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Finding Your First Job: The Job Search and Interviewing Process

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By the time students begin their first job search, it is usually too late to significantly improve the qualifications they bring to the job market. Students must take best advantage of their time in graduate school to develop the experience and credentials they will need to get the type of job they are seeking. Still, the job that a graduate student eventually acquires is by no means determined solely by what the person has done in graduate school. The difference in job-seeking success between two applicants who seem to have similar credentials from graduate school can be striking. Some of the difference in success can be attributed to the intangibles a person brings to the job—interpersonal skills, charisma, vision, and likeability—and to factors no one can control, such as the candidate's fit with job openings in that particular hiring cycle. Yet the manner in which a person conducts the job search also plays an important role in determining the outcome of that search. Some candidates take best advantage of their qualifications, while others fail to realize that potential. This chapter is written to help graduates be as successful as possible in their job search and interviews, whether they are seeking a position in academe, business, or other professions.

THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

Although the application and interviewing process can vary among different companies and universities, there is a standard pattern followed by most employ-

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ers. This section provides an overview of job search fundamentals, beginning with what candidates need to do before applying for any job.

Before Sending an Application

The first step for candidates is to identify positions of potential interest. Before looking for available positions, job seekers need to consider what type of employment they seek. Communication graduate students may seek jobs in professional fields such as human resources, marketing communication, and consulting, as well as research and academic positions. Applicants seeking jobs in industry should consider the type of work required, opportunities for advancement, and even ethical considerations regarding the nature of the industry. No matter what the position, seek out advice and models of résumés that are generally accepted in that particular field. Informational interviews are an excellent way to meet individuals who already hold the desired job as well as to learn more about various paths to different careers.

Perhaps the most important consideration for those seeking a tenure-track teaching position is their preferred balance of teaching and research (see Kuehn, 1994). Different expectations of teaching and research will determine both teaching load (typically ranging between two and four classes per semester) and number of publications expected for tenure (which can range widely, with expectations typically between 1–15 articles). Other potentially important considerations include whether the school has a graduate program and whether the school is a public or private institution. The matter of whether a school is publicly or privately owned has numerous implications, but for many people, the biggest issue is the opportunity to work at a school operated by a particular religious denomination.

Once candidates have carefully considered their own preferences, they can review academic job openings in places like *Spectra*, CRTNET (Communication Research and Theory Network listserv: www.natcom.org/CRTNET), and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Students can identify corporate job openings in industry publications, newspapers, and Web sites (e.g., Monster.com, CareerBuilder.com), as well as professional organizations' websites (e.g., The Society for Human Resource Management: www.shrm.com). Job seekers should then learn more about the programs or companies whose job ads look appealing to see if their interests fit with the nature of that position.

For teaching jobs, a ''goodness of fit'' between the applicant and the institution can span an infinite array of characteristics including areas of concentration the department offers, nature of classes taught, typical class size, research facilities available, service expectations, department support for research and professional development, definition of suitable scholarship, parental or caregiver accommodations, department culture, and more. For jobs outside the academy, graduates should consider the nature of the tasks and industry, hours, travel, and compensation. Many professional positions pay better than academic jobs, but they usually require more administrative work and offer less flexibility and control over one's own time. Also, professional jobs typically require more interaction and interdependence on other employees than is required in academic positions.

Another issue to consider is the number of job openings to which one should apply. Graduates should apply to enough positions to maximize their opportunity to find a job, yet not so many as to overwhelm those writing recommendation letters. A rule of thumb is to apply to all jobs that look truly exciting, and then a few jobs that seem adequate in case the seemingly ideal organizations do not make offers.

For all jobs, applicants should consider the culture and climate of the department and whether they want to place themselves within such an organization. Corporate and departmental cultures differ widely in terms of their competitiveness, social support, conflict, sociality, hierarchical structure, diversity, and inclusiveness. Given the range of research that indicates the power of jobs to shape individuals' identity (Tracy & Trethewey, 2005), job applicants should take stock of the type(s) of current employees and work culture and ask themselves questions such as: "Will I enjoy or grow within this environment?" and "Do I want to be like these people?"

Sending Application Materials

After deciding where to apply, the process of preparing materials begins. The matter of what to include in an application package is simple: Send whatever is specified in the job ad. Virtually every school will ask for a cover letter, curriculum vitae, recommendation letters, and a statement of either research interests or teaching philosophy. In seeking employment within the academy, most research-oriented universities will ask candidates to send articles or conference papers while most teaching-oriented schools will ask for evidence of teaching effectiveness. Jobs outside the academy will ask for a résumé, statement of professional goals, and often other documents relevant to the profession they represent. These employers will frequently request a list of references rather than the letters themselves. When professional positions are applied for through a Web site, job applicants should keep in mind that many résumés are filtered through key words (e.g., team, leader, project management). As such, it can be helpful to include in one's application the potential key words that the employer used in the job advertisement.

Cover letter. Although some people on hiring committees skip applicants' cover letters and go straight to their résumé or curriculum vitae when reviewing files, others read cover letters carefully before looking at other material. Many employers in business decide whether or not to even look at an application file based on the cover letter alone. The bottom line is that, especially in business, the cover letter is critically important in an application. The cover letter allows an applicant the opportunity to succinctly make a case for why he or she is worth considering, which can influence how—or if—the rest of the file is evaluated. Furthermore, points made in a cover letter (if made well) routinely find their way into hiring committees' discussions. The key is to make the cover letter inviting to read. This letter must be individually written for each application and should be about ¾ to 1½ pages in length (*never* over 2 pages) for most industries.

A good cover letter begins with a statement that the applicant is applying for the job (identifying which position, if several are posted) and is best organized in a way that mirrors the job advertisement. The first paragraphs should highlight ways the applicant is a good fit with the major elements of the advertised position. Applicants should avoid repeating information in the cover letter that is available in other application materials; instead just note where the relevant qualities are addressed in other application materials and direct readers' attention to those spots. Candidates can also mention relevant information in cover letters that might not be clearly evident in the rest of the application materials (e.g., their career trajectory, the reasons for a break in their employment record or scholarship, how their professional work complements their scholarly work). Finally, a strong way to close the letter is to discuss why this particular position is of special interest to the candidate (e.g., the company's reputation, a university's religious denomination, a particular geographic location, an innovative teaching program, or a person's relationship with that company or school).

In the cover letter, candidates should note their relevant strengths, but do so in a likeable and not boastful manner. The applicant's portfolio can exhibit a person's merits in a more "objective" fashion. The cover letter should focus on goodness of fit and on the unique qualities the candidate would bring to the position that might appeal to the hiring institution.

Curriculum vitae or résumé. The curriculum vitae or résumé is the most important single document in a job application packet. Given the importance of this document through one's career, students should spend time creating a strong framework for condensing and describing their scholarship, work experience, teaching, service, and extra-curricular activities. A number of frameworks exist for creating these documents (Jackson & Geckeis, 2003) and students should make use of models that are used by their mentors as well as those used by individuals employed by the organization to which they are applying. Most vitae/résumés include contact information, institutions and dates of earned degrees, publications and conference papers, courses taught, awards and distinctions, work experience, and service (to the profession such as responding to a conference panel, to the department and/or university such as serving as a graduate student leader, and to the public such as *pro bono* communication consulting for a local nonprofit organizations).

While no single organizational framework is necessarily "best," one's curriculum vitae should be well organized (usually in reverse chronological order) and should clearly delineate the role of the individual—and order of authors on a research project, the time spent in a certain position, or specific duties accomplished for a certain project. Include all relevant information, but avoid inflating or double-listing activities, which can cause readers to doubt the veracity of the entire document. Last, the best vitae are easy to read, with plenty of white space and appropriate use of formatting. Business résumés follow the same layout, design, and sequencing guidelines as curricula vitae. However, business résumés are strictly limited to one or two pages and should emphasize experience relevant to the type of job being sought. Many excellent sources offer guidelines for creating a business résumé (e.g., www.Monster.Com or www.CareerBuilder.com).

Recommendation letters. As evidenced by the significant role of peer review in academic publishing and teaching, the opinions of peers are important in evaluating an applicant's qualifications. The same is true outside the academy—professional recommendations have a significant impact in hiring decisions. As such, the significance of strong letters of recommendation cannot be underestimated in the job application packet. Strong recommendation letters are the result of professional relationships. Students should begin thinking about who might serve as their references early in their studies and begin developing significant relationships with those people as they take classes and engage in research projects throughout their graduate work.

Students should consider several tips as they choose letter writers. First, students should consider the job position and choose a group of writers who will be considered credible by that particular hiring committee. Sometimes the source of the letter is as important as the content. Generally speaking, students should endeavor to cultivate relationships with well-known scholars or business leaders. Students should have a conversation with prospective letter writers and discern the type of letter that will be provided by each person. Some people will be quite honest if they feel they cannot write a strong letter, while others are reluctant to hurt a student's feelings. An unenthusiastic response or a comment such as "Someone else could probably write a stronger letter" are indicators that this person might not write a particularly glowing letter.

The best letter writers show a depth and breadth of knowledge about the student and can effectively and positively comment on the details of the applicant's job skills and character. Most academic job search committees are also keen on having assurance that the applicant will indeed finish the degree, so it is helpful if the advisor's letter includes a timeline for finishing the dissertation and/or other requirements. Finally, students should have an appreciation for the amount of time and effort it takes to write a good letter. Students should provide letter writers with plenty of time (a month or more, if possible) to write the letter and offer to facilitate the process by providing a description of the job, their vitae, a draft of the cover letter, and addressed envelopes.

Research portfolio. In seeking a position as a researcher—whether for a faculty position at a university or for a marketplace analyst in a business—most prospective employers will ask for a research statement. The purpose of this statement is to give the hiring committee a sense of the applicant's research experience and trajectory. For universities, this narrative should show a goodness of fit with department goals, a significant individual research program, and a projection of future directions. These statements are typically one to two pages in length. The best research statement is written simply and accessibly, so that any faculty member can understand the candidate's research agenda and the contribution this research will make to the discipline and to society.

Candidates should send as a writing sample the most impressive examples of their work in their primary area of interest. Ideally, this is a single-authored article published in a top journal on a topic central to the candidate's research agenda. However, few graduate students have such a piece readily available. In this case, applicants should send a copy of their best published article (if any), potentially complemented with a single-authored conference paper or a class paper that is central to the candidate's research agenda. If none of these are available, a dissertation chapter may be the best choice. For a professional job, a succinctly written executive summary or white paper will likely be more impressive than an academic paper.

Teaching portfolio. Many employers are interested in evidence that demonstrates the applicant's teaching ability—in the classroom for faculty members and in training and development settings for business. Such evidence can come in a number of forms, and like the curriculum vitae, the construction of a teaching portfolio will be of use for faculty not only in job applications, but also in tenure and promotion files at teaching-oriented schools. Teaching portfolios commonly include a table of contents, a statement of teaching philosophy, synthesized and contextualized student teaching evaluations, peer reviews, syllabi, sample course assignments and exams, a discussion of the applicant's instructional training and professional development, and examples of student work in the applicant's courses.

The portfolio should highlight the purposes and goals of teaching, adequate preparation, appropriate methods for achieving pedagogical goals, significant results (e.g., in terms of projects developed, student achievement), effective presentation, and reflection on one's own practice (Newton, Singer, D'Antonio, Bush, & Roen, 2002). Also, student evaluations of teaching should be contextualized and synthesized. Numbers do not speak for themselves, and universities have widely variant evaluation processes (a ''1.0'' rating can have very different meanings depending on the system). Student comments can add depth but are often not considered as credible as numeric averages because the applicant could cherry-pick the most flattering remarks. Qualitative and quantitative ratings will be strongest when mixed with peer reviews, demonstration of instructional activities, and personal reflexivity about pedagogical goals.

General advice on sending materials. Several guidelines are important in preparing and sending materials. First, be sure to send everything specified in the advertisement. Failing to do so will make the file incomplete and can remove the applicant from consideration. Second, candidates should proofread everything in the file. Special care needs to be taken that one's curriculum vitae is perfect. Typos and errors in the application file will hurt credibility, reducing that candidate's likelihood of being offered an interview. Finally, for positions that request a hard copy of the application, candidates should staple or secure multi-page documents and place their materials securely into an envelope for mailing. The application is usually assembled as a single file folder for each applicant that may be photocopied for multiple members of the hiring committee. As such, it is wise to avoid inserting materials into plastic page covers, binding them into three-ring ringed folders, or encumbering them in any other manner. A successful application will lead to an interview.

INTERVIEWS

Due to budgetary constraints, most employers utilize a multi-stage process of interviewing that may include telephone or e-mail screening interviews and one or more on-site interviews with various groups of individuals. In academic jobs, the ''final'' interview usually happens during a one to two day on-site visit. Meanwhile, corporate jobs may require several visits to the site as the applicant sequentially moves through and up the corporate hierarchy as the interview pool is gradually narrowed down.

Screening Interviews

Most organizations utilize some form of screening interview, either over the telephone or in person. For jobs in higher education, in-person interviews are most commonly done at the National Communication Association convention in November. The purpose of this interview is to provide more information about the job to the short list candidates (typically 5–10) and decide which applicants to bring to campus for a full interview. This interview is an important step in the search for a tenure-track job. Candidates should expect questions about both teaching and scholarship and are expected to ask questions of the hiring committee. This interview usually includes several faculty members, either conducted in-person by faculty available at a convention or remotely by several faculty on speaker phone or conference call. Expect the interview to be approximately a half hour.

Before the screening interview, candidates should do considerable research. Those seeking academic jobs should learn about the relative strengths and specialties of the school, identify areas of academic concentration, familiarize themselves with faculty members' scholarly interests, know what courses the department offers, and if time permits, look at faculty members' publications or attend faculty members' convention presentations. For corporate jobs, candidates should learn as much as possible about the company's market, portfolio, and organizational structure. Organizations are more interested in hiring candidates who want to work at *their* institution rather than hiring people who are just looking for any company that will take them.

During the screening interviews, candidates should be sensitive about the length of their answers. Interviewers' verbal and nonverbal cues will provide the necessary feedback, even on the telephone. Hiring committees are unimpressed with candidates they must pry information from but are equally repelled by candidates who do not know when to stop talking. In seeking a faculty position at a university, candidates also need to watch for one potential land-mine: teaching preferences. Faculty who are territorial might feel threatened by an applicant who wants to teach "their" course. Candidates can best answer questions about what classes they prefer to teach by telling the committee which courses the department offers that are of greatest interest. Identify a number of courses but do not to seem demanding about teaching any particular one. Finally, candidates should show their best interpersonal skills, being as gracious as possible. It is permissible to end the interview by asking about a time frame for on-campus interviews.

On-Site Interview

After organizations have selected their finalists, they will bring each candidate in for an on-site interview. Interview lengths vary for corporate positions but typically range from a couple of hours to no more than a day. Written or oral testing may also be part of this process. Companies that do extensive testing may even spread that process across several days. For academic positions, interviews typically last two days and give both the department and candidate a thorough chance to get to know each other. During an academic interview, candidates should expect the following:

- Meetings with the department chair, faculty members, dean, a group interview with the hiring committee, and possibly a faculty member from another department

- A presentation of the candidate's research
- A pedagogical talk or guest lecture in a class
- A meeting or social event with students
- Multiple meals with individual or small groups of faculty and possibly a reception with the entire department

At the time the interview is offered, the chair of the hiring department should inform candidates of their activities and likely schedule; at least a day before the interview starts the chair should provide a complete itinerary. Candidates are welcome to inquire about any information they need to prepare properly—including the goals of the requested presentations, equipment available for presentations, and estimated number of attendees.

Preparation. When an on-site interview is offered, candidates should do additional research on the department or company, so they are best prepared for the events ahead. Packing for interviews can be tricky, as candidates should be well-prepared but are limited in what they can bring. The essentials for any interview include a portfolio or briefcase that is easy to carry yet looks professional, presentation notes, an extra copy of the résumé or vitae, support material for presentations (laptop, jump drive, CD, and/or hand-outs), and back-up transparencies of any essential PowerPoint slides. Candidates should also bring notes they have made in preparing for the interview (e.g., information about the department or questions they want to ask while at the interview). Other supplies that candidates sometimes bring include pain reliever, breath mints or gum, safety pins, and other "survival" materials.

Regardless of one's chosen profession, interviewees traditionally wear business clothes such as a suit or other professional attire during their on-site interviews. Applicants are wise to dress in layers to allow for quick adjustments to different temperatures or levels of formality. All candidates should check the weather for their interview site before flying and be prepared with functional footwear in case of inclement weather.

Recommendations. Interviewing is a daunting process for many candidates and most everyone feels some degree of anxiety as they depart for an interview. Candidates can ease their nerves by keeping several points in mind. Interviews can be like first dates: Both sides are learning about each other to see if a long-term relationship is desirable. Keeping this two-way street in mind can be comforting, since it means that both parties are equally interviewing each other. Candidates should know that hiring departments want to see them do well, since these candidates rose to the top of their applicant pool. Also, employers want the candidates to have a positive experience, since they will want their top choice to accept the job offer.

Interviewees need to bear in mind that they are "on stage" for the entire visit. Give the best self-presentation possible with all people (including students) and in all settings, including meals, receptions, and while riding in the car to and from events. Because there are many different activities during an interview, applicants should adapt their behavior to the particular context. At times candidates will be expected to engage in a complex discussion of scholarship; at other times, they need to relax, be personable, and talk about something other than themselves (or better yet, ask questions of others).

Candidates need to be aware that interviewing uses vast quantities of a person's energy. Regardless of how outgoing a person is, most people find a full day of interviewing exhausting. Some people might still have energy left at the end of the first day to review their notes for the next day's presentation, but many find even that quite demanding. Candidates should fully prepare presentations before flying to the interview site to ensure well-deserved and necessary rest during their "down-time" at the interview site.

Candidates should consider the questions they will be asked and how they will answer those questions (see Appendix). Applicants should also compile a list of questions about the position and be prepared to ask them at the right time and to the right person. Candidates are wise to consider the context and target when asking questions. For instance, ask the dean about the department's reputation in the university, a student about the university's student culture, an assistant professor about how much the junior faculty are shielded from excessive service requirements, a senior professor about changes in the department over the years, a manager about the company's market strategy, or an entry-level employee about the company's support for career growth or parents with young children. After returning home from an interview, it is polite (although not required) to send e-mails or handwritten notes thanking key personnel with whom the candidate met and talked during the interview.

The preceding discussion provides a general overview of how to plan for and perform during the interview. However, many job seekers have additional concerns. While it is impossible to plan for every interview anomaly, the following discussion covers several of the most common concerns of job seekers.

COMMON CONCERNS OF JOB SEEKERS

Job seekers encounter several common concerns as they apply for their first positions. While there are no hard and fast rules, the following comments are designed to provide a starting point for reflection and discussion about candidate behaviors during the interview, considering multiple job offers, and salary negotiations.

Questionable questions and behavior. Interviews may range from several hours to several days, depending on the position and organization. Candidates at universities will interact with faculty and students during morning, noon, and evening in contexts ranging from a professional classroom to faculty offices to meeting rooms to collegial social events. Given this range, candidates sometimes experience incidents and situations where they are not sure what to do. For instance, should candidates drink alcohol? Anyone who has attended an academic or professional convention will recognize that alcohol consumption varies across universities—from not consuming alcoholic beverages to acknowledging that in some cultures alcohol consumption is common. Avoid being the first to order or drink alcohol. If others order it, applicants may follow suit but should limit their consumption. If hired, there will be plenty of opportunities down the line for socializing. If in doubt, err on the side of professionalism and do not drink alcoholic beverages at any time during the interview.

Given the permeable business/social aspects of the interview, applicants may also be faced with questions that are technically illegal. Most interviewers should be trained on interviewing guidelines by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to help ensure lack of discrimination due to sex, ethnicity, size, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation. However, few people outside human resource departments are properly trained. As a result, applicants sometimes report being asked a variety of inappropriate questions, such as their plans for marriage or children, their age, or their religion. In many cases, the motivation for these questions is harmless or even virtuous (e.g., to show interest in the candidate or help him or her find access to resources in the community). However, bias and discrimination are still present and candidates are well-advised to consider this as they interview.

There are several ways to prepare for inappropriate questions. The first matter is for candidates to decide whether they are willing to answer such questions. Being completely open and honest, even when asked illegal questions, may indicate an open easy-going nature and also help candidates avoid being hired into a potentially unwelcoming or alienating departmental atmosphere. However, certain questions are illegal for a reason—their answers may be inappropriately used against an applicant. Candidates should know what questions are illegal and be ready with a response if they do not want to share such private information. Various tactics are available for answering inappropriate questions (Heiberger & Vick, 2001). Among others, candidates can respond with humor, a change of topic, responding to the intent rather than the content of the question (e.g., "You ask whether I plan to have a family? I can't really answer that, but I definitely would define myself as someone who works hard and plays hard. I think having a social side to me actually helps my work ethic."), or a direct indication that the question is illegal. As with much of what is discussed in this chapter, the best defense is to prepare for potentially questionable behavior or questions. Applicants should remember that the people they meet during their interview are not only potential colleagues but also potential friends, and that applicants may cross paths with potential employers long after a job interview is completed.

How many interviews? First time applicants often wonder about the number of interviews to accept from different prospective employers. Job interviews are costly in money and time for both the applicant and employer, so students should decline an interview if they feel sure that they would decline the job if offered. However, it is generally in applicants' best interest to experience multiple interviews. Visiting with several potential employers provides the opportunity to learn more about different schools or companies. Reputations can be deceiving and out-dated, and it is often only after an on-site visit that one can appreciate the pros and cons of a potential job. Furthermore, candidates will find value in being able to compare and contrast various departments, universities or companies, geographic regions, industries, and job offers. However, too many on-site interviews can exhaust a candidate and make negotiation difficult as the candidate waits to visit or hear from other places. In general, applicants should accept all screening interviews. Following the screening interview, if a person is lucky enough to have numerous options he or she should be cautious about accepting more than three or four on-site interviews.

Salary negotiations. Many first time job seekers are so happy to be offered a position that they completely forget about trying to negotiate. However, job applicants have much more power to negotiate *before* they accept a job than after they hold a position. Furthermore, a lifetime of raises and perks are often based upon the initial offer. As such, it is in applicants' best interest to carefully consider and negotiate their offers. At the same time, hiring departments typically try to make a strong offer, so applicants want to be careful not to insult their future colleagues with unreasonable demands.

A number of items can be negotiated, and students should thoughtfully consider the priority level of various items that belong in this bargaining mix. First, of course, is salary. It is usually wise to sacrifice one-time perks for a higher base salary, but employers can sometimes dip into various pockets of money available for one-time signing bonuses. Indeed, new employees often receive start-up money to help pay for office furniture, books and journals, moving expenses and a house-hunting trip, digital and computer equipment, and laboratory supplies. Applicants should consider all of the items that could help ease their research and teaching, understand the costs of each, and negotiate likewise.

Other negotiable items for faculty positions include travel money (the yearly standard as well as extra for the first year or two to allow the applicant to return to the graduating institution to finish any co-authored projects), graduate research assistants, summer research support, and teaching load reduction sometime in the first few years. For job applicants who have experience or who are otherwise in a strong bargaining position, the following items may also be negotiable: parking spaces, support finding employment for one's partner (or even a partner hire), and support for constructing a new laboratory or performance space. For jobs outside the academy, job seekers may also wish to think about support for ongoing training or education, a home office set-up, company car, entertainment expense account, and other perks. Although some items—such as health insurance, retirement plans, parental leave, and daycare—may not be negotiable, these items will make a difference in one's standard and quality of living so it makes sense to learn about the employer's offerings in these areas *before* the job is accepted.

When is the best time to attempt such negotiations? In most cases, the applicant should not begin negotiating until the job is offered. At the same time, the applicant should be prepared with an answer if an employer asks a question like, "So, what kind of offer would it take for us to hire you?" As such, it is important for applicants to do research on current salaries (for academic jobs, the budgets of public universities are generally available in the "reserve" area of the institution's library), cost of living, their own level of competitiveness, and their job offer priorities. Applicants can also mention their preferred package but simultaneously indicate their active cooperation of working with the university or company in moving toward an offer that is mutually acceptable. If someone at the hiring institution just makes a job offer without any explicit negotiation discussion, applicants may ask something like, "What kind of negotiation room is there in the offer?" and then take the opportunity to talk further. Doing so may feel scary, so students are wise to practice negotiating well before their first job interview (Heiberger & Vick, 2001).

Although successful interviews require a lot of preparation, research, and face-time, they can also be fulfilling and even fun. This process provides an opportunity for applicants to synthesize their scholarly work, talk about their ideas and experience, and meet with others who are interested in them. Lifelong connections can be made through the application and interviewing process. This chapter provides suggestions to better prepare students for this pathway to advancing their career.

APPENDIX

Questions Candidates Might Want to Ask

- What are the responsibilities of the position? What is the relative emphasis on various responsibilities (such as research, teaching, grant-getting, and service in a university tenure-track faculty position)?
- What are work load expectations? How would the organization prioritize different obligations?
- What is the history of the position? How have the last several hires fared in their career success and/or tenure process with the company or university?
- What is the teaching load? What types of courses would I be expected to teach? What level (undergraduate, Master's, doctoral) classes would I be able to teach? How many students should I expect to have in my classes?
- Is there a teaching load reduction for the first year or a teaching leave granted before sabbatical?
- Can course time be bought out with research money? What would that cost?
- What are the service expectations for junior faculty?
- What type of computer resources, software, and laboratories are available?
- What types of funding opportunities are available? For instance, what types of grant opportunities are available for new faculty? What type of support is provided for external grant-seeking? What type of money is available for ongoing training or education?
- Are assistants (e.g., graduate students, interns, administrative personnel) available to help in my research efforts or job endeavors?
- What is the department's reputation in the larger organization or industry? How has this organization changed over the last few years? What are projections for the future? (These are good questions to ask someone in a top leadership position.)
- How much travel and/or entertainment money is generally provided? Can this be supplemented for my first couple years?
- What health plans and retirement plans are provided/available? (Ask for an information packet.)
- What are the perks for one's spouse and children (e.g., travel, education, employment, daycare)?
- What is the culture of the department/organization?
- What are the organization's philosophies or policies about diversity (ethnic, gender, age, religion)? For faculty positions: What are the department's philosophies or policies about methodological and epistemological diversity?
- Is the department managed by a director, chair, or head? Ask for an explanation of departmental governance (for instance, does the head of the

department make all decisions or are decisions made by employee vote? How often are various organizational meetings?).

- Why did you decide to join this organization/department/school? What are your reasons for staying? What would you change if you could? What changes would improve the organization/department/school?
- In addition to these overall questions, ask others about their interests and current projects. This gives the candidate a feel for the organization, provides a "breather," and indicates interest in the current employees.

Questions Candidates Might Be Asked
(Be forthright; integrity is important.)

- Why do you want to be employed by *our* department? Why do you want a job in our company?
- When will you be finished with your graduate degree? At what stage are you now and what do you still need to complete?
- Describe your research agenda/program. How has your research evolved? Where do you see your research program going in the next five years? How has your research prepared you for this position?
- What particular academic and methodological training sets you apart from the rest?
- What courses could you or would you teach? What textbooks would you use and why? What is your teaching philosophy?
- How do you deal with issues of diversity in your teaching and research?
- How do you see yourself fitting in with current employees in our department? What would you bring that we do not have? How would you make connections to others who are here?
- How long do you plan on staying at this job?
- Can you tell me about the research, teaching, work experience and publications listed on your vitae?
- What do you do in your free-time?

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