

To: Members of the American Economic Association

From: AEA ad hoc Committee on the Job Market: John Cawley (chair), Matt Gentzkow, Brooke Helppie-McFall, Peter Rousseau, and Wendy Stock

Date: December 3, 2020

Re: JOE job openings by sector, 2020 versus 2019

This memo provides an update on the cumulative number of job openings on Job Openings for Economists (JOE), by sector and week, compared to the same week in recent years.

Some clarifications on the data and graphs in this memo:

- Week of the year is defined according to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), so the exact days contained in a given numbered week differ slightly across years. For example, week 1 in 2020 runs from December 30, 2019 to January 5, 2020, whereas week 1 in 2019 is one day later - it runs from December 31, 2018 to January 6, 2019. This minor difference in the specific days included in each numbered week should not generate meaningful differences this late in the calendar year.
- The data cover ISO weeks 1 through 48 of 2020, ending November 29, 2020.
- The counts that are graphed are the number of job *openings*. To clarify, it is not the number of job listings; a listing may include multiple openings.
- For all years, if the employer contacts JOE to say that the search is cancelled, those openings are removed from the count. They are kept in the count if the employer states that the position has been filled. Note that employers may not always contact JOE after a search has been cancelled.
- On each graph, the year-to-date cumulative number of job openings is listed for 2020 and 2019. (For the sake of clarity it is not listed for 2018 or 2017.)

The graphs are shown below, overall and by sector. Figure 1 (on p. 3) shows the total number of job openings in 2020, compared to 2019. While in 2019 there were 3,476 job openings on JOE at this time, in 2020 there are 2,400, which is a decrease of 30.1%.

Subsequent graphs compare the number of job openings separately by sector. Figure 2 shows that, last year (2019) at this time, JOE contained 807 job openings for full-time academic positions in the U.S.; this year that number is 354, a decrease of 56.1% - see p. 4.

The number of full-time academic job openings is down less for institutions outside the U.S. (-25.0% in Figure 4) compared to U.S. academic institutions (-56.1% in Figure 2); however, the decrease is still substantial. In 2019, there were 1,139 full-time positions listed for non-U.S. academic institutions; in 2020, the number is 854 - see p. 6.

Figure 6 shows that full-time non-academic positions are less hard-hit than full-time academic positions, but are still down 22.0% in 2020 compared to 2019. At this time in 2019, JOE listed 786 non-academic jobs; this year there are 621 - see p. 8.

These decreases in the number of job openings in 2020 relative to the same week in 2019 may raise the question of how many more listings are likely to be posted before the end of 2020.

Although we don't know the answer with certainty, in 2019, 93.6% of the calendar year's job openings were posted by the end of week 48, the period covered by our data.

In light of these substantial and striking decreases in the number of job openings, the committee reiterates its recommendation that Ph.D. programs consider offering ongoing support for Ph.D. candidates who do not find positions in 2020-21.

Figure 1: Number of Job Openings on JOE, All Types

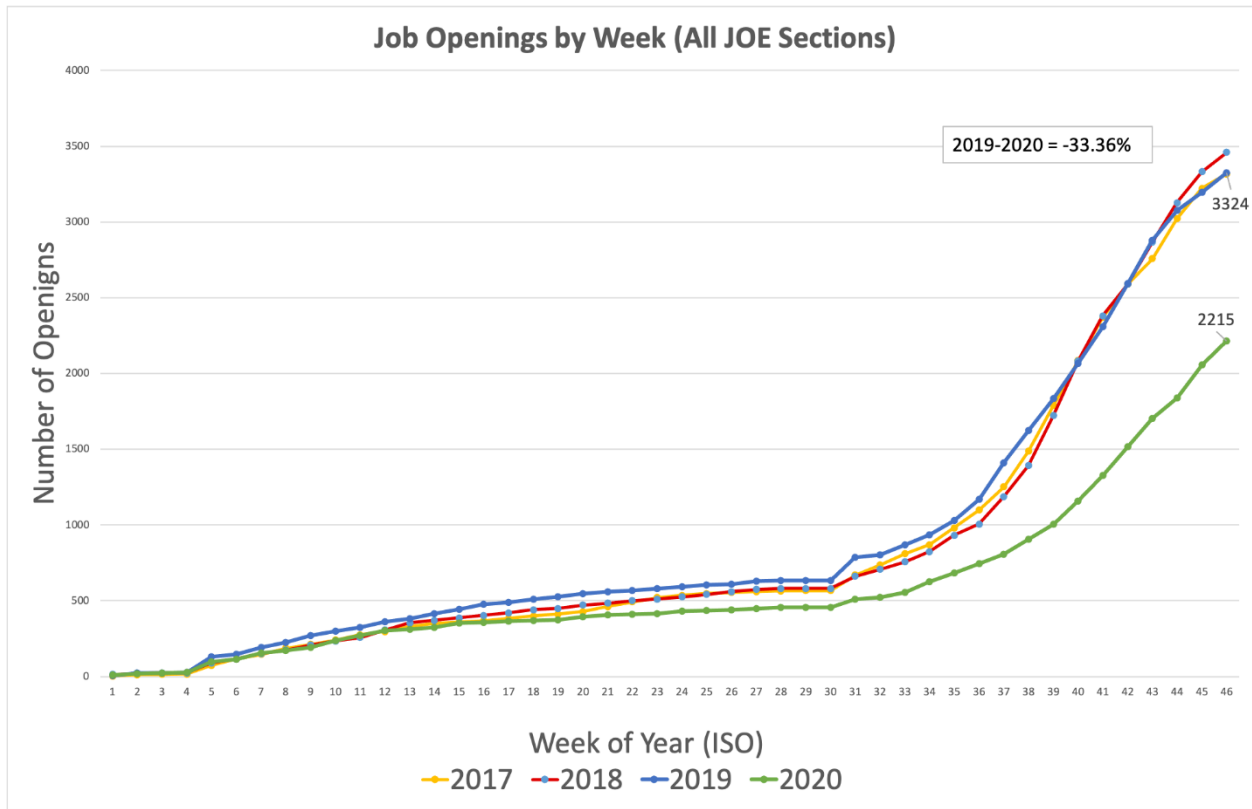


Figure 2: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Full-Time Academic Jobs in the U.S. Only

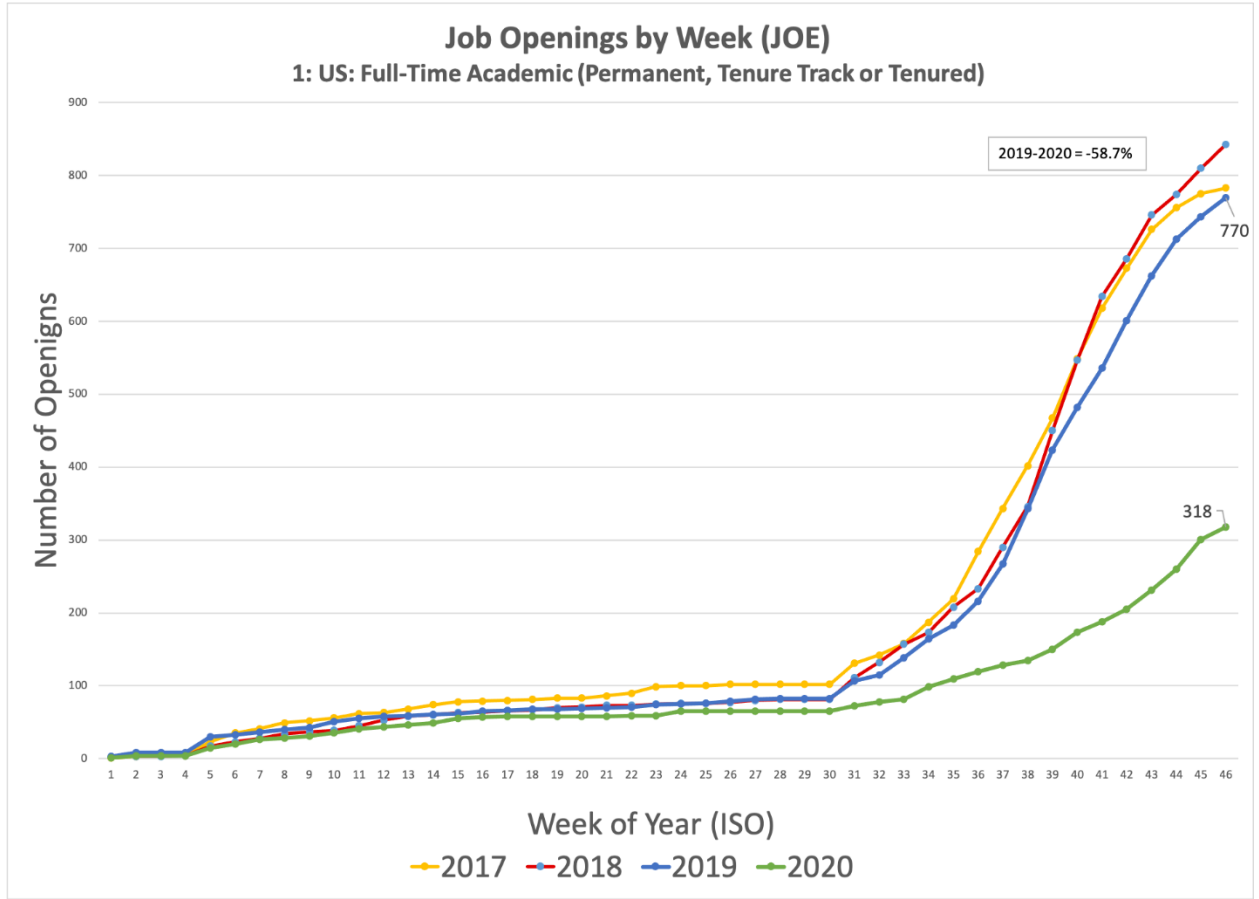
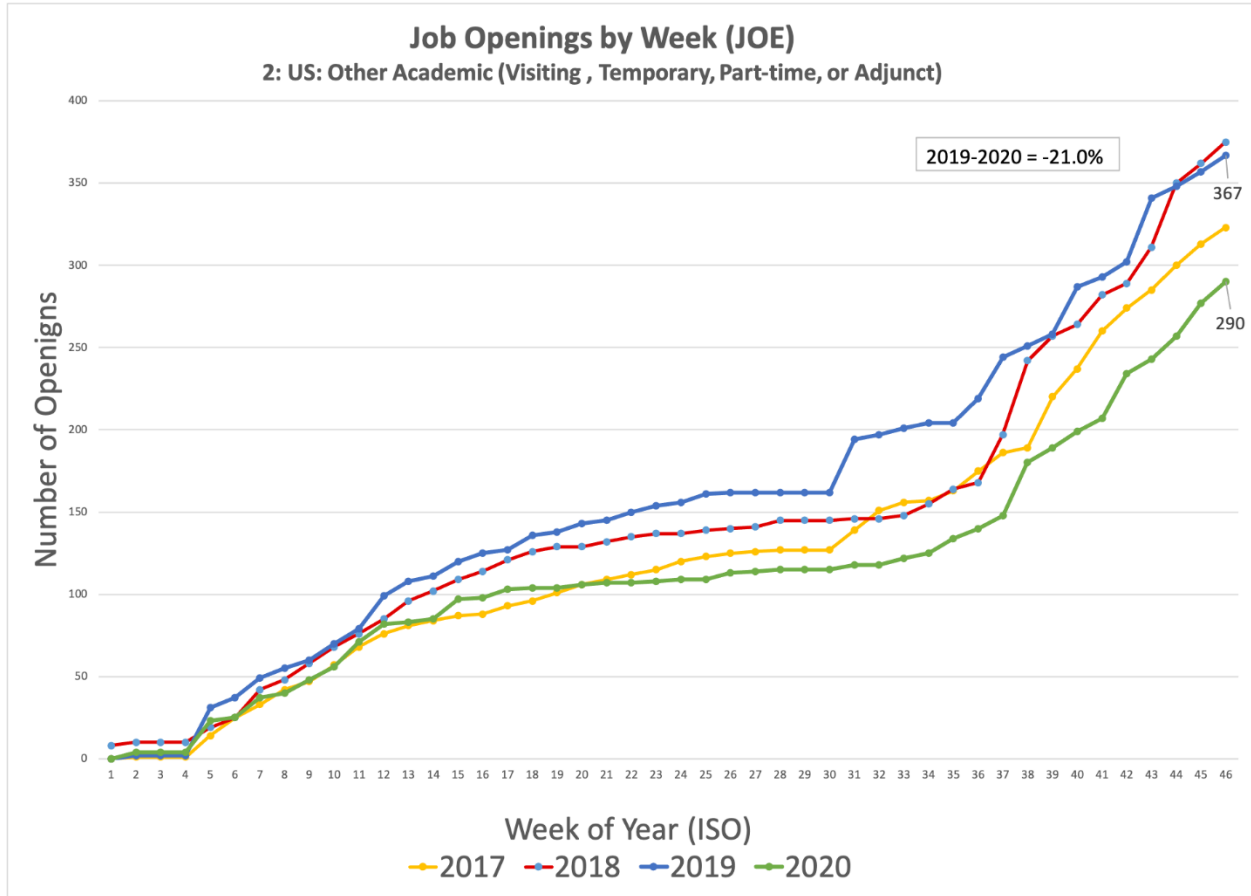


Figure 3: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Academic Jobs in the U.S. Only



Note: “Other” academic jobs includes visiting, temporary, part-time, or adjunct positions; that is, everything other than full-time positions.

Figure 4: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Full-Time Academic Jobs Outside the U.S. Only

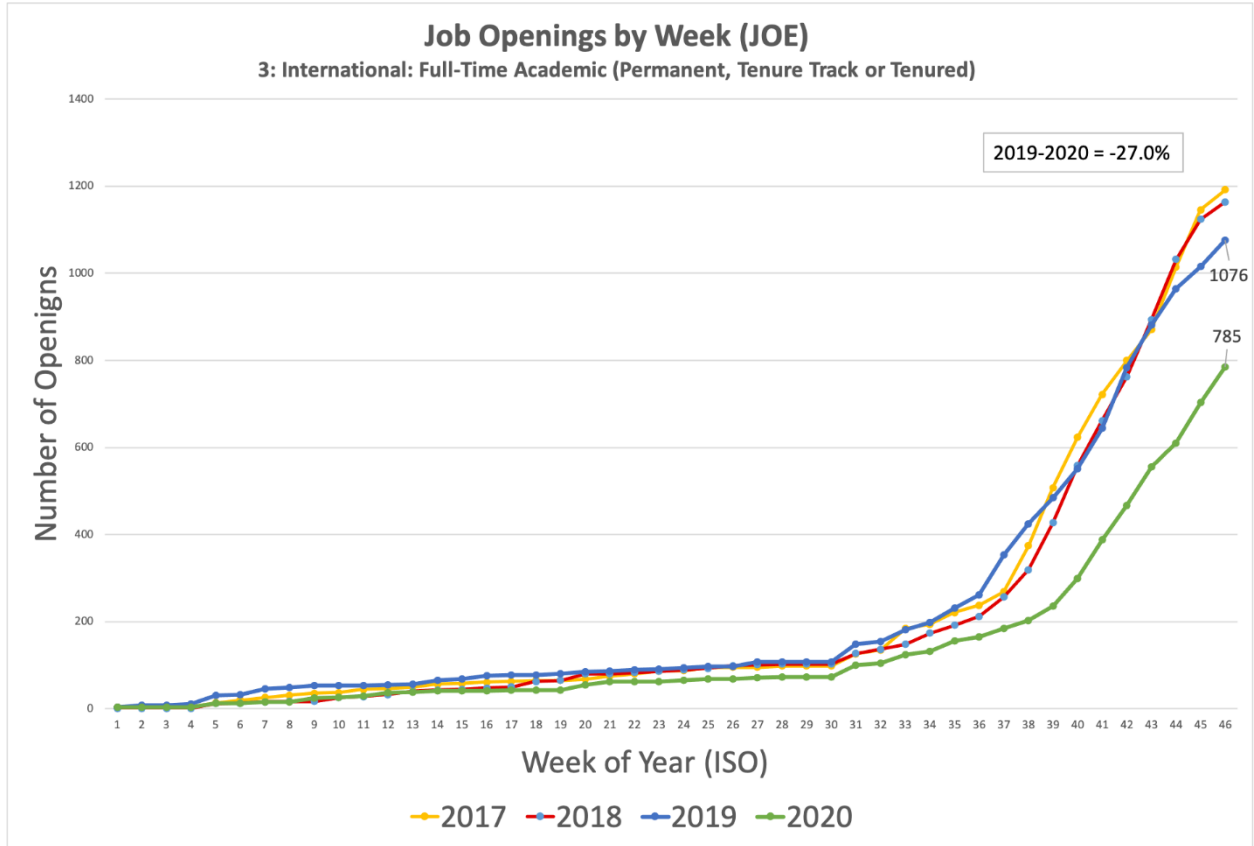
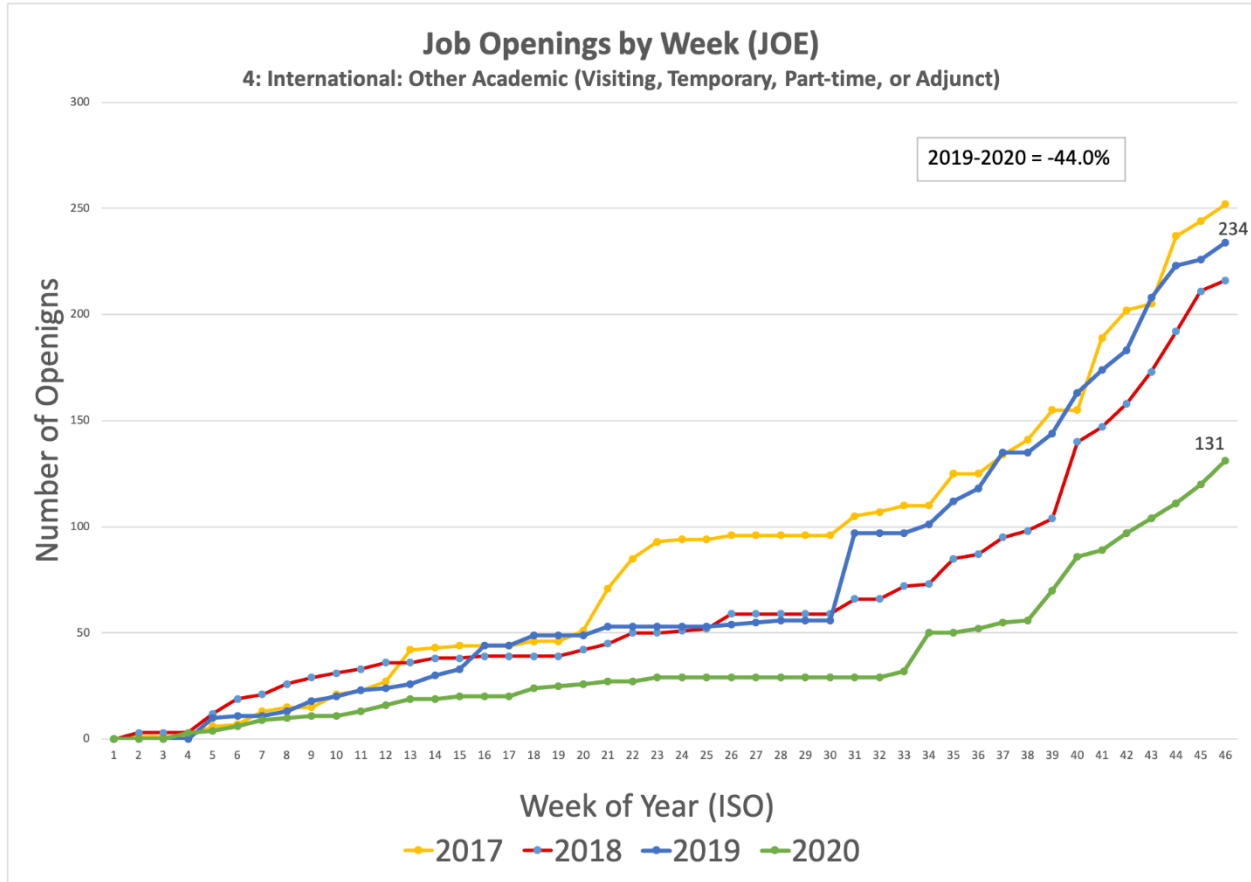


Figure 5: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Academic Jobs Outside the U.S. Only



Note: “Other” academic jobs includes visiting, temporary, part-time, or adjunct positions; that is, everything other than full-time positions.

Figure 6: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Full-Time Non-Academic Jobs Only

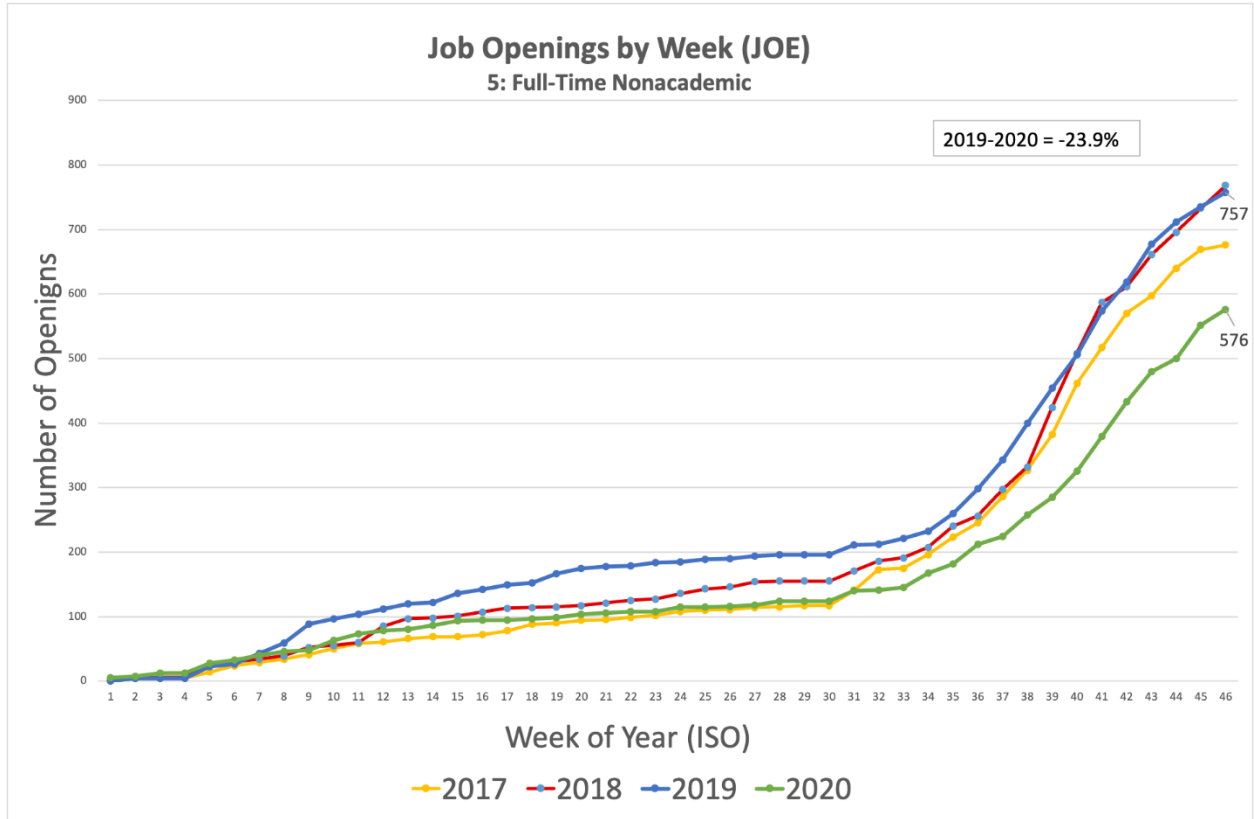
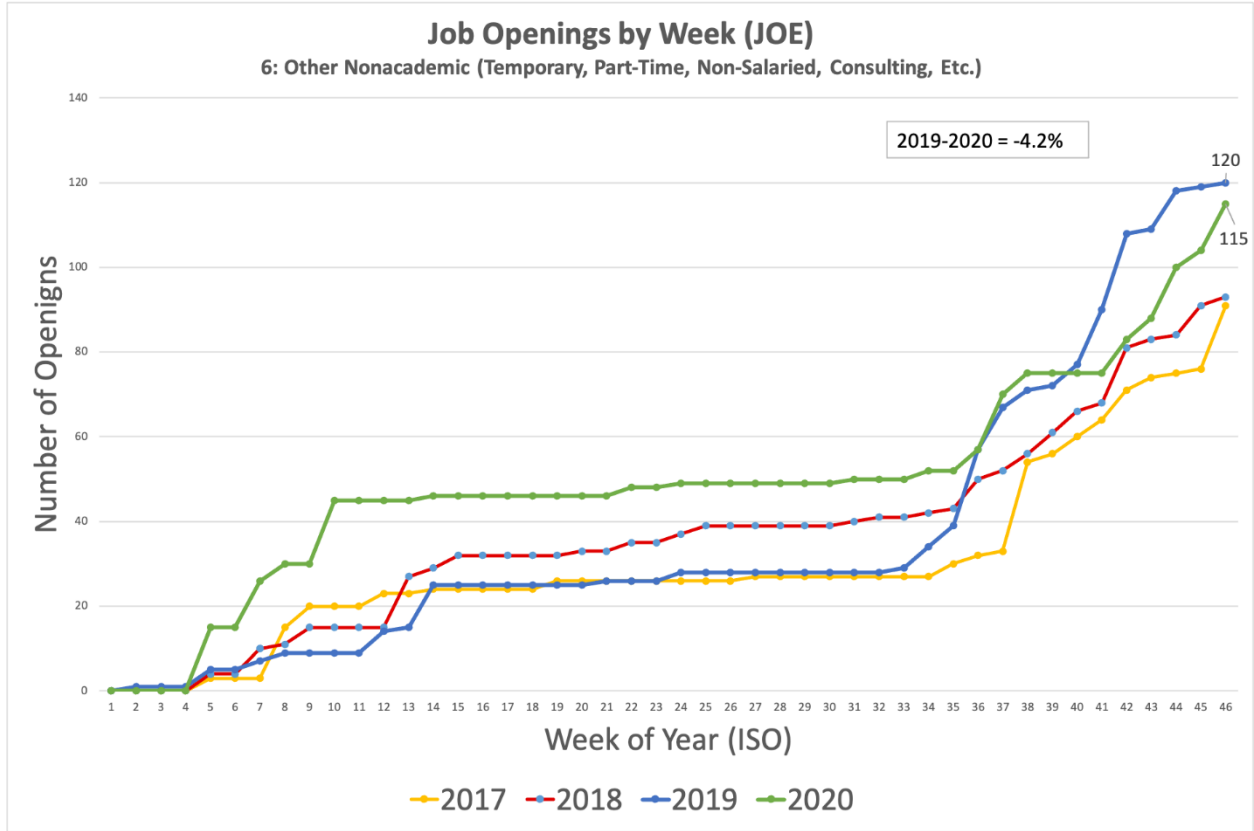


Figure 7: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Non-Academic Jobs Only



Note: “Other” non-academic jobs includes temporary, part-time, non-salaried, or consulting positions; that is, everything other than full-time positions.