Going Live:

Interviewing for Faculty Positions & Preparing your Job Talk

Andrew Green, PhD
UC Berkeley Career Center
THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

24/7 RESOURCES

- How-to Workshops on Youtube
- Interview Practice on Big Interview
- Career Exploration on Candid Career
- Career Readiness Workbook on Issuu
- Resume and Cover Letter Resources
Graduate Students, PhDs & Postdocs

Whether you are interested in pursuing a career in academia or exploring the broad range of other professional options, the Career Center has workshops, events and online resources that can help you find job announcements, prepare your credentials, and bring you face-to-face with potential employers. Take a look at the Grad Student & PhD Services we offer.

If you’re not sure what you want to do after grad school, PhD advisors Debra Behrens and Andrew Green can provide counseling and assessments that will help you in that decision-making process.

- Academic Job Search
- Careers Beyond the Academy
- PhD Externship Program
PhDs Workshops and Events

The Career Center provides a variety of programs and resources for doctoral students and postdocs. To register for programs and events, login to Handshake.

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<td>Academic Job Search - Sciences + Engineering I: Overview and the Perspective of Search Committee Members</td>
<td>Aug 14</td>
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<td>Academic Job Search - Sciences + Engineering II: Your Written Application Materials</td>
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<td>Academic Job Search - Sciences + Engineering III: Going Live - Interviews + the Job Talk</td>
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From Last Week

• Typical length of documents
  – Cover Letter: 1-1 ½ pages
  – Research Statement: 1-3 pages
  – Statement of Teaching Philosophy: 1-1 ½ pages
  – Diversity Statement: 1-1 ½ pages

• Diversity statement: How do committees weigh it/use it/view it compared to the other statements?
Feedback from Interviews

• “You don’t smile enough.”

• “There were better candidates.”

• “You don’t act like a PI.”

• Daunting but doable: Job searching after a postdoc
I do a lot of Mock Interviews: A Brave Volunteer?

- 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.
Overarching Themes

• 30 Second Commercial & 30 Second Research Summery

• 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)

• Ask Them if They have Any Questions or Concerns

• Rare and precious opportunities
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
A new tool: Big Interview

https://berkeley.biginterview.com
Start a new mock interview

- PhD STEM - Faculty Positions (teaching-related)
  Added on May 19, 2020

- PhD STEM - Faculty Positions (research-related)
  Added on May 15, 2020

- PhD STEM - Behavioral Questions
  Added on May 15, 2020

- PhD STEM - Industry Questions
  Added on May 15, 2020

- Behavioral Interview Practice
  Added on November 14, 2018

- Tough Interview Questions
  Added on November 14, 2018
Tell me about yourself.

Record your answer for this question

Please select another video source if the default one is not working:
- Integrated Webcam
- Logitech HD Webcam C615
What does Big Interview offer?

• Virtual mock interviews for all experience levels and dozens of industries
• A database of thousands of interview questions with tips on how to answer them
• The ability to rate and share your interview answers for feedback
• A step-by-step interview Answer Builder for crafting answers to behavioral questions
What does Big Interview offer?

• Broad range of question sets with tips on how to answer them

• The ability to rate and share your interview answers for feedback

• A step-by-step interview Answer Builder for crafting answers to behavioral questions

• Customized question sets for PhDs in the Sciences + Engineering
  – Faculty Positions (research-related)
  – Faculty Positions (teaching-related)
  – Industry Questions
  – Behavioral Questions
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
Phone/Zoom/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)
Why invest the time?

• The final obstacle standing between you and a tenure-track position
“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
Still to come

• Nailing the Job Talk – October 15
• Negotiation Strategies – December 8
• Prep for the Masters/PhD Fair – October 1
• Masters/PhD Fair – October 15
Plan B?

• My IDP hosted by ScienceMag.org under “Careers”

• Connect with grad student orgs like
  – Beyond Academia
  – CDIPS
  – MCB 295 (spring)

• Complete your Handshake profile and sign up for PhDs in the Sciences CareerMail

• Make an Appointment (via Handshake)

• I was not the best, or, I think, the worst, …

• Gotta make some new friends