

## **Advice for Interviewing in the Academic World**

**By Elena Bennett**

### Before the interview:

- 1) Who's in the dept? what do they do? teach? Departmental gaps in research and teaching that you could fill? Departments they interact with? Field stations? Other universities?
- 2) Get a schedule. Think about potential collaborations with people you will meet
- 3) Ask to see specific people you want to meet if they aren't on the schedule. (incl students)
- 4) Prep talk
  - a. 3-4 stories around a theme
  - b. Practice multiple times with an audience
  - c. Know your audience
- 5) Prep 'questions I will be asked'. Know your answer.
- 6) Prep questions for them
- 7) Check the weather.

### During the interview:

- 1) Get lots of rest before. Try really hard to sleep well during, too.
- 2) Figure out who your 'friendly sponsor' is/who they are.
- 3) Bring a list of questions to ask them. Check it in the bathroom between meetings
- 4) LISTEN. Take notes, even.
- 5) Ask questions. (always have one ready for the person you're talking to, 1 on their research, and 1 on the job/school/dept)
- 6) Try to picture yourself as a prof in the dept. Would you be happy? What do you need to know to figure out if you would be happy? These are the questions to ask.
- 7) Give the talk of your life (and look like you're enjoying it). They are using the talk to figure out:
  - a. Can you teach? (are you clear)
  - b. Experts in your field want to know some details, but *no one else cares*. Others will trust the experts about your science and want you to be coherent and a potential collaborator
- 8) Bring a notebook and take notes
- 9) Bring your schedule
- 10) Bring a list of questions
- 11) HAVE FUN. Remember "I don't need this stinking job."

### Questions you will be asked:

- 1) What is your first grant? Who will you submit to? What will you do?
- 2) What do you add to our department?
- 3) How are you different from X person?
- 4) What do you do?
- 5) What will you be known for in 10-20 years?
- 6) What questions do you have for me?
- 7) What resources would you need to establish a successful research program?
- 8) How will you teach?
- 9) How will you mentor grad students? Hands on? Hands off? How would you handle X problem (grad students break up in your lab, etc.) How many students ideally in your lab?

10) What will you teach? Could you teach x?

Questions to ask them:

- 1) Faculty:
  - a. Something about their research
  - b. What do you like about working here?
  - c. What do you want in a new hire? (look for inconsistencies across dept)
  - d. Who do you collaborate with? (in dept, outside dept, outside university)
  - e. Access to online journals? Library?
  - f. Where do you apply for grants? Where do most of your grants come from?
- 2) Young faculty:
  - a. Do young faculty members have a voice in the department?
  - b. Do you feel valued?
  - c. Are there programs to help young faculty with grant proposals?
  - d. Where do you apply for grants? Where do most of your grants come from?
  - e. Is there anything else you want to tell me that I haven't asked about?
- 3) Chair:
  - a. Are there mentoring programs for new faculty?
  - b. How often does the department meet?
  - c. How are decisions made?
  - d. Voice of young faculty?
  - e. What are the teaching requirements/opportunities (how much will I teach?)
  - f. What percent of time do you expect young faculty to spend on teaching or research?
  - g. How does tenure and promotion work here?
  - h. Are there programs to help young faculty with grant proposals
  - i.
- 4) Dean:
  - a. What is the long-range plan for this dept?
  - b. What is the perception of this department outside the department?
  - c. Are there programs (such as mentoring programs) for new faculty?
  - d. How does tenure, promotion, etc. work here?
- 5) Grad students: (try to assess happiness b/c your students will be here, too)
  - a. What do you do? (Get individual responses if you're meeting in a group)
  - b. How do you like it here? Best aspects? Worst aspects?
  - c. What do you want in a new prof?
  - d. How do profs interact with students here? Open door policy?
  - e. How long does it take for a typical MSc or PhD to graduate?
  - f. Do you interact with other profs besides your major advisor?
  - g. How are you/most students funded?