word processing (2), advertising, banking, book-binder/picture-framer, building and construction, building musical instruments, chef, Congressional assistant, certified public accountant, consumer advocate, Educational Testing Service, English as a Second Language in a major electronics corporation, gourmet food store, industrial relations, insurance, Internal Revenue Service, journalism, law school, management, medical school, municipal government, museum work, musical director, National Endowment for the Humanities, opera singer, receptionist, State Department, technical writer, telephone company.

would be dangerous to assume that the D.A. is a more viable degree in today's job market than is the Ph.D. While such an assumption may well be true, it is worth remembering that many D.A. programs were designed for faculty members who already have full-time teaching positions and wish to pursue advanced graduate study in a program that emphasizes teaching rather than research; thus, a significant number of the 17 D.A.s who were listed as having "found" full-time positions had such positions already and were never actually on the job market.

The 1976-77 Job Information Lists

Chart 2
Tenure-accruing Assistant Professorships
Listed in the *JIL*, 1971-77

	71-72	72-73	73-74	74-75	75-76	76-77
Old & Mid. Eng. Lit.	21	14	16	13	10	15
Renaissance	24	20	11	19	12	13
Rest. & 18th Cent.	27	12	16	11	9	14
19th Brit.	33	22	24	31	23	15
Amer. Lit., Gen.	30	14	24	21	20	18
Colon. Amer. Lit.	3	3	5	4	4	7
19th Amer. Lit.	3	5	6	8	3	8
Mod. Br. &/or Amer.	25	20	24	22	21	19
Literary Crit.	9	3	7	4	5	7
Drama	10	9	13	13	7	8
Linguistics	34	34	20	42	41	53
Rhet. & Comp.	12	12	23	30	27	56
Creative Writing	13	12	14	12	6	29
Comp. Lit.	13	10	13	12	14	14
Black Studies	21	13	16	12	7	18
Folklore	3	7	1	5	6	7
Eng. Ed.	11	7	3	6	2	13
Journalism	8	7	9	8	12	3
Tech. Writing	4	2	4	8	5	7
Children's Lit.	7	7	2	7	1	6
Canadian Lit.	4	1	2	1	2	3
ESL/TESL	1	2	3	4	3	11
Communications	2	4	0	5	2	8
Amer. Studies	0	0	0	3	3	15
Generalist	16	14	14	12	12	17
Reading	3	1	1	2	3	0
Devel. Eng.	*	*	*	*	*	7
Women's Studies	*	*	*	*	*	3
Film	*	*	*	*	*	5
Other	2	1	3	12	3	6
Total	339	256	274	327	263	405

*Positions in this area were counted in "Other."

The information in Chart 2 was taken from the *MLA Job Information Lists* published since the fall of 1971. The following types of jobs were not counted: jobs for associate or full professors, jobs for M.A.s or A.B.D.s only, term appointments that could not lead to tenure, and "possible but not yet authorized" positions. The purpose of the count was to discover how many

definite, tenure-accruing positions for new doctorates had been advertised in the four "regular" issues of the *JIL* in each academic year since 1971. In reading Chart 2 it is particularly important to be aware of its limitations. First, it is not a listing of all the jobs in English; it is only a list of the definite, apparently tenure-accruing jobs advertised in the *JIL*. Second, since some jobs for new Ph.D.s are not advertised in the *JIL*, the MLA and ADE offices have no record of them. Third, since many jobs do not materialize until July or even August, it is impossible for them to be advertised in the four "regular" issues of the *JIL*. Fourth, many of the jobs which were advertised as "possible" or "doubtful" in the *JIL*, and thus were not included in the count, did in fact materialize and were filled. Fifth, since many of the *JIL* advertisements are ambiguous, one must guess whether a job is definite or uncertain. Sixth, when departments stated that two or more areas of specialization were acceptable for a single position, only the first specialty listed was counted; in no case was one job listing counted more than once.

The figures for 1976-77, which appear here for the first time, reveal nothing surprising. The number of tenure-track positions for composition/rhetoric specialists continues to increase—doubling from 1972-73 to 1973-74 and then doubling again from 1975-76 to 1976-77. Linguistics, creative writing, English as a Second Language, and American Studies also showed large increases in 1976-77. With the 1976-77 count, it became necessary to create three new headings: developmental English, film, and women's studies; in previous years, positions in those fields had been listed in the "Other" category.

The 1972 Survey of Departments Offering the Doctorate

In October 1972, ADE surveyed the 127 American English departments that offered the doctorate. Of the 127, 111 (87.4%) responded. These 111 departments reported awarding 1,286 doctorates. Chart 3 compares information gathered from the thirty largest departments in 1971-72 with information gathered from the same thirty departments in 1976-77.

Chart 3

Largest Ph.D.- producing departments	Doctorates awarded in 1971-72	Doctorates in 1976-77	Percent decline
1-10	394	195	50
11-20	231	184	20
21-30	172	97	44
Total	797	476	40

Obviously the annual production rate of doctorates in English is declining (the number produced by all 127 departments in 1971-72 was *probably* 1441, and the peak year for doctoral production was 1972-73 with *probably* 1455*). Whereas the two largest Ph.D.-producing departments in 1971-72 awarded 58 and 57 degrees respectively, the largest Ph.D.-producing department in 1976-77 awarded 32, and the two largest departments in 1971-72 reduced production to 23 and 22 degrees in 1976-77. Of the 46 departments that produced 10 or more doctorates in 1971-72, 3 produced the same number of doctorates in 1976-77 as in 1971-72, 6 produced more, and 37 produced fewer. Of the 37 that produced fewer, 11 produced half, or less than half, of their 1971-72 total, and 6 produced one-third, or less than one-third, of their 1971-72 total. In short, the graduate establishment produced about 25% fewer doctorates in 1976-77 than it produced four years earlier in 1972-73, and it seems likely that in 1977-78, for the first time since 1967-68, fewer than 1,000 doctorates in English will be awarded.

The conclusion of last year's report on the job market read as follows:

It seems possible that as many as 2,400 Ph.D.s in English will seek employment during the year; approximately 1,200 new Ph.D.s in English will enter the job market for the first time; perhaps as many as 600 job seekers who received a Ph.D. in 1975-76 and failed to find employment will undertake the job search again;

*The figures for 1971-72 and 1972-73 are based on *Earned Degrees Conferred*, published annually by HEW, and on *A Fact Book on Higher Education: Earned Degrees*, published annually by the American Council on Education. Both books are somewhat difficult to decipher, but when used to complement each other, they offer fairly accurate figures.

and perhaps as many as 600 currently employed Ph.D.s will be denied tenure or will reach the end of a nonrenewable term appointment and thus be forced to seek employment at another institution. . . . Though it would be useless to guess how many jobs will be available to the 2,400-plus job seekers in 1976-77, I am certain that the number of jobs will not approach 2,400—or even 1,200, for that matter (*ADE Bulletin* 52 [February 1977] i-ii).

In view of this year's Ph.D. placement survey, that conclusion was not far wrong, and this year's conclusion is not very different. Our guess is that about 500 of the Ph.D. class of 1976-77 have completed the only serious attempt they will ever make to find a position as an untenured assistant professor (approximately 350 will receive tenure at their first job; 56 already have satisfactory nonacademic positions; and approximately 100, having tried unsuccessfully to find a permanent position, will never seriously try again). The other 600 will reenter the job market at least once and perhaps two or three times in the next few years. Obviously some will be successful—many more will not.

A guess about the state of this year's job market is just that. Nevertheless, it seems likely that in 1977-78 there will again be more than 2,000 job seekers (there are about 3,200 individual subscribers to the English Edition of the MLA's *Job Information Lists*). There is no way even to guess about the number of full-time positions that will be available to those 2,000-plus job seekers, nor is there any way of determining the number of Ph.D.-holders who, having looked for employment in years past, will simply give up hopes for a career in teaching and begin to look for employment elsewhere.

Jasper P. Neel
Jeanne C. Nelson

1978 ADE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Sammye Greer, Illinois Wesleyan University, 1978 President

Randall W. Ackley, Juneau-Douglas Community College
Bruce E. Coad, Mountain View Community College
Arthur B. Coffin, Montana State University
Marianna W. Davis, Benedict College
Arthur M. Eastman, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
James Goodwin, Sam Houston State University
William Harmon, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Peter Lindblom, Miami-Dade Community College
A. Walton Litz, Princeton University
Ralph W. Rader, University of California, Berkeley
Carol Smith, Douglass College, Rutgers University

The Association would like to thank the following ADE officers whose terms ended in December 1977:

Alan M. Hollingsworth, Michigan State University, 1977 President
William A. Gibson, Idaho State University
Thomas Munck, Blue Mountain Community College
Harriet Sheridan, Carleton College

SPRING ADE MEETINGS

ADE will sponsor meetings at the following conferences this spring.

COLLEGE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION, Boston, 6-8 April

"Should the Teaching of English Be Separated from the English Department?"

Speakers:

Harry Crosby, College of Basic Studies at Boston University
Susan Miller, Ohio State University
Jasper P. Neel, ADE

Session Chair:

Ulrich Wicks, University of Maine, Orono

CONFERENCE ON COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION, Denver, 31 March-2 April

"Involving the Entire English Department in Teaching Composition"

Speakers:

Thomas Farrell, St. Louis Community College
Richard Larson, Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY
Jeanne C. Nelson, ADE

Session Chair:

Jasper P. Neel, ADE

NORTHEAST MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION, SUNY-Albany, 23-25 March

"Should There Be A Northeast ADE?"

The NEMLA meeting will be an open discussion of the possibility of forming a Northeast Association of Departments of English.