

# Going Live:

## Interviewing for Faculty Positions & Preparing your Job Talk

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# I do a lot of Mock Interviews

- Tell me about yourself
- Tell me about your research

# Three Goals

- Increase confidence in Interviewing for Faculty Positions
- Provide a strategy for interview prep and handling uncomfortable questions
- Offer guidelines to get you started on outlining and preparing for your Job Talk.

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## Grad Students & PhDs - Career Center Special Events

The Career Center's PhD counselors offer customized workshops designed to meet the needs of graduate students, PhDs, and postdocs whether you are pursuing a faculty position or are focused on professional options outside of academia. For more information about Career Center services for advanced degree holders, visit [Graduate Students, PhDs, and Postdocs](#).



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<b><a href="#">Academic Job Search in the Sciences + Engineering I (PDF)</a></b> Understanding the Search Process, Finding Job Announcements, and Managing your Online Presence	Aug 4
<b><a href="#">Academic Job Search in the Sciences + Engineering II (PDF)</a></b> Creating Your Written Credentials: CVs, Cover Letters, Etc.	Aug 11

# Conference Interviews

- 15 Second Commercial & 30 Second Research Summary
- Searching for Colleagues not Students
- A Dialogue not a Monologue
- Defend Your Work and Conclusions without being overly Defensive or Deferential
- Ask Relevant Questions (e.g., Research Support)
- Be Prepared to talk About Courses in Conceptual Terms
- Ask Them if They have Any Questions or Concerns

# Phone/Skype Interviews

- Be prepared (e.g., 15 sec commercial)
- Use shorter, less complex sentences
- Pause to allow them to move on, but be prepared to fill silence
- Stay focused. It's not a casual conversation
- Test drive your skype set-up (earbuds)

# Kinds of Questions

- You and your future plans
- Your research
- Your teaching interests + philosophy
- Other Contributions you might make
- Feared Questions
- Questions for them

# You and your future plans

- Tell me about yourself?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- Tell me about your research?



# Research Questions

- Walk us through the next 5 years in your research
- What funding sources do you expect to approach
- How would you include undergraduates in your research and how does it inform your teaching?
- Who in our department does similar research? Who do you envision collaborating with.

# Teaching Questions

- How do you engage students with different skill levels?
- How do you utilize new media in your teaching (Use concrete examples)?
- What was the most challenging circumstance or incident you've encountered in your teaching, and how did you address it?
- What are your favorite courses to teach, and why? What other classes would you like to offer that are not already offered?

# Feared/Illegal Questions

- Why did you take so long to finish?
- Why didn't your PhD/Postdoc yield more publications?
- Is your husband willing to relocate if you are offered this position?
- Do you have any children?

# Other Common Questions

- How have you engaged students from diverse backgrounds?
- Where do you envision your students getting jobs?
- What is your ideal balance between teaching and research?
- Why Arizona State?

# Questions you might ask

- What kind of research support is provided for junior faculty?
- Typical Lab size
- Lab resources-shared facilities (NMR, Mass Spec, and Microscopy, can use instrumentation labs for research)
- How is it determined who teaches what?
- What % of students are engaged in research

# Interviews are like Qualifying Exams

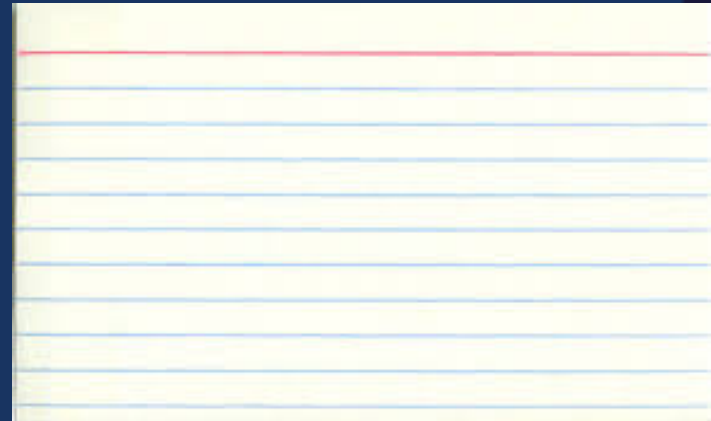
- They are inherently anxiety-inducing experiences.
- They require advance thought and preparation (math)
- The goal is to avoid the challenge of formulating your answer to a question at the same time you have to deliver it

# Interviews are not like Qualifying Exams

- Rarely a correct answer. A literal interpretation and answer is often not helpful to them. Rather what is their concern and how can you best address it?
- Use their (or common) language to describe your experience
- Muster up some enthusiasm – econ history
- Do you come across as an engaging colleague?

# Strategies for Preparation

- Secret weapons:
  - Power of 3
  - Helical Approach
  - Practice





# On-Campus Interview: You will Meet

- Faculty/Colleagues
- Students
- Benefits/HR
- Lab Managers
- Deans
- Assume that none of them will be familiar with you and your work
- You'll Never Know Who is Most Influential in the Decision

# Interview Killers

- 67% failed to make eye contact
- 55% carried themselves poorly
- 38% applicants lacked confidence or didn't smile
- 33% showed bad posture or weak handshake
- Condescending to Students
- But I'm a PhD!
  - So What?!

“The job talk is what will  
make or break your campus  
visit”

Professor Tim Lebestky  
Williams College

# Setting The Hook

Most common start to a Job Talk

My research is about the S. Korean Auto Industry

Most common response:



# Setting The Hook

- Just because you've spent all this time on your topic doesn't mean they will find it worthy of their attention
- Tell them a story
- What is the Surprise? What's at Stake?

# Intentionality

- What is the question your research is intended to address,

and

What portion of it will you cover in your job talk?

# Job Talk Exercise

- What is the big question you want to answer through your research?
  - Is there upward mobility in the Int'l Econ System for late developers?
- What is the specific question you address in your PhD/Postdoc research
  - Can the Koreans become players in the int'l auto market?
- What is the most surprising fact/finding/anecdote, you uncovered
  - In 1989, Hyundai dealers sold more cars per dealership than Honda dealers sold Civics
- Who is your audience?
  - Small college dept: no other pol economists in the room

# Start-Up Package

- Start researching now
- Create a spreadsheet that shows how you would utilize
  - 75%
  - 100%
  - 125%

Of a typical start-up offer in your field at different types of institutions



## Upcoming Presentations and Events

**Nailing the Job Talk or Erudition Ain't Enough**

Oct 26

**The Strategic Postdoc: How to Secure It and What to Do Once You Have It**

Dec 5

**PhD Negotiation Skills and Strategies**

Dec 7

**Preparing for the Masters & PhD Career Fair and On-Campus Recruiting**

Oct 5

**Masters & PhD Career Fair**

Oct 12

# P.S. – Two Questions

- What was the most useful part of this presentation?
- What topic should have received more time or attention?

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