



SELECTING AND NEGOTIATING A FACULTY APPOINTMENT

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“SELECTING”

- ✦ **Assumption – We are considering only an entry level, tenure-track faculty position in the USA.**
- ✦ **Some initial items to consider when applying for an open faculty positions:**
 - **Do I want mainly teaching responsibilities, with minimal responsibilities in scholarship / research?**
 - **Do I want some balance between teaching and research?**
 - **Do I want mainly research responsibilities, with minimal teaching?**
 - **Does the position for which I might apply mesh with my technical interests, and are there other faculty with similar interests?**
 - **Do I prefer rural or urban settings?**
 - **Do I prefer (or want to avoid) certain geographical regions of the country?**
 - **Do I prefer a public or private university/college?**



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ✦ **Answers to these questions will likely determine to what colleges and universities you apply .**
- ✦ **For example, if you wish to mainly teach, with minimal research responsibilities, you should likely avoid Research Universities with large or growing graduate programs, particularly at the doctoral level.**
- ✦ **If you wish to do mainly research, with minimal teaching, you may not find a university tenure-track position to be the best choice. Most universities with strong research programs expect some teaching from their tenure track faculty. Consider either an organization dedicated to research (national lab, high-tech firm, etc), or consider accepting a non-tenure track research assistant professor position.**



THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!

**“FOR EVERY COMPLEX QUESTION,
THERE IS A SIMPLE ANSWER --**

AND IT’S WRONG”

H. L. Mencken



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ⤴ **Selecting, of course, is a two-way deal. In addition to your selecting, you must be selected by the university, first for an interview, and second for an offer of a position.**
- ⤴ **The competition may be very stiff. It is not unusual for many Research Universities to receive 200 or more applicants for an open faculty position.**



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ✦ **As a general rule of thumb, it is much more difficult to secure a faculty position at a university ranked higher than the one from which you received your terminal degree, than the opposite.**
- ✦ **Before applying, and again before an interview, do your homework on the university and the department in which you are interested.**



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ▲ Faculty at the interviewing institution, particularly in your discipline, want to know that you are knowledgeable about them and their activities. Look them up on the web, and memorize some key items about their activities and accomplishments.**
- ▲ Come to the interview prepared with a number of thoughtful questions that will not only tell you what you need to know, but will also demonstrate that you are truly interested in the position. Faculty are very quick to discern whether or not you are just using the interview as a learning process (which wastes their time.)**
- ▲ It is expected that the interviewing party cover the expenses of the interview trip.**



BE PREPARED FOR THE INTERVIEW

“HOPE IS NOT A STRATEGY”

**Dan Tellep, First CEO of
Lockheed-Martin**



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ⤴ **Before the interview, prepare a list of what you believe you will need to carry out the responsibilities of your position. Have these requirements in some detail, such as costs of items, space sizes and types, specific software requirements, specific computer requirements, etc. Have solid justifications for your needs.**
- ⤴ **Be prepared to present or discuss these with the department head, or whoever is the lead person conducting the interview.**



“SELECTING” (cont’d)

- ▲ **List what you truly would need, whether it be for teaching, research, or both, but don’t ask for the moon, and don’t go on a fishing expedition to see what you can get.**

Experienced faculty and department heads are wise to this.



“NEGOTIATING”

- ✦ **The commonly understood goal of the interview is for both the interviewing and interviewed parties to learn as much as possible about each other.**
- ✦ **Conduct yourself during the interview to maximize your chances of receiving a job offer, even though what you learned may not meet all your wants or needs.**



“NEGOTIATING”

- ⤴ While you likely will not have a job offer during or at the end of the interview, do not assume that negotiating must wait until you have an offer. Laying out your needs is the beginning of negotiations.**
- ⤴ On the other hand, avoid bringing up the question of salary.**
- ⤴ If you are asked about salary needs, defer by saying that salary discussions should occur after a decision has been made to pursue with you a job offer.**



“NEGOTIATING” (cont’d)

- ⤴ **During or at the close of the interview, be prepared to present your itemized list of needs, with costs of these where appropriate.**
- ⤴ **If you have certain needs or wants, such as specialized teaching equipment or software, have this ready in sufficient detail, including costs, along with your rationale for needing these. Be prepared to defend your request.**
- ⤴ **It is not unusual for an experimentalist who plans to conduct research to need very specific and expensive equipment. Have details ready during or at the close of the interview, with costs and justification.**



**SUPPPOSE YOU RECEIVE A JOB
OFFER!**

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

NOW WHAT?



NEGOTIATING IN EARNEST

ITEMS IN THE JOB OFFER TYPICALLY INCLUDE:

- **ACADEMIC YEAR SALARY** (Usually 9 months). This might be negotiable if you have a higher offer from another academic institution. Usually, however, salary offers will be in keeping with the market.
- **JOB TITLE.** (For newly minted doctoral graduates with little experience, this will typically be an appointment as Assistant Professor for a stated period of time, subject to renewal or promotion. This is typically not negotiable).
- **INITIAL PERCENTAGE OF TIME** you would devote to research, teaching, etc. This might be negotiable.
- **MOVING ALLOWANCE.** Do your homework so that you know what it costs to move you and your family to your new location. This can be negotiable if you have the numbers to back you up.
- **START UP PACKAGE.** – Negotiable, as explained below.



THE START-UP PACKAGE

For faculty positions at research universities, standard practice provides newly hired tenure track faculty with a “Start Up” package consisting of:

- Funding for research equipment, supplies, travel
- Graduate student support
- Reduced teaching load for a specified period
- Nominally equipped lab space
- Fully equipped office space
- Basic computer with at least nominal software
- Summer salary support



THE START-UP PACKAGE (cont'd)

- ✦ Many of the items in the start-up packages are typically negotiable, but your reasons for requesting something other than what is initially offered should be logical and solid.
- ✦ For experimentalists, the largest cost item in the start-up package is often the funding for research equipment. For example, a single piece of research equipment for an experimentalist in the nanotechnology area might cost more than \$100,000.
- ✦ Ascertain the details of support for graduate students – what stipend for what level of graduate student for how long? This can be a point of negotiation.



THE START-UP PACKAGE (cont'd)

- ✦ If, because of your research or teaching, you need an office computer with larger than nominal specifications, outfitted with software other than nominal office software, you might negotiate this.
- ✦ Negotiate travel funds in sufficient amount to allow you to travel to professional meetings and/or potential research sponsors – 2 to 4 trips per year.
- ✦ Negotiate how many semesters you would have a reduced teaching load to allow you to develop your research and/or teaching program.
- ✦ Negotiate how many summers you would have salary support with no teaching responsibilities to allow you to develop your research or teaching capabilities and program.



“If you want to catch a frog, you can’t worry about getting your shorts wet.”

Cynthia Lewis, Really Important Stuff My Kids Have Taught Me, 1994.



QUESTIONS?