

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: October 12, 2021

Re: JOE job openings by sector, 2021 versus 2020 and 2019

This memo reports 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 2021 ran from January 4, 2021 to January 10, 2021, whereas week 1 in 2020 ran from December 30, 2019 to January 5, 2020. This minor difference in the specific days included in each numbered week should not generate meaningful differences a few months into the calendar year.
- The data cover ISO weeks 1 through 40, which in 2021 ended October 10.
- 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 2021, 2020 and 2019. (For the sake of legibility 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 2021, compared to recent years. As of the end of week 40, there have been 1,781 jobs listed on JOE since the beginning of 2021, which is 53.7% higher than at the same time in 2020 but 13.8% lower than in 2019.

Subsequent graphs compare the number of job openings separately by sector. Figure 2 shows that 423 full-time academic positions in the U.S. have been listed on JOE so far in 2021; this is 144.5% higher than at the same time in 2020, but 12.2% lower than in 2019 - see p. 4.

Figure 4 shows that 486 full-time academic job openings in institutions outside the U.S. have been listed on JOE so far in 2021; that is 62.0% higher than at the same time in 2020 but 11.8% lower than in 2019 - see p. 6.

Figure 6 shows that 419 full-time non-academic positions have been listed on JOE so far in 2021; that is 28.5% higher than at the same time in 2020 but 17.2% lower than in 2019 - see p. 8.

These increases in the number of full-time positions did not necessarily come at the expense of short-term positions. The number of visiting, temporary, part-time, or adjunct positions in the U.S. is up 59.8% from 2020 and up 10.8% from 2019 (see Figure 3). However, the number of visiting, temporary, part-time, or adjunct academic positions in institutions outside the U.S. is

down 27.9% from 2020 and down 62.0% from 2019 (see Figure 5). In addition, the number of temporary or part-time nonacademic positions is down 2.7% from the same time in 2020 and down 5.2% from 2019; see Figure 7. Although there are declines in temporary or part-time nonacademic jobs, and academic jobs outside the U.S., it is important to keep in mind that these are smaller categories than the comparable full-time jobs, and the overall number of job listings on JOE overall has risen 53.7% from last year.

On the whole, these numbers suggest a major rebound from last year (2020) in the demand for Ph.D. economists, particularly with respect to full-time positions. However, the rebound is less than complete – overall, the demand for Ph.D. economists in 2021 remains down 13.8% from 2019, the last pre-COVID year. Our committee cautions, however, that the largest number of listings occur in October and November, so only by early December will we know for sure the full extent of the rebound in the job market for Ph.D. economists.

Please also note that **the AEA Executive Committee and the ad hoc Committee on the Job Market suggest the following timing for the job market**, to ensure common expectations, fairness, and a thick job market:

- That employers wait to extend interview invitations until Thursday, December 2, 2021 (AEA signals will be sent to employers on December 1.)
- That employers wait to conduct initial interviews until Monday, January 3, 2022 and that interviews not take place during the ASSA meetings (January 7-9, 2022).

For more details, please see the AEA's email of September 16, 2021.

The AEA Executive Committee also recommends that first-round interviews be conducted virtually rather than in-person.

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

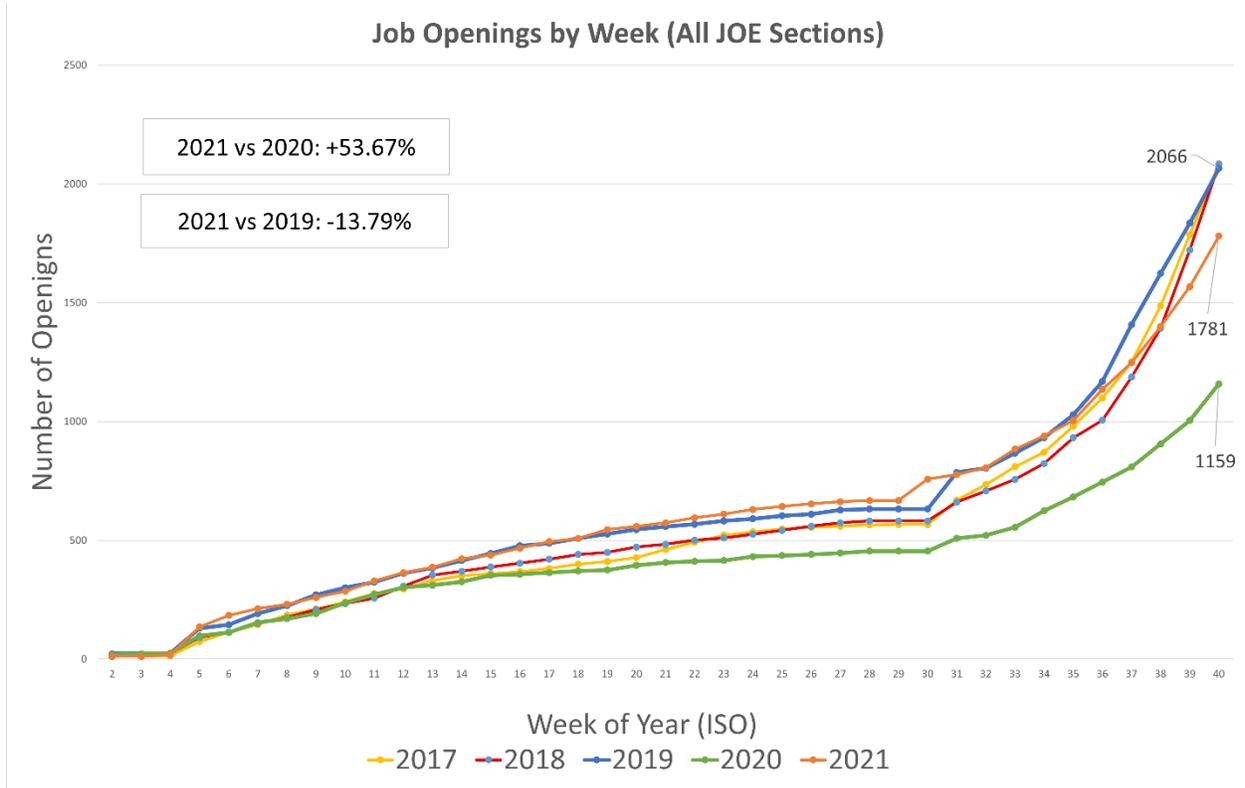


Figure 2: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Full-Time Academic Jobs in the U.S. Only

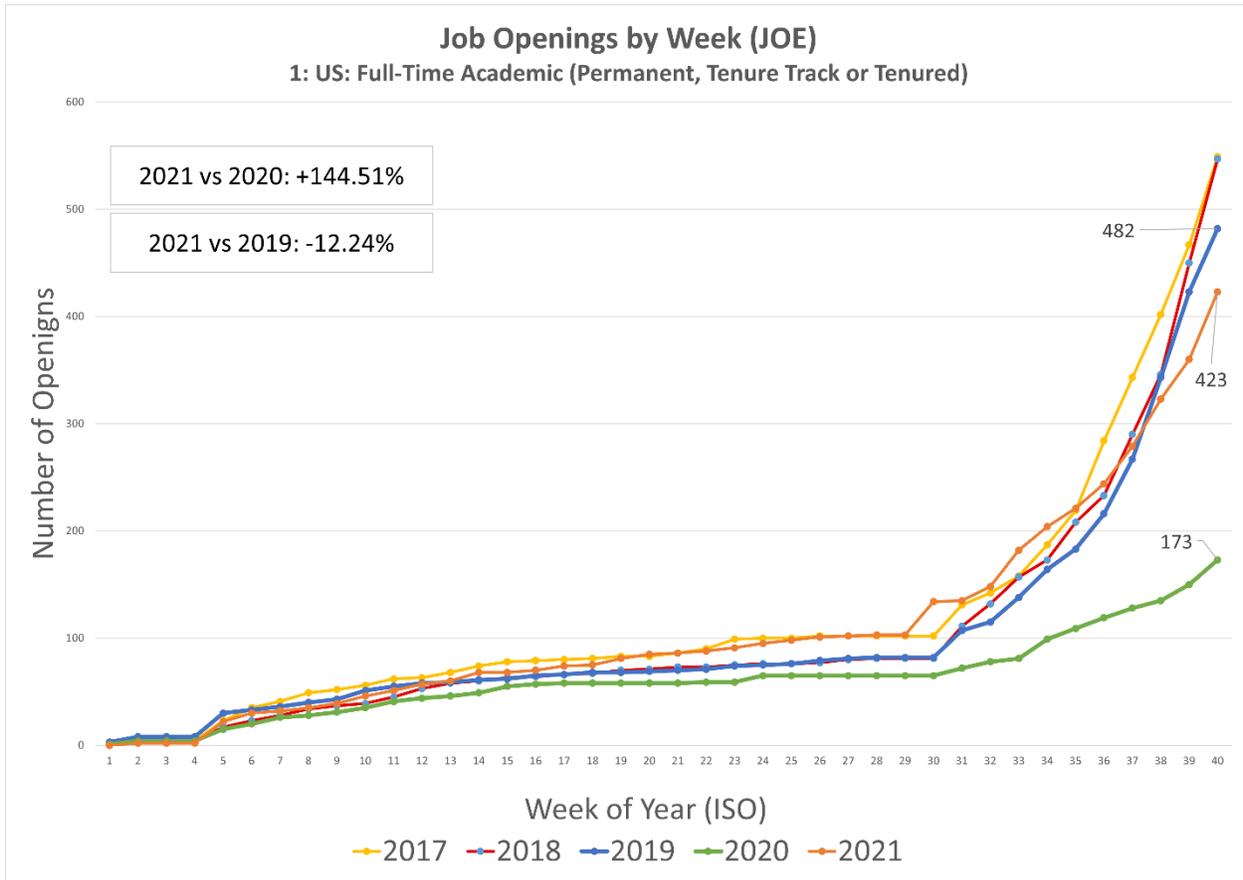
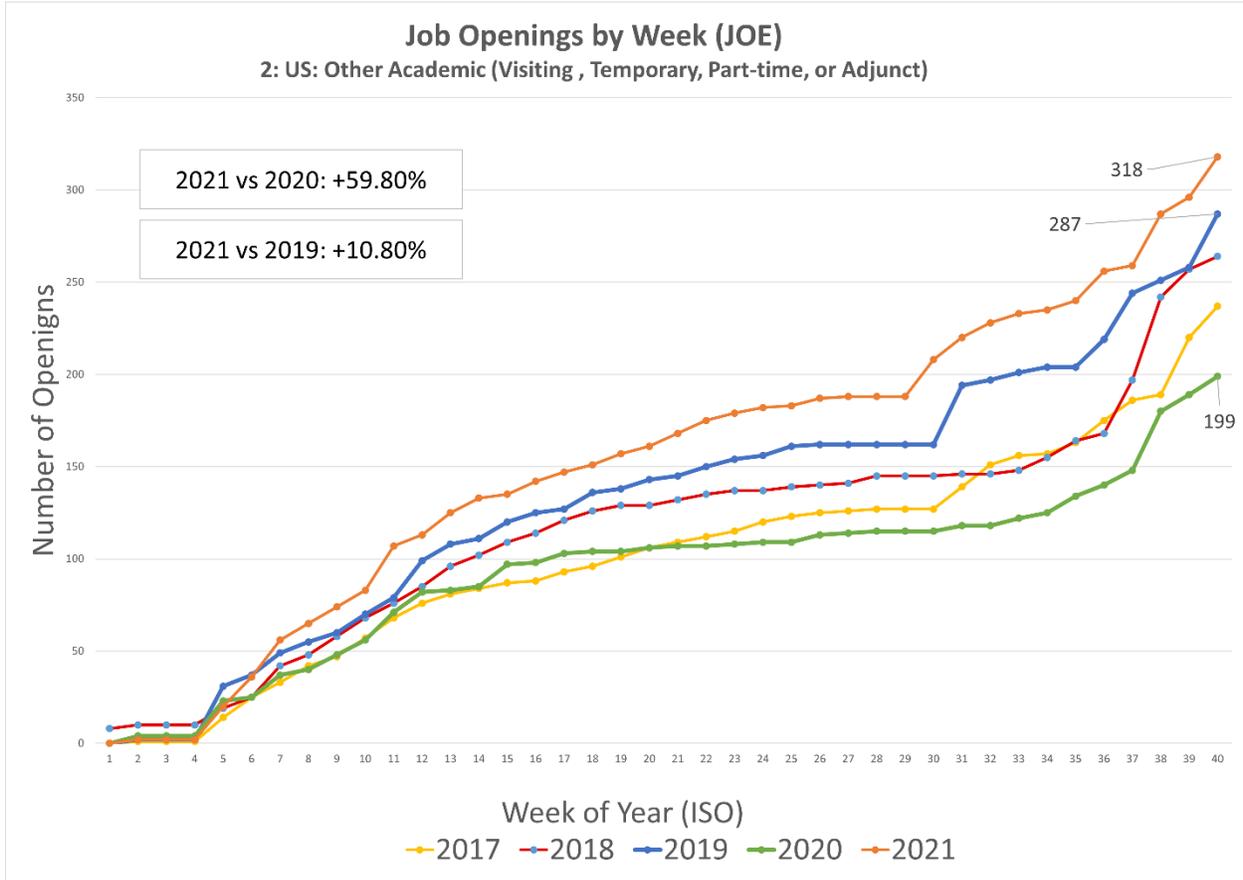


Figure 3: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Academic Jobs in the U.S. Only



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

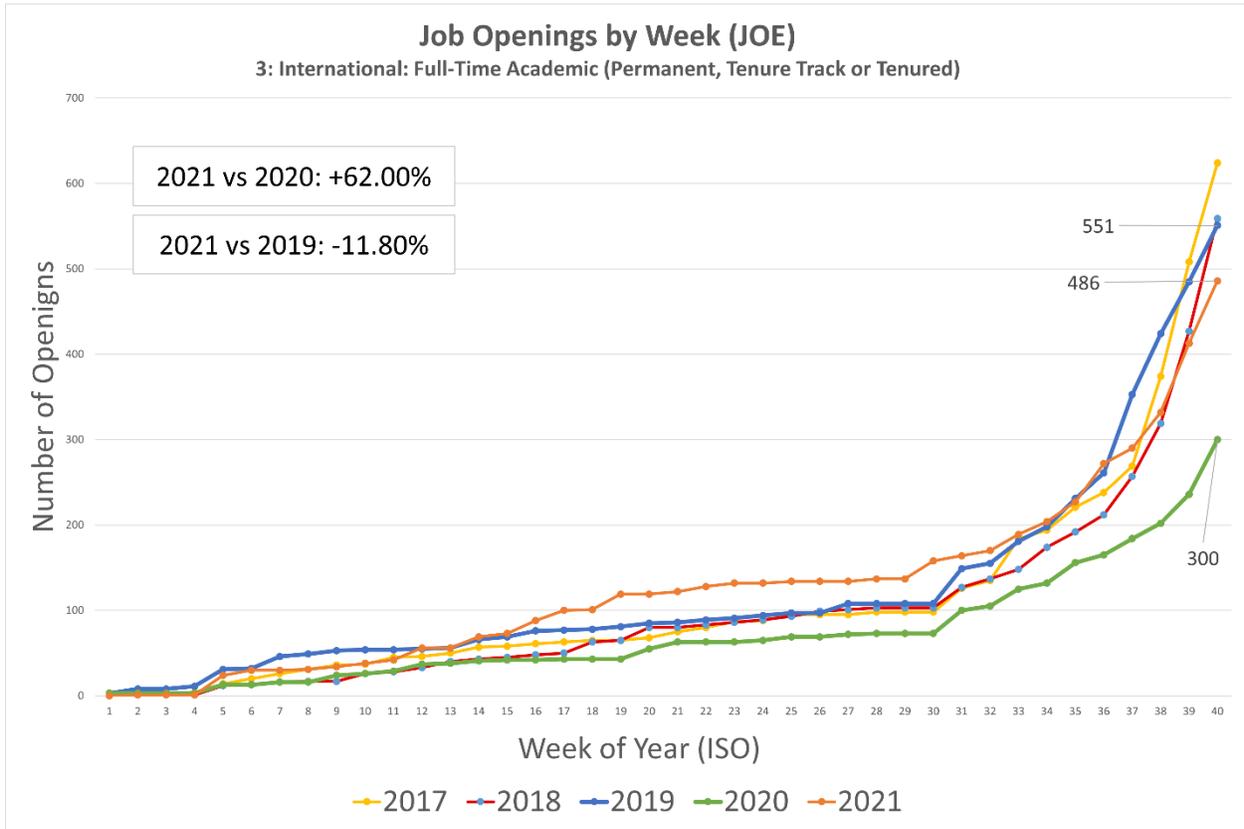
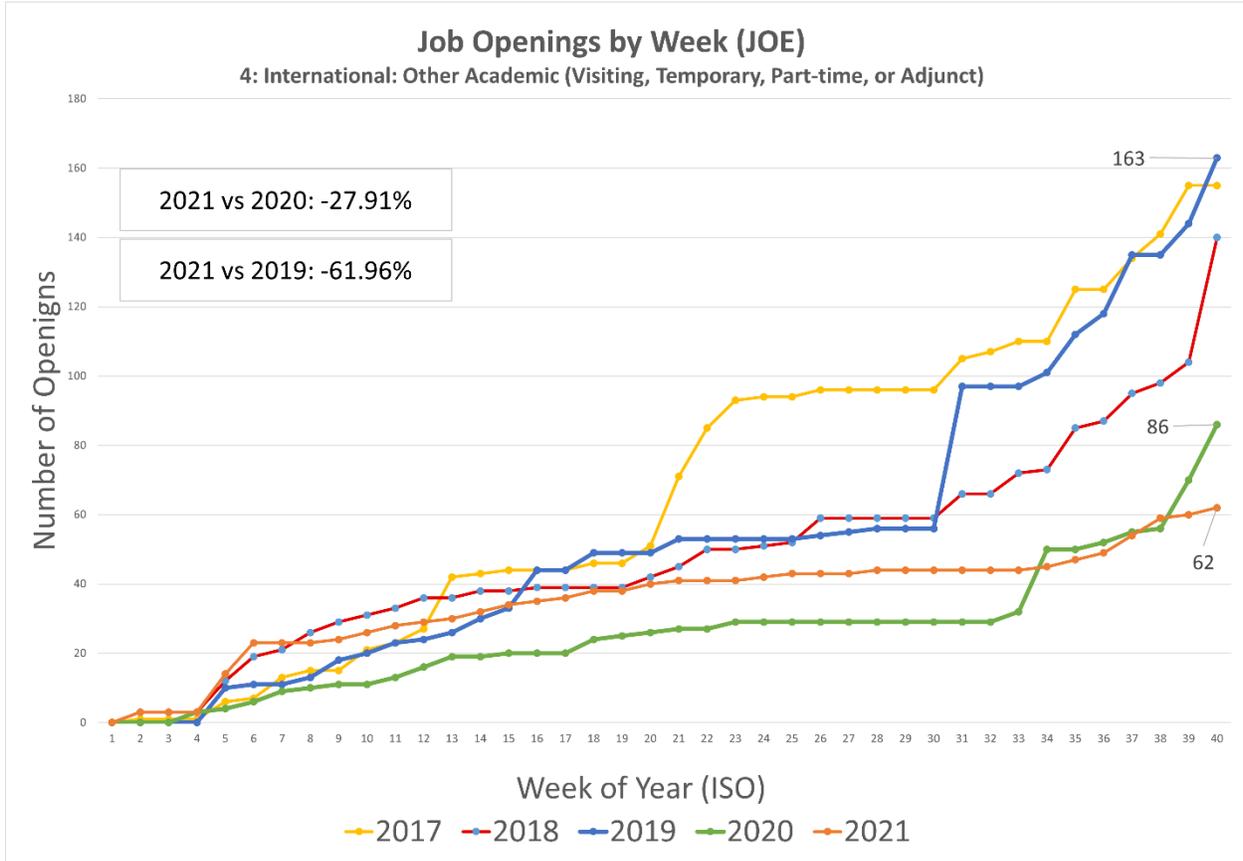


Figure 5: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Academic Jobs Outside the U.S. Only



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

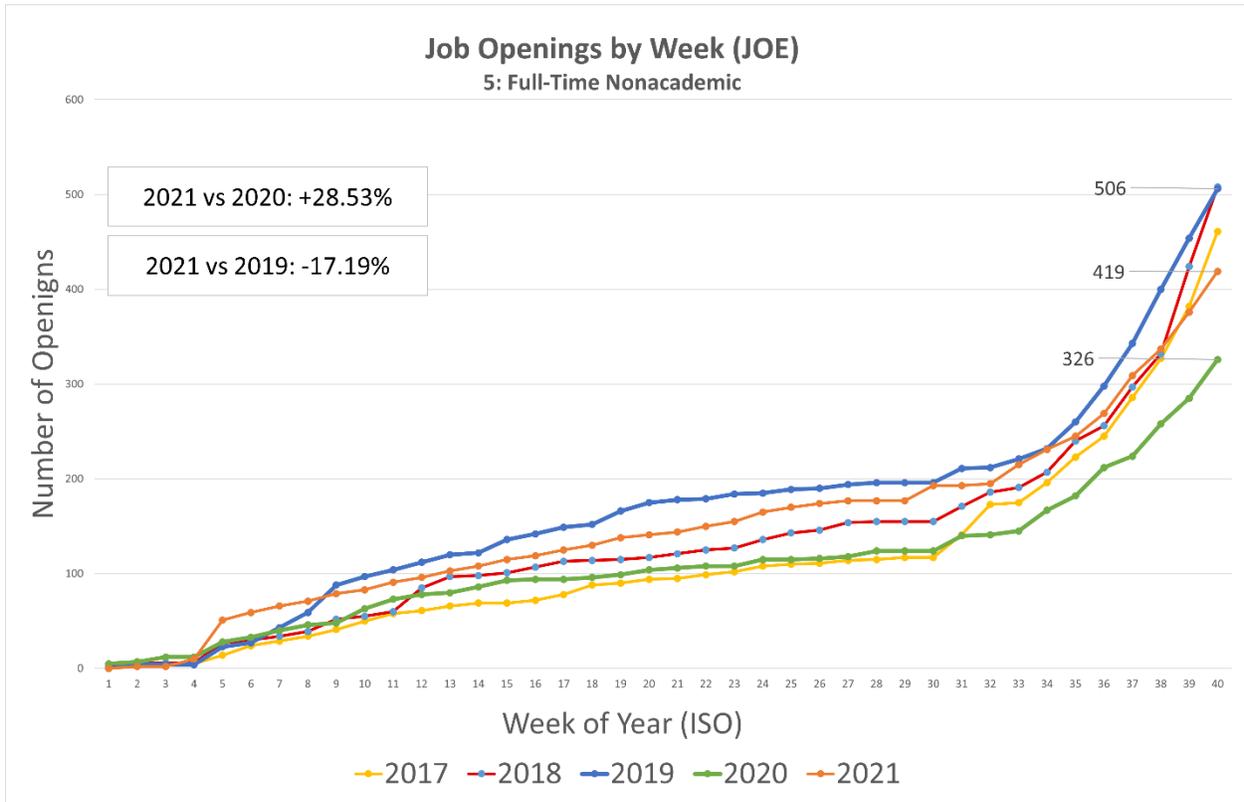
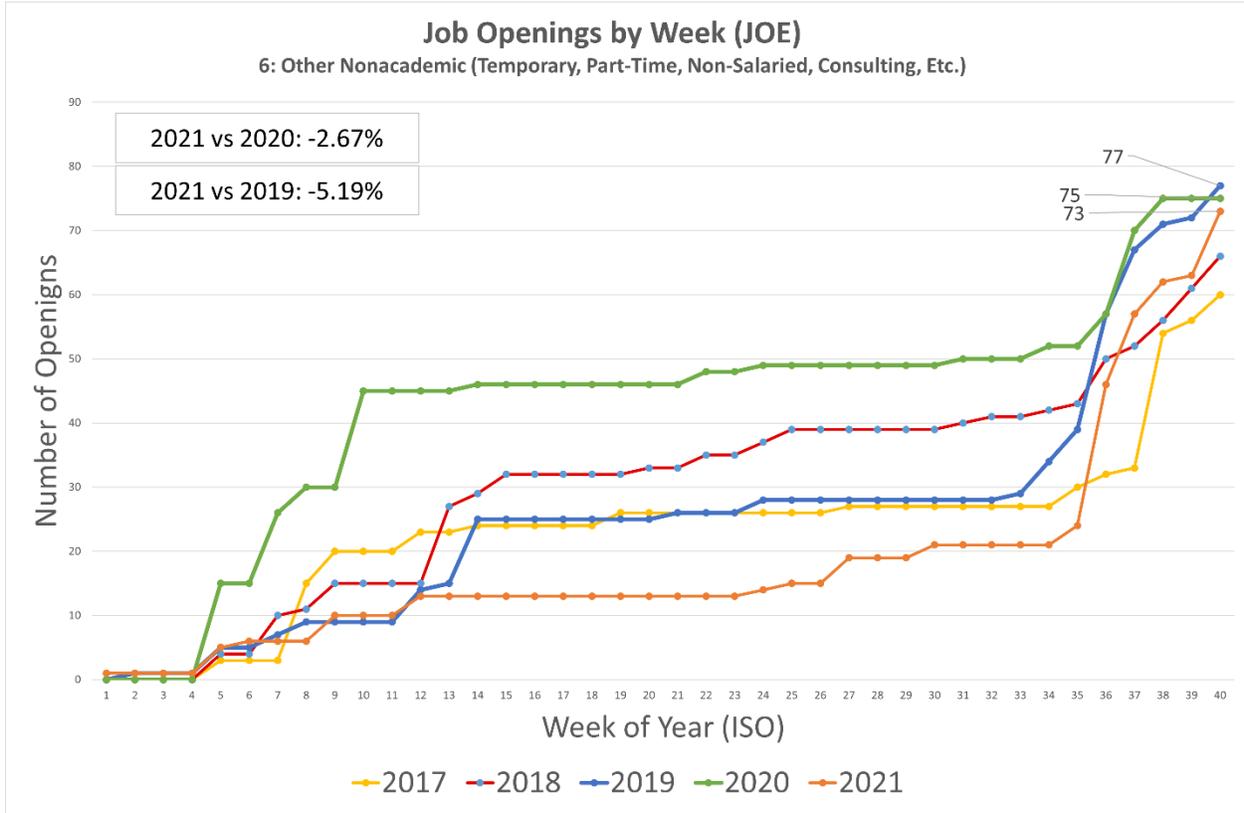


Figure 7: Number of Job Openings on JOE, Other Non-Academic Jobs Only



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