ACADEMIC JOB SEARCH: INTERVIEWING AND NEGOTIATION

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AGENDA

- Interviewing
- Negotiating
PURPOSE OF AN INTERVIEW

- Opportunity to persuade the interviewer that you are the best candidate for the job
- Opportunity to explore the "fit" between you and the department/school
PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Read the job advertisement carefully!
- Understand the institution – teaching? Research?
- Make sure you understand the strategic direction of the department -- research areas
- Ask about the department’s curricular needs: what courses might the department need you to teach -- come prepared to talk about such courses
- Read about the people listed on your schedule
PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Practice your job talk (with peers and committee member, if possible)
- Develop a “elevator” version of your research: The 2 minute sound bite
- Prepare to talk about your research, potential sources of funding, your teaching, and yourself
PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Draw connections between yourself & the position. Do not expect others to do this!
- Practice talking about yourself and selling your research and Teaching skills
- Plan how you’re going to get dressed
- Before any interview, clarify all arrangements
  - Accommodations
  - Travel
  - Getting from place to place
BEFORE THE INTERVIEW: ATTIRE

- Men – most often suits
- Women – business attire
- Wear formal clothes in which you’re comfortable
- Get your interview clothes well in advance
SCREENING INTERVIEWS

- Phone interview
  - Treat phone interviews as real interviews; get dressed if it helps you get in the right frame of mind
  - Have all documents in front of you (your statements, syllabi, names of colleagues, courses, etc.)
  - Make sure you’re in a quiet space without dogs or kids

- Video interview
  - Similar to a phone interview, but even more formal -- they can see you!
BEFORE THE VISIT...

- Ask for meetings that will help **YOU** determine if position is a good fit
  - Assistant professors in the department
  - Potential collaborators in target/other departments
  - Graduate students in your area
  - Female faculty from other departments
BASIC INTERVIEW SKILLS

- Answer concisely (2 minutes might be too long, 20 seconds might be too short)
- Focus on your accomplishments and experience as they relate to the position
- Be positive, show enthusiasm
- Prepare 2-3 questions to ask each interviewer
- Try to remain calm and positive, even if you feel that the interview is not going well
THE CAMPUS VISIT

- Likely elements:
  - Giving a research talk
  - Meeting members of the department
  - Meeting administrators (deans, HR)
  - Teaching a class
  - Meeting with graduate students and/or undergraduate students
  - Social situations – meals, etc.
POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: RESEARCH

- How does your dissertation relate to your research interests in the future?
- What are your future research plans?
- How will your research intersect with the interest of potential colleagues?
- How can your future research plans enhance your teaching?
- What contribution is your research making to the field?
- How do you plan to fund your research?
POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: TEACHING

- Tell me about your teaching philosophy
- What are your teaching strengths and weaknesses?
- How might you structure an introductory course/graduate seminar/sophomore class in the field?
- What are your primary goals when teaching an introductory course in the field?
- What do you like most about teaching?
- We need you to teach [a particular class/subject]. How would you approach this?
- Tell me about your experiences working with diverse students
MORE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- What attracts you to [small town in state you’ve never visited before]?

- You come from Cornell, where you were trained to research/teach in an R1 institution. What attracts you to a primary teaching position?

- Our students are not used to the kind of workload you propose in your sample syllabus, how would you adapt your syllabus?

- How would you approach conflict in your lab/with colleagues?
MORE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS CONTINUED

- You've accounted for the research of Holmes and Levitte. Can you tell me how their model might affect your hypothesis?
- Unpublished research in my lab shows exactly the opposite effect. How have you checked that you established the proper controls?
- How does this differ from the basic model that we teach in sophomore transport class?
- It looks like you've done some interesting modeling. Is there an application of this work?
- What a wonderful little application. Is there any theoretical support?
- Your work appears to be a complete replication of Holmes's work. Just what is really new here?
- You've done some interesting work, but it’s mostly policy. Why do you think you are qualified to teach intro sociology?
POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

- That’s a really good question...thank you for asking it.
- You make a very good point...I have a couple responses...
- We’ve discussed this question a lot in our research group and here’s what I think...
ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Ethnic background
- Country of origin
- Vital statistics
- Sexual orientation
- Family status
- Marital Status (are you married; what does your husband/wife do?)
- Race (they can ask you to fill an optional EEO card)
- Gender
- Religion
- Age
- Physical and/or mental status
MAKING THE MOST OF THE INTERVIEW

- Treat everyone as important
- Prepare questions
- Treat social situations professionally
- Take care of yourself: sleep and eat
- Send thank you note to the search committee chair or the person who coordinated your visit
INFORMATION TO GATHER

- The tenure process, tenure criteria
- The teaching load
- Expectations about research $$ and supporting grad students.
- Future strategic directions of the department
  - In what areas do you see the college investing in the next 10 years
THE OFFER IS IN: IT’S TIME TO NEGOTIATE!

- Choose to negotiate!
  - Salary example: John and Jane were offered 75K; Jane took it. John negotiated to 80K
    - John took the wage difference and invested it (5% annually); after 30 years, he has accumulated 350K.

- Your strongest bargaining point is **before** you sign the dotted line
WHAT CAN BE NEGOTIATED?

- Decision date (if you have competing offers)
- Start date
- Salary
  - Summer Salary
  - Advance
- Teaching load and teaching schedule
- Advising
- Spousal employment/Study

- Start-up package
  - Seed research funds
  - Travel funds and conference expenses
  - Postdocs/graduate students/research assistants
  - Computing resources/software
  - Furniture
- Moving expenses/housing help
WHO DO YOU NEGOTIATE WITH?

- Chair/Dean
- Start negotiation over the phone
- Get the details in writing
- Your first reaction, if interested
  - Let them you are excited and look forward to receiving the letter
  - Ask for clarifications
  - Decision date?
  - Other offers?
GET ADVICE

- Discuss offer with trusted mentors/colleagues
  - PhD advisor
  - New faculty members
  - Senior faculty member
  - Department chair
  - Friends who just signed offer letters
HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR NEGOTIATIONS?

- Take stock of your interests
  - What do I care about?
  - Must haves?
  - “Would like to” haves?
  - Learn about norms in the field/institution

- Translate your interests into concrete positions
  - Prioritize among the issues
  - Set goals

- Try to anticipate the other side
  - what are their needs/resources?
  - What are their pressures/concerns?

- Determine what happens if you cannot achieve your must-haves
DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

- When do you bring this up?
- Talk to other dual couples in the college
- Talk with dual career office on campus, if one exists
MULTIPLE OFFERS

- Stronger bargaining position
- Keep the other side informed of the status of your other offers
- If you plan to say "no," don’t drag it; don’t burn bridges
- Ask to match an offer only if you plan to accept it
SECOND VISITS

- Only accept if you are serious (it costs the institution $$)
- An opportunity to bring spouse/partner
- Explore housing, spousal jobs, schools, etc.
TO ACHIEVE GREAT OUTCOMES...

- Ask questions that give you a better sense of the other side
  - Plans for the department?
  - Strategic direction and how you fit into it?

- Be creative about meeting your interests
  - Extend your time horizon—not possible next year, but get commitment for following year (in writing if possible)
  - Getting extra support for grant writing
A FEW MORE WAYS TO ENSURE GOOD OUTCOMES

- Develop a positive relationship
  - Create rapport (small talk, enthusiasm)

- Gather data before you start the negotiation
  - Use your network (colleagues, peers, advisors)
  - What’s standard for this position, this kind of university?
  - Asking question to uncover the interests behind the position

- Bundle issues (and tradeoffs)

- Be soft on people, hard on the issues
TAKEAWAYS ON NEGOTIATION

- Choose to negotiate!!!
- Raise (your) expectations
- Build and use your network to gain information
- Be an advocate for your own interests
- What do you need to be effective?
- Manners matter
THANKS

- Kathleen O’Connor, Johnson School of Management -- Slides on Negotiation Strategies
CITIZEN STATUS QUESTIONS

- Possible questions:
  - Are you eligible for a work permit in the US?
  - Are you able to legally work in the US?
  - Do you have work permit for the US?
  - Are you a US citizen?

- Familiarize yourself with OPT/CPT regulations on the isso.cornell.edu site. If necessary, talk to an immigration advisor at ISSO before the interview.

- Review the new STEM OPT option.