The Job Search

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About Kathryn

- Love math → Computer Science
- Love boys → UG Research Summer
- Love research & France → Marry Scotty 1985
- Love research & France → Rice PhD 1992
- Love research & France → Post Doc, Ecole des Mines
- Love research & France → Asst Prof UMass 1993
- Love research & France → Tenure 1999
- Love research & France → Assoc Prof UT Austin U1
- Love research & France → Cooper 1995
- Love research & France → Dylan 1998
- Love research & France → Wyatt 2001

The Academic Interview

- Invitation
- The Talk
- 30 to 60 minute One-on-One
- Meals

  Goal: Convince them that you will improve their department.

The Invitation

- Research University
  - Papers in top conferences
  - Great letters
  - Spark
- Teaching College
  - Papers in conferences
  - Teaching experience/enthusiasm
- Factors out of your control
  - Area, slots, etc.

The Talk

- Goal:
  - Convince them you are smart and a good teacher
- General Audience
- Clearly state problem & your contributions
- Enough details to convince the one expert
- Practice, practice, practice

One-on-One

- Goal:
  - Convince them they want to work with you
  - Decide if you want to work with them
- Connect with their research
- Read 2 to 4 of their papers that really interest you
Indirect Questioning

- What’s the best thing about your dept?
- What’s the worst?
- How does the dept make important decisions?
- Who do you collaborate with?
- Where are last year’s PhD graduates working?
- What did you do yesterday?
- What do you like best about your job?
- What do you like least?

Meals

- At most one drink
- Good topics: travel, hobbies, kids
- Bad topics: politics, religion

Miscellaneous Tips

- Take breaks in the restroom
- Stay alert: sleep, exercise, caffeine
- Arranged marriage theory of interviewing: everyone should be able to behave for a day

About Ellen

- MIT EECS
  - SB, 1990
  - SM, 1992
  - PhD, 1998
- Mills College
  - Assistant professor, 1998–2003
  - Associate professor, 2003–

My job search (1997)

- Two-body constraint
- Not sure what type of job I wanted
  - research university
  - research lab
  - liberal arts college
  - industry
Liberal arts colleges

- Small classes
- Few graduate programs
- Teaching more important than research
- Broader students
- Higher teaching load than research universities

My job search: method

- Apply everywhere (>100 jobs)
- But give special attention to top ten
- Be organized
  - spreadsheet
  - map
  - etc.

Determine your values

- Do you like teaching?
- Do you like research?
- What is your risk tolerance?
- How important is salary?
- How hard do you want to work?
- Do you want to have children?

Status

- Would you rather be a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond?
- Whose respect do you value?
  - Students
  - Colleagues at home institution
  - Colleagues in research community
  - Your advisors'

Supervising students

- Research levels
  - undergraduate
  - master’s
  - doctoral
- Student characteristics
  - technical background
  - diversity
  - single-mindedness

Teaching

- Would you prefer
  - few larger courses
  - many small courses
- Student characteristics
  - technical background
  - motivation
  - time to spend on major
  - diversity
Questions to ask about teaching

• What’s the teaching load?
• What courses would I teach?
• How much control over courses would I have?
• Can I create new courses?
• Would I have TA support?
• What are the standards?

Questions to ask about tenure/research

• How many people were denied/granted tenure in recent years? Why?
• Have women with children been granted tenure?
• What hours do you work?
• Are grants expected/required?

Questions about environment

• How do people within the department get along?
• How does this department get along with the rest of the college?
• Can I see the last department review?
• What is the financial condition of the college?
• Why is this position available?

Negotiations

• Starting date
• Teaching
  – course releases
  – which courses
• Time until tenure evaluation
• Pre-tenure sabbatical
• Money

Money: Salary

• Amount
• Being off-scale
• Pay raises
• Summer salary
• Benefits
• Subsidized housing

Money: funding

• Startup and ongoing
  – Research equipment
  – Travel
  – Students
  – Books and memberships
  – Class/lab equipment
• Intellectual property rights
What is most important for tenure

• Research
• Teaching
• Service
• Collegiality

Conclusions (1)

• Choose a job that rewards you for what you want to do.

Conclusions (2)

• If you never hear "no", you're not asking for enough.

• (But know when not to apply this rule.)

For more information

• See “Tips for a Massive Academic Job Search” ([http://spertus.com/ellen](http://spertus.com/ellen))
• Read Ms. Mentor’s Impeccable Advice for Women in Academia by Emily Toth.

• Good luck!