When you hear the phrase "university administration," you probably think of deans and college presidents, people who determine broad educational policy, govern universities, and act as their public faces. These top administrators are usually tenured faculty members who have worked their way through the professorial ranks before being tapped for leadership roles.

Colleges and universities abound with career opportunities in administration beyond these roles. Employment opportunities run the gamut from academic program administration, student life services, and public relations to finance, human resources, and institutional research. Such positions offer a different type of work experience than that of a faculty member: for one thing, most administrators suit up and show up for an 8 am -5 pm work week, whereas faculty tend to have more freedom to set their own schedule. While the work week may look different, administrators experience many of the same pleasures faculty do: advising bright and motivated young people; working with intelligent, stimulating colleagues; and helping to shape the overall educational mission of the university.

LEARN ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE OPTIONS

One of the best ways to explore the administrative employment possibilities in higher education is to speak with administrators on your own campus. At a mid-size university like Brown, your choices are many, so you might want to start by asking a CareerLAB advisor for some guidance on whom to approach. You can also meet with a mid-level dean in the Graduate School or in the Dean of the College office to learn about the work that they do. Your contacts in these offices will help you generate names of other administrators with whom you might speak, such as the President’s primary Assistant or an associate provost.

In addition to talking with actual administrators, you can read to learn more about the nature of administrative work—its headaches as well as its joys. To get an idea of the kinds of administrative career possibilities in higher education, look at The Chronicle’s Career Network job listings. Click on administrative positions. You will see that there are more than 25 categories.

- Rob Jenkins explores the pros and cons of getting into administration: http://chronicle.com/article/Getting-Into-Administration/44904/
- Mary Morris Heiberger and Julie Miller Vick provide advice to graduate students looking to get into academic administration: http://chronicle.com/article/When-You-Want-to-Stay-on-Ca/46318/
- In “Making the Switch,” Julie Miller Vick and Jennifer S. Furlong discuss the many roles Ph.D.s play on campus outside of teaching: http://chronicle.com/article/Switching-Sides/46918/

ADMINISTRATIVE JOB LISTS

Browse job listings on the sites below to develop your knowledge of university administrative positions and the required or desirable characteristics for each job. Knowing the kind of background needed for a particular position will help you make better short-term choices now.
Careers In Administration

- The Chronicle of Higher Education allows users to browse jobs by position type: from the “jobs” tab, click on the “administrative” link.
- Academic360 has a wealth of links to sites with academic job openings for both faculty members and administrators: www.Academic360.com
- The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers allows users to search for jobs by location and category: jobs.aacrao.org/hunter/search.php
- The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources allows users to make connections with higher-ed professionals. Its “JobLine” section allows users to search for jobs by title and by date posted: www.cupahr.org
- The National Academic Advising Association provides a forum for ideas pertaining to academic advising through numerous activities and publications. Its website includes job listings related to academic advising and student services under the “Resources” tab (click “Position Announcements”): www.nacada.ksu.edu/
- The National Association for College Admission Counseling’s website allows users to browse job listings in high schools, colleges, universities or industry partner organizations. Under the “Career Development” tab, click “Career Opportunities:” www.nacacnet.org
- HigherEdJobs provides administrative job listings, by searching by “category:” www.higheredjobs.com/