Going Live:

Interviewing for Faculty Positions & Preparing your Job Talk

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UC Berkeley Career Center
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.
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.

Login to Callisto for complete event details and the latest information!

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<td>Creating Your Written Credentials: CVs, Cover Letters, Etc.</td>
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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

– Where do you see yourself publishing your future work?

– How would you include undergraduates in your research and how does it inform your teaching?

– Are there other campus programs or research centers that you might contribute to?
Teaching Questions

• Discuss your teaching style? (Use concrete examples)

• 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?
Additional Teaching Questions

• How would you define “student success?”

• How do you approach teaching a class with students who bring different levels of preparation?

• Where do you envision your students getting jobs?

• How do you create an inclusive environment in your classroom?
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?

– Is service learning a major emphasis at the institution or in the department?

– 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
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