

# Careers in Astronomy

A discussion, not really a lecture, about what career paths might be available to people really interested in astronomy.

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Why study astronomy?

# Why study astronomy?

Why NOT study astronomy if you really enjoy it?

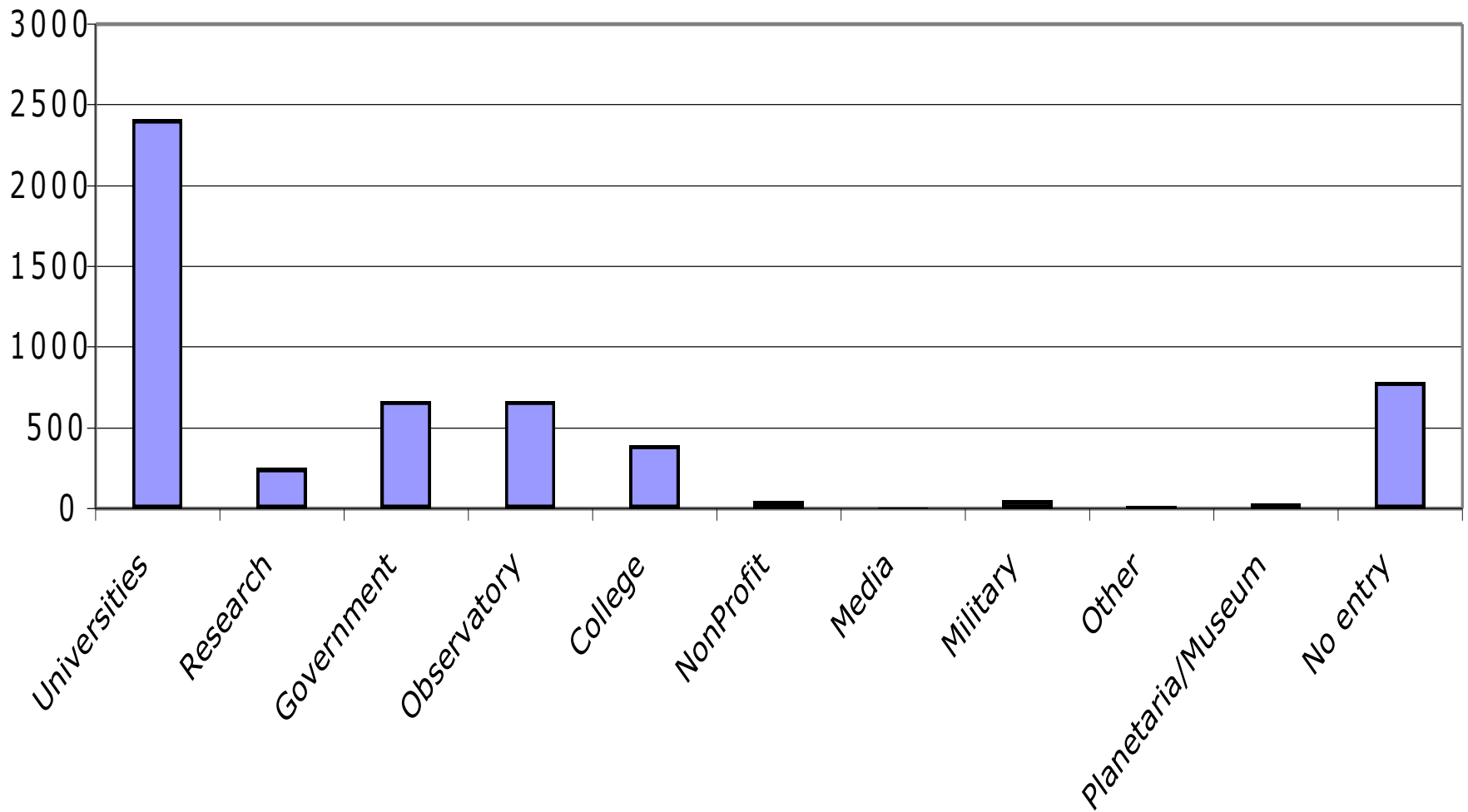
# Typical academic faculty career path

- Bachelor's degree in astronomy, physics, geology or related field (4 yrs)
- Ph.D. degree in astronomy, astrophysics, physics, geology, space science or related field (4-6 years)
- Postdoctoral fellowship (2-3 years; sometimes more than one)
- Assistant professor, untenured (5-6 years)
- Associate professor, tenured (5+ years)
- Full professor, tenured (the rest)

# To grad school or not to grad school: is that the question?

- Most graduate students in physical sciences are supported on TA-ships, GRA-ships or fellowships for 12 months/year
- Graduate courses are higher level versions of undergraduate courses; they are not easy.
- Graduate research is hard work, sometimes fun, more often frustrating (that is the nature of research).
- But, most graduate students are well-fed and adequately housed and dressed. Many have cars, big screen tv's etc.
- So, it really depends on your personal goals and motivation!

# Where AAS Members Work



Source: K. Marvel, AAS

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## Career Services

[Career Services](#)

### Career Services

#### Job Profiles from the AAS Newsletter archives:

- [Preparing for the College Teaching Job Market](#) by Luke Keller
- [Succeeding in a Large Research Collaboration](#) by Andy Howell
- [Balancing Research and Service at NOAO](#) by Knut Olsen
- [Working at a Soft-Money Institute](#) by Barb Whitney
- [Back to School: A Ph.D. Enters the Classroom](#) by Joshua Roth
- [Jobs in Industry](#) by Peter Williams
- [Science Communication as a Press Officer](#) by Christine Pulliam
- [Bush-Whacking a Career Trail](#) by Blake Bullock
- [Astronomers Working in Public Outreach](#) by Liam McDaid
- [Beyond Ivory Towers](#) by Leila Belkora

### About

The AAS offers several career resources to our members, including the monthly [Job Register](#). The AAS Committee on Employment serves as an advisory body to the AAS to provide input and

# Career paths of Astronomers

- Following in the footsteps of your PhD adviser
- Working on the staff of a national observatory in a support staff position
- Working as a "soft money" researcher
- Federal\agency program manager (NSF, NASA, NRC)
- Teaching at a principally-undergraduate college
- Teaching in the K-12 arena
- Teaching in the (new) distance-learning arena
- Public outreach (museums, tv)
- Journalism/science communications/press officer
- Working in industry/private sector
  - Aerospace industry
  - Financial services
  - Management consultant
  - Computer graphics/visualization