

Teaching at the College Level

by Sara Tusek



JOB DESCRIPTION

Please see the April '08 ALOE for information on the college and university system in the USA.

College and university faculty members (instructors and professors) are organized into departments based on academic subject or field. They typically teach several related courses in their subjects, and may instruct undergraduate or graduate students, or both.

College and university faculty (professors) may give lectures to several hundred students in large halls, lead small seminars, or supervise students in laboratories.

They prepare lectures, exercises, and laboratory experiments; grade exams and papers; and advise and work with students individually. In universities, they also supervise graduate students' teaching and research. College faculty work with an increasingly varied student population made up of growing shares of part-time, older, and culturally and racially diverse students.

Most full-time faculty members serve on academic or administrative committees that deal with the policies of their institution, departmental matters, academic issues, curricula, bud-

gets, purchases of equipment, and hiring. Department chairpersons are faculty members who usually teach some courses but have heavier administrative responsibilities.

Full professors—those who have reached the highest level in their field—usually spend a larger portion of their time conducting research than do assistant professors, instructors, and lecturers.

Most faculty members must be present for classes, usually 12 to 16 hours per week, and for faculty and committee meetings. Most establish regular office hours for student consultations, usually 3 to 6 hours per week. Otherwise, faculty members are free to decide when and where they will work and how much time to devote to course preparation, grading, study, research, graduate student supervision, and other activities.

JOB QUALIFICATIONS

Four-year colleges and universities usually require candidates for full-time, tenure-track positions to hold a doctoral degree. They may hire mas-

ter's degree holders or doctoral candidates for certain disciplines, or for part-time and temporary jobs. In 2-year colleges, master's degree holders fill most full-time teaching positions.

College and university professors should communicate and relate well with students, enjoy working with them, and be able to motivate them. They should have inquiring and analytical minds and a strong desire to pursue and disseminate knowledge. In addition, they must be self-motivated and able to work in an environment in which they receive little direct supervision.



<http://www.dls.gov/OCO/ocos066.htm>

College and university teachers instruct students in a wide variety of academic and vocational subjects beyond the high school level. Most of these students are working toward an academic degree, but many others are studying for a license or certification to improve their knowledge or career skills. Postsecondary teachers include college and university faculty, postsecondary career and technical education teachers, and graduate teaching assistants.

Teaching in any venue involves forming a lesson plan, presenting material to students, responding to students learning needs, and evaluating students' progress. In addition to teaching, college and university teachers, particularly those at 4-year colleges and universities, perform and publish a significant amount of research in the subject they teach. They also must keep up with new developments in their field and may consult with government, business, nonprofit, and community organizations.

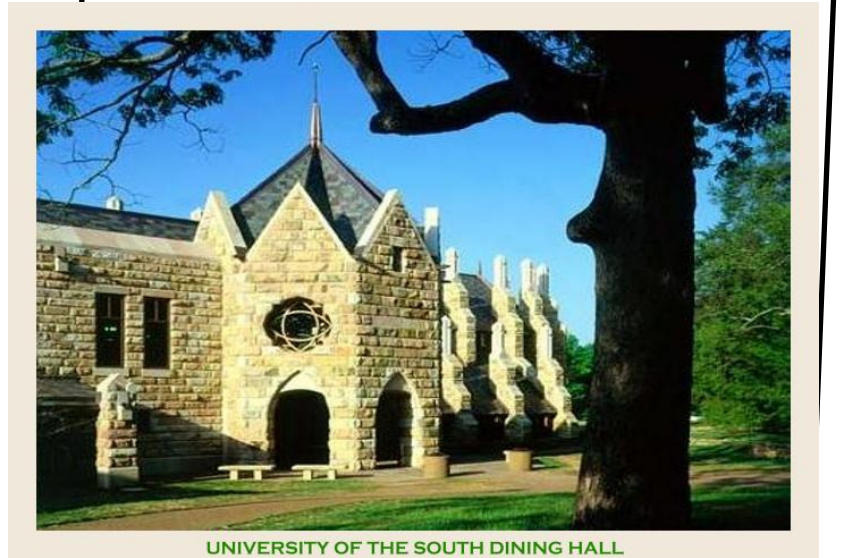
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A Lesson on English

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“A Lesson on English” is a series of short lessons created for people who want to become fluent in conversational English. The lessons are practical and useful for students learning English in a traditional classroom setting or on their own.

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SALARY AND PROSPECTS

Median annual earnings of all college and university faculty members in May 2008 were \$58,830. The middle 50 percent earned between \$41,600 and \$83,960. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$28,870, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$121,850.

Earnings for college faculty vary with the rank and type of institution, geographic area, and field. According to a 2008–09 survey by the American Association of University Professors, salaries for full-time faculty averaged \$79,439.

By rank, the average was \$108,749 for professors, \$76,147 for associate professors, \$63,827 for assistant professors, \$45,977 for instructors, and \$52,436 for lecturers. In 2008–09, full-time faculty salaries aver-

aged \$92,257 in private independent institutions, \$77,009 in public institutions, and \$71,857 in religiously affiliated private colleges and universities.

Faculty in 4-year institutions earn higher salaries, on average, than do those in 2-year schools. In fields with high-paying nonacademic alternatives—medicine, law, engineering, and business, among others—earnings exceed these averages.

In others fields, such as the humanities and education, earnings are lower. Earnings for postsecondary career and technical education teachers vary widely by subject, academic credentials, experience, and region of the country.

Many well-qualified faculty members have significant earnings from consulting, teaching additional courses, research, writing for

publication, or other employment, in addition to their base salary. College and university faculty enjoy unique benefits, including access to campus facilities, tuition waivers for dependents, housing and travel allowances, and paid leave for sabbaticals.

In 2008, there were 1,699,200 people working as college and university faculty members.

Projected employment by 2018 is 1,956,100, which is a 15% increase; most job growth is expected to occur in two-year colleges, as more adults return to college or begin their studies after the traditional college age.

Teaching at the college level is endlessly interesting, challenging and rewarding for people who respect their students and love their academic discipline.
