How to get a faculty job.

John Boothroyd, PhD
Professor of Microbiology and Immunology
Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education
February, 2009

Outline

• How can you prepare and sell yourself?
• How is a search run?
• What happens in the interview?
• How do you negotiate the job offer?
Prerequisites

- Know what kind of job you want.
- Do great science and think outside the box.
- Communicate it.
- Network.
- Differentiate from your P.I.
- If you can land some future funding (BWF - CDA; NIH-K22) great!

Finding the openings

- Network
- Ask around
- Look on notice boards
- Read journals
- Check websites
- Have an open mind!
The application package

- Cover letter
- C.V.
- Names of references
- Research Statement
- Teaching Statement
- Reprints

The cover letter

- Intro two sentences
  - I wish to apply
- Middle paragraph
  - I am working on
  - I believe this is a great fit with [TAILOR]
  - Teaching? Clinical?
  - My “vision”…
- Closing sentences
  - Why is this interesting and important?
- Keep it brief and punchy (and proofread ALL)
The c.v.

• Personal details - name and contact info. but NOT age, SSN, marital status, kids (visa?).
• Education - give dates, institutions, subject and degree
• Employment
• Research Experience [put dissertation work here]
• Teaching Experience
• Honors and Awards (i.e., required competition)
• Other professional activity (mtg org’n, committee work, reviewing, etc)
• Membership IF significant (i.e. elected, not AAAS)

The c.v. (cont’d)

• Independent funding
• Patents (careful)
• Invited presentations
• Publications (all combined - bold your name)
• In preparation ok but they really should be (no journal name unless in press)
• NOT abstracts, meeting titles, fluff and filler…
References

• Doctorate adviser
• Post-doc adviser(s)
• People who can write with substance and make comparative statements
• [anticipate this need now - network]
• Provide c.v., research statement, reprints, etc.

The research statement –
The Summary is KEY!

• Tailor
• Summary: 1/2 page max:
  – BIOLOGY or PHYSICS or ECONOMICS (i.e., BROAD)
  – QUESTION
  – Approach
  – Preliminary findings
  – Immediate future aims
  – Long term future aims
  – BIOLOGY (etc.)
• Why is this interesting? Why important? How am I uniquely able to do this? Why would you want to commit to me as a colleague for life?
The research statement - full

- Same flow as summary
- Trace your career – past (<1/2 page) and present (<1/2 page) grooming for this day!
- Bulk is future aims - be clear (~2 pages)
- Schematics/models good
- Some data OK but must be really, really key (and pretty)
- Airy, big font, nice images
- *Why is this interesting? Why important? Why are you uniquely able to do this? Why would I want to commit to you for life?*

Teaching statement

- Tailor!
- Your interest level
- Past experience
- Future:
  - What courses
  - When (year 2 and 4 (immediate and long)
  - What level
  - Flexible
Outline

• How can you prepare and sell yourself?
• How is a search run?
• What happens in the interview?
• How do you negotiate the job offer?

Initiating a Search

• Decide on field and level
• Identify billet, space and start-up funds
• Seek decanal approval
Advertising

• Letters to colleagues
• Ads in journals
• Networking at meetings, etc.

First cut (by subgroup)

• Wrong field
• Wrong rank
• Wrong quality
Second cut

- Committee reviews
- Looks for 3/3:
  - impressive c.v.
  - interesting research/teaching plan
  - good letters (often requested up front)
- Gets more info, if needed
- Decides: interview, hold, reject

Outline

- How can you prepare and sell yourself?
- How is a search run?
- **What happens in the interview?**
- How do you negotiate the job offer?
First Interview

• 1-2 days
• 1-2 talks
• Faculty inside/outside dept.
• Trainees
• Maybe Dean
• Exit interview

Preparing for the Interview

• Prepare your “job talk”
• Read about the department/program
• Read about their resources, grad programs, funding programs, etc.
• Read latest paper by faculty, especially interviewers, dinner people, chair.
• Dress appropriately
The Interview - Day 1

- Breakfast with search committee chair
- One-on-ones with faculty
  - Bilateral interview
  - Engage their research
  - This is for life…
- Keep aware of time
- Job talk
- Lunch with trainees (ask if not offered)
- Faculty outside dept (ask if not offered)
- Dinner with committee

The Job Talk - Substance

- Tailor to the audience and search
- **Biology and question paramount**
- Overview to start
- Good intro
- Finish with future plans
- Listen to questions - repeat or ask for clarification
  “are you asking…?”
The Job Talk - Style

- Get there early and bring back-up (flash drive)
- Not too long!
- Cater to experts and outsiders
- Plenty of meat - but balance of data and schematic
- Question - Experiment - Axes - Result - Interpretation = QEARI [or Intro/M&M/Fig. legend/Results/Discussion]
- Aesthetics count
- Be rigorous.
- Be excited!

The Interview - Day 2

- Breakfast with faculty
- Dean?
- More of all sorts
- Chalk talk
- Exit interview
- 2nd dinner, fly out, crash
The “Chalk” Talk

- 2-3 intro slides
- OVERVIEW on one slide - 2-3 questions
- Then 2-3 slides per question
- Biology and questions paramount
  - “When it’s all done in ten years, what will s/he likely do next?”
- Excite the closest and furthest
- “I’d like to listen to his/her trainees at our retreat, sit on their committees, brag about her/him at meetings, etc…”

Exit interview

- Ask if don’t already know:
  - Space (should have seen it)
  - Teaching
  - Start up (official plus other in-house)
  - Training programs (how run and how access)
  - Tenure system
- Leave for now if not offered:
  - Salary
  - Benefits
  - Spouse/partner
The Interview - Day 3+

• Thanks
• Follow-up, if necessary, on any unanswered science questions raised in discussion.
• Check back in a few weeks.

Outline

• How can you prepare and sell yourself?
• How is a search run?
• What happens in the interview?
• How do you negotiate the job offer?
Second visit - information gathering

• You get to drive more - ASK to meet/see:
  – Cores
  – Grad program directors
  – Chair of possible secondary appointments
  – Other chairs if considering joint appointment
• All the rules of first interview still apply:
  – Know whom you’re meeting
  – Prepare for them and ENGAGE
  – Get the dirt

Second visit - start of negotiation

• NOW, the partner, kids, housing, salary, benefits
• Ask to meet with housing office, benefits office.
• Short and long term teaching, space, tenure
• Be clear: “we are definitely interested in making you an offer”, “I am definitely interested in coming”, “I definitely want to come”, are (purposefully?) ambiguous! Mean what you say.
The Offer Letter

- Informal offer first, often
- Formal provisional next
- Formal formal can take a while
- Get it in writing and in detail:
  - Space
  - Start up
  - Salary and benefits
  - Tenure
  - Teaching

Space

- Where (room numbers)?
- Shared/exclusive?
- When ready to occupy?
- What renovations needed?
- Who pays for these?
- Common space policy and access?
- Future needs?
Start-up money

- Apples and oranges
- What can come out of it?
- When must it be spent by?
- What happens to balance?
- What comes out of it/ what not?
  - Your 9 month salary
  - Your summer salary
  - Admin assistance
  - Glassware washing
  - Phone, mail, photocopying

Other sources of funds

- What and how are students paid (years 1-6)?
- Internal funds for students, post-docs, research?
- State monies?
- Junior faculty grants?
Salary and Benefits

- Apples and oranges; e.g., 9 or 12 month
- Base salary (on which benefits are determined)
- Benefits (esp. housing, childcare, retirement, pre-tax plans, tuition, moving expenses, parental leave)
- Percent off grants expected vs. required
- Policy if cover more than this percent
- Sabbatical (how much, how often, who pays)

Tenure

- Criteria?
- “Up or out”?
- When does clock start and stop?
- Pauses for children?
- What is tenure-deciding group (especially if joint appointments - double jeopardy or twice the chances…)?
- What is history in that Department, School and Institution?
Teaching [and clinical]

- How much?
- When - short and long term?
- Percent time? [or, better, percent time protected for research]
- TA support?
- Secondary appointment?

Negotiating Key Points

- You are worth it! Quality comes at a price.
- You may be negotiating with Dean, not Chair or Provost, not Dean – ARM THEM!!!!!!!!!!
- Counter-offer with reasonable argument
- Confirm all conversations by email “Thanks, I just want to confirm… please confirm that I understood correctly”
Negotiating Key Points

• Your power drops 90% the second you sign.
• A little trust and instinct ok after due diligence.
• Negotiate in good faith.
• Use other offers to negotiate where you really want to go (but don’t waste time of others)
• Say “no” to others when appropriate (early if non-starter, when have a signed offer letter from # 2 or 3 choice)
• What do you REALLY care about?

Finally!

• You may decide other careers are your preference
• You may not find the perfect job
• There may well be a better fit out there somewhere but don’t second guess to death
• Make a commitment
• Use the Career Centers!!
  http://cardinalcareers.stanford.edu/
  http://med.stanford.edu/careercenter/