

Working in the Academics

I. How to Get an Academic Job?

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I. Introduction

What is it like?

Working in an organization of higher education is to advance knowledge through teaching and learning. Presently, an academic staff is expected to teach and research. In addition, service is required at various levels.

Advantages:

- freedom of pursuing your own interests;
- freedom of travel all year round;
- enjoying a one year sabbatical every 6 years;
- flexibility in control of time;
- job stability;
- having your own group (company)- being your own boss;
- potential of receiving fame, profit, and respect;
- ease of switching fields or change career.

Disadvantages:

- teaching similar subjects over and over again may be boring;
- receiving tenure maybe stressful;
- working hours maybe too long;
- income level maybe embarrassing.

II. Searching for an Academic Position

- academic journals
- job announcement bulletin boards in each department
- professors and colleagues elsewhere
- professional conferences

Investigation of the position

- A job announcement is usually broken into four parts:
 - qualification requirements, PhD or ABD
 - job responsibilities, teaching, research and service
 - departmental information
 - application procedure

Example of a job description:

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS AND REMOTE SENSING, IN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT, Daniel B. Warnell School of Forest Resources, The University of Georgia

POSITION: Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Remote Sensing in Natural Resources Management. This is a 12-month (50% research, 50% teaching) tenure-track appointment at the assistant or associate professor level with salary commensurate with experience.

QUALIFICATIONS: A Ph.D. degree, at least one degree in a natural resource management field, and extensive training and experience in GIS techniques and technology and remote sensing with applications in natural resource management are required. Knowledge of one or more of the following is also desirable: database systems and design, object-oriented systems, image processing, photogrammetry, geodesy, and spatial statistics.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The successful candidate will be responsible for developing a research program capable of attracting significant extramural funding in the candidate's area of expertise and will also be expected to work on a wide array of multidisciplinary natural resource management projects with other scientists. The successful candidate must demonstrate the interest and ability to teach an undergraduate course in applied uses of GIS and remote sensing in natural resources management, is expected to develop one or more graduate courses in the candidate's area of expertise and will be responsible for attracting and advising graduate students at the M.S. and Ph.D. level.

THE UNIVERSITY: The University of Georgia is a land grant institution comprised of 15 schools and colleges including the Graduate School. Enrollment is 32,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The Daniel B. Warnell School of Forest Resources is a professional school with 64 faculty, 240 upper division undergraduates, and 130 graduate students. The School offers the Bachelor of Science degree with majors in forestry, wildlife, fisheries, and forest environmental resources. Graduate degrees include the Master of Forest Resources, the Master of Science, and the Doctor of Philosophy. The School maintains a 740-acre research forest less than 10 minutes from campus as well as 23,000 acres of forestland across the state for teaching and research.

APPLICATIONS: Each applicant should submit a curriculum vita, statement of research and teaching interests, official transcripts of all college-level work, letters of evaluation from at least three references, and reprints of selected publications. Complete applications received by November 30, 2001 are assured full consideration. Send applications to:

III. How to Get an Academic Position

The applicant should analyze the suitability of a position.

Am I ready?

Waiting for one more year or apply now?

Does your qualification match the job requirements? Make a self evaluation.

Do you like the department environment – location, area of expertise, facilities, teaching loads, etc.

If the job does not match your background and expertise, don't apply.

Sometimes it takes years to come up a position that suit you the best.

Call the search chair for additional information or clarification, even better visit the department

Application letter preparation

The purpose is to impress the selection committee that you are the special one that they would like to interview

What counts?

Background, experience, suitability in terms of research and teaching, quality and quantity of publications, prestigious academic awards;

To senior positions, services in communities, professional societies, governmental agencies, special task committees carries more weights.

The most important is usually the teaching and research productivity

The application letter should include:

- introduction of training background
- research and teaching experience
- any particular award/favorable appraisal of your work
- comments or quote from peers or authoritative organizations
- research grants
- summarize your suitability/emphasize your strength and adaptability
- use examples to illustrate your strengths
- write individualized letter according to each job description

The application letter is the “door knocking brick.”

Search for appropriate referees

You should have at least 4-5 referees for choice. They could be your professors who knows you well both as a person and as a researcher/student, professors or other professionals who are familiar with your work.

This later category consists primarily of authoritative figures in your field. You must make “friends” from professional gatherings and find opportunity to make them aware of your work.

Journal editors who reviewed a few of your papers can be considered.

For each job, you are usually required to provide 3 referees. You should choose among them. Communicate well with your referees, show appreciation, express the desired aspects for them to emphasize on. These are different for each job.

They are all busy. Therefore, the more you can prepare for them the better and the quicker they will write you the letters.

Good communication with senior colleagues is very important – briefing the progress on an annual basis, discussing research, meeting for lunch and other social activities

Preparing the CV

Content of a CV

- Contact information
- Education
- Awards and honors
- Academic interests
- Teaching
- Research or consulting
- Supervision
- Professional affiliation
- Committees
- Grants
- Publications
 - Peer-reviewed articles
 - Book chapters
 - Books
 - Conference papers
 - Invited talks
 - Creative writing
- References

Clear, concise, sometimes exchange the orders according to your own emphasis

Usually, gender, birthdates, marital status, hobbies are not necessary. Unless you want them to know you are a lady (and you are confident this will not cause negative impacts), use a Ms or Miss before your name.

Submit you CV, letter of applications, or sometimes a statement of interest and your samples of publications, and wait for the autumn harvest.

IV. Waiting for answers

Do not call unless it is invited or absolutely necessary.
there is indeed questions regarding the job.

Have support materials ready in case you are asked about.



V. Preparing for an interview

The goal of interview:

- Mutual evaluation and selection

- An examination of your all round capabilities

- For the committee, they would like to answer the following questions

 - How good is this candidate in teaching?

 - Big class, small audience, subjects...

 - Does s/he really look like what is on paper?

 - How well does the candidate meet our initial job description?

 - How good is the candidate in research?

 - Is s/he a good colleague to have around? What type of person is s/he?

 - How well does s/he interact with students? Student opinions important

- For the candidate

 - How well the colleagues are?

 - Am I excited by interacting with them?

 - Look at their facilities and spirits of students

 - Previous number of enrollments in class to be taught.

 - What about the living conditions?

 - Housing, school, special recreation facilities

Role of the Selection Committee

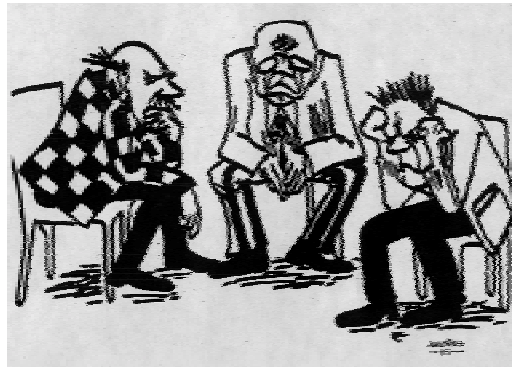
- Screen the applicants and recommend for suitable ones for interview

- Closely examine the candidates and rank them and

- Recommend for job offer

Composition of Selection Committee

4-5 faculty members, one graduate student, plus sometimes an affirmative action officer



Departmental vote

Search committee make report of the recruiting process and answer questions
Faculty members watch video or attend talks and examining the application materials
Vote at a particular meeting for the department head to negotiate further Job offer.

Process of an Interview

1-2 talks. Research seminar and teaching if the 2nd
1 or 2 days (mostly 2 days) and sometimes more than 2 days
meeting with individual faculty, each for 30 minutes
having lunch and dinners with interested faculty led by committee members
having a gathering with senior undergraduate and graduate students
visit of specific facilities and groups on or around campus
meeting the department chair
meeting the dean of a college
finally meeting with the search committee
if they are really enthusiastic, take you to site seeing tours, field trips, house viewing with a realtor, etc.

Preparing your interview talk

Purposes of the talk

- Show your research skills
- Demonstrate your teaching capability
- Show your skills on handling questions
- A minor point is to make your talk as entertaining as possible

The attendants are here to

- Learn new knowledge
- Evaluate your teaching skills and your research capability

Prepare the interview talk very carefully. Usually you get to choose the title and topic area, unless it is a teaching talk. Components of a research seminar include:

Problem statement

Objectives
Tool development, method design, experimental design
Data collection
Results analysis
 Emphasizing new findings v.s. key findings summarized in problem
 Statement
Summary of research significance in the context of your field
Conclusion

Rehearse as many times as possible. Put important things down in writing, as you practice you will gradually not need them. Things to remember. It is better to prepare the talk in a storyteller manner. Lay a good base for yourself for later discussions. Have one or two focus/emphasis during the talk. Have strong take-home messages.

Common questions during interview

- Why do you want this position?
- What are your reasons for leaving your present job?
- Discuss some problems you have encountered in your current research? How did you approach the problem? What were the results?
- What are some emerging issues in your field of research today? How can you address these issues?
- What do you consider your chief accomplishment in your present position?
- What is your long-term career objective?
- What do you want in your next job that you are not getting now?
- In what ways have your education and experience prepared you for this position?
- Based upon your understanding of this position, what is your weakest area?
- How would you improve your expertise in that area?
- Do you have any questions for us?
- How might you incorporate affirmative action into your extension programs?
- Follow up questions based on these
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Taking notes during interview

Questions
How did you answer?
How people feel about your visit? Comments, stories,

Goodbye message

The department head or the committee chair will tell you how soon you will hear from them
You can tell the committee by re-emphasizing your interest based on new observations made.

VI. Post-interview greetings

Coming back, if you are satisfied with the position, you should
Re-express your interest
Re-express your thanks, immediately after you come back
Make sure that this is your last chance to make up your weakness during the interview

VII. Bargaining when you are selected

If you are offered the job, this is usually first comes by a telephone call by the Department head. You maybe told that a letter will be sent to you if you verbally agree with the conditions of salary, step, and startup pack

Do not make decision over the phone

Start a round of bargaining

Things to consider:

How is the job market?

How badly do they want you?

Do you hold multiple offer?

Wait for a while to accept the offer

Request a site visit

List your desires

Salary

Office space

Startup package

Student support

Technician/secretary support

Office decoration and furniture purchase

Spouse settlement

House hunting/temporary living

Moving compensation

If you have to sell a house, ask for loss compensation

Have a few options/plans during the bargaining

Top priority set

If the above set can only be partially met, second set of opinion

Remember negotiation is always better supported by your preparedness and

By evidential materials

VIII. Get the final job offer

Prepare to move for a new happy life!!!!

