

Who would you choose?

Gaining perspective on search committees

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Agenda

- Brief reminder of the landscape of academia in the U.S. and the typical faculty job search process
- Search committees and the “typical” faculty search process
- Mock search committee activity – who would you choose to interview?
- Discussion

There are 3939 higher ed institutions* classified into 7 basic types.

1. Tribal colleges and universities
2. Special-focus institutions (law, art, medicine, etc)
3. Associate's colleges
4. Baccalaureate colleges/Associate's colleges
5. Baccalaureate colleges
6. Master's colleges and universities
7. Doctoral universities
(3 subtypes: R1, R2, R3 based on R&D expenditures)



***<https://carnegieclassifications.acenet.edu>**

Institutions vary in their focus

Teaching



Research

1. Tribal colleges and universities
2. Special-focus institutions (law, art, medicine, etc)
3. Associate's colleges
4. Baccalaureate colleges/Associate's colleges
5. Baccalaureate colleges
6. Master's colleges and universities
7. Doctoral universities
(3 subtypes: R1, R2, R3 based on R&D expenditures)

Faculty search timeline usually begins ~1 year prior to job start



late summer to early fall	early to mid-fall	mid to late fall	winter-spring	February - April	late summer
Open jobs advertised	Application deadlines	1 st interviews	Campus interviews	Job offers	Appointment starts

Application package

Always need

- CV
- Cover letter
- List of 3-5 referees who can speak to your potential to be an outstanding faculty member *in the type of institution to which you are applying*

May also need

- Research plan/statement of prior research accomplishments
- Diversity statement
- Teaching philosophy
- Teaching evaluations/portfolio
- Statement of faith (some religiously affiliated institutions)

Search committees and the “typical” faculty search process

Search committee is made up of

Search committee chair



- Communicates with candidates
- Writes committee reports and final recommendation letter

Search committee chair

+

4-6 other faculty members

Sometimes

- The Department chair (*as ex officio*)
- A grad student
- A postdoc
- A diversity advisor

Search process

1st committee meeting:

- = Discuss qualities sought in new faculty member
- = Write and post job ad

Applications received; each app assigned to 2-3 committee members for review.

- = Members review and rank applications

2nd committee meeting

- = Compare top candidates & choose who to phone screen

Conduct phone screens then select candidates to invite to campus

Conduct campus interviews

Recommend hire

All search committees (regardless of type of institution) are looking for two main qualities in a new faculty hire



1



2

All search committees (regardless of type of institution) are looking for two main qualities in a new faculty hire

- Someone who will be successful in the context of the specific institution / department / expectations of the job.
- A good colleague.



The first chance the search committee has to gauge this...



- A conference talk or poster would be ideal!
- Your application package
 - CV
 - Cover letter



Who would you choose to interview?



You are on the search committee for Fantastic University.

- Three units of Fantastic University are conducting a joint recruitment to hire “multiple” junior tenure-track faculty.
 - Biomedical and Health Sciences
 - Center for Cell Signaling
 - Medical School
- The job ad was written by the heads of the departments in which the faculty could be hired. The search committee members were selected from the current “areas of excellence” mentioned in the job ad, and you are representing cardiovascular biology. The ad was posted and the applications are starting to roll in.



You are on the search committee for Fantastic University.

- Step 1: Take a few minutes to read the job ad on your own.
- Step 2: Attend your first committee meeting.

Get together with a couple people seated near you and talk about what kinds of things you might like to see from the candidates, based on the job description. (It's your first search committee meeting!)



Step 3: Read the 4 packets and rank them. (20-30 mins)

In Step 4, you'll discuss your choices with your fellow committee members and try to reach consensus.

Although these have been adapted from actual CVs of individuals finishing their training, the number and caliber of publications, presentations, and funding is preserved.

Wanda Maximoff (green)
Carol (Colan) Danvers (blue)
Jimmy Johns (yellow)
Xu Shang-Chi (pink)



Step 4: Discuss with your fellow (sub)committee members.

- Who did you rank at the top, and why?
- What reservations did you have about the other candidates?
- Can you reach consensus on who to recommend to do Zoom interviews with?

Wanda Maximoff (green)
Carol (Colan) Danvers (blue)
Jimmy Johns (yellow)
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Debrief

What if this was the job ad – who would you choose?

Assistant Professor – Department of Physiology

The successful candidate will be expected to contribute to teaching in the Medical School as well as the undergrad/grad programs of the Department. Progress in rank will require productivity in research, teaching, and service.

- Research: Conduct research, submit grant proposals, publish papers, attend scientific meetings, present talks and posters; guide the research of students and supervise other lab personnel.
- Teaching: Serve as a facilitator in the med school curriculum; Prepare and deliver lectures in courses offered by the Department in the graduate and undergraduate curriculums; participate in graduate student thesis committees.
- Service: Engage in service activities beneficial to the division and scientific community.
- Preference given to those whose area of research complements our departmental strengths in development, neuroscience, and endocrinology.



What if this was the job ad – who would you choose?

Assistant Professor – Biomedical Drug Discovery

We invite applicants with expertise in an area with relevance to the broad field of pharmaceutical sciences and drug discovery.

- Demonstrate a commitment to innovation by developing a rigorous research program that creates new knowledge, tools, or translation to address unmet needs or gaps in understanding (e.g., pathophysiology of a given disease that is currently untreatable, defining novel therapeutic targets for drug development and/or drug delivery, etc.).

A few interesting recent papers

SCIENCE ADVANCES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEUROSCIENCE

Myths and facts about getting an academic faculty position in neuroscience

Nina S. Hsu[†], K. Paul Rezai-zadeh[†], Michael S. Tennekoon, Stephen J. Korn*

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FEATURE ARTICLE



RESEARCH CULTURE

A survey-based analysis of the academic job market

JASON D FERNANDES[†], SARVENAZ SARABIPOUR[†], CHRISTOPHER T SMITH,
NATALIE M NIEMI, NAFISA M JADAVJI, ARIANGELA J KOZIK,
ALEX S HOLEHOUSE, VIKAS PEJAVAR, ORSOLYA SYMMONS[‡],
ALEXANDRE W BISSON FILHO AND AMANDA HAAGE*

Closing advice on crafting a CV

- Your CV is not immutable – don't be afraid to change it up based on how you are using it
- As you are tailoring your CV for a particular purpose, consider the proportion of space you devote to research, teaching, and service in your CV. Is the proportion appropriate for what you're using the CV for?
- Since you will be tailoring your CV to specific uses, keep a separate, "master CV" that you update every time you accomplish something or learn a new skill or have a new experience (my ASPIRE colleague calls this a "junk drawer CV")

Tip: is there an evaluation rubric for the institution?

Research			Teaching		Service		Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*		
Curricular Fit	Productivity	Plans	Teaching Area	Mentoring	Engagement with the campus	Engagement with the professional community	Knowledge and understanding	Track Record	Plans
1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5	1 - 5
<p>Example areas for assessing research quality and potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past research accomplishments (publication record-- emphasize quality not number or journal, impact/novelty of research, presentations, grants/fellowships etc.) • Research plan. Potential for sustained impact? Creative, doable, exciting? Long term and short term vision? Also consider info from rec letters. • How well does the proposed research mesh with current research in the department? Would they find research colleagues here? Synergy can come from techniques, systems, etc. • Potential for interdisciplinary collaboration • Interest and ability to develop a new research area 			<p>Example areas for assessing teaching quality and potential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to or demonstrated ability to teach undergrad and graduate courses (specify which areas) • Interest in teaching and record of teaching accomplishments • Ability to attract and successfully mentor excellent graduate students 		<p>Example areas for assessing service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential or track record of department engagement • Potential to make a positive contribution to the department climate • Potential to be a conscientious community member • Potential to make positive contributions to the professional community 		<p>Go to the OFEW contributions to diversity webpage for guidance. Example areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of, experience with, and interest in dimensions of diversity that result from different identities, such as ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural differences. • Familiarity with challenges faced by underrepresented individuals and the need to identify and eliminate barriers to their full and equitable participation and advancement. • Experiences or participation in activities designed to remove barriers and increase participation of underrepresented students, staff, and/or faculty. • Specific ideas for programs, initiatives, or activities to initiate at Berkeley if hired 		



Questions?

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What search committees wish you knew

- “Search committees have less power than people think.”
- “We often have no idea what we want.”
- “Search committees want you to pretend this is not a hassle.” (read: put on a positive face no matter how many times you are asked the same question.)
- “We skimmed your CV several weeks ago and can’t remember the details.”
- “We know all about you, but we don’t want you to know all about us.”
- “Keeping the employment needs of your partner a secret until the very end can wreck the whole process.” [but not too early]

From article by Allison Vaillancourt for Chronicle of Higher Education