

# Nuts and Bolts of the Academic Job Search

Hong Ma

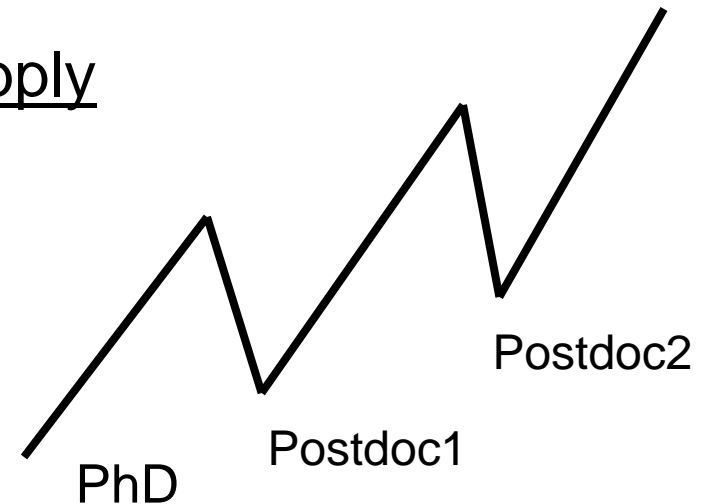
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# The Academic Job Cycle

- Listings in the Fall
- Interviews Jan-April
- Offers from April onwards

## Considerations for when you should apply

- Market forces
- Adequate references
- Mental readiness (in 6-12 months)
- How timing affect your evaluation
  - e.g. new graduate vs. postdoc
  - Beware of the “what have you done lately?”
- The process is time-consuming, but also very rewarding



# Where to Look for Postings

- Society magazines (e.g. IEEE Spectrum)
- Departmental websites
- Web indices:
  - [www.tedjob.com](http://www.tedjob.com)
  - [chronicle.com](http://chronicle.com)

## How many applications to send?

- How many interviews are you willing to go on?
  - 1 interview ~ 1 week
- Geographic considerations – would you actually go?
- Your backup plan

# Preparing Your Application

- Figure out your research niche / philosophy
- Do this by answering the question:
  - **What experiences, skills, and insights do you have that uniquely qualifies you to solve the problems that you propose to solve?**
  - Should encompass a large class of problems
  - Should not be the same as your advisor
- If you haven't figured this out, don't worry!
  - Okay to let the process drive you
- Exude these ideas throughout your application
- Credibility is key → backup everything you say with examples

# Preparing the “Job Talk”

- 40-50 minutes
- Show depth and insight
- Make it easy to understand
- **Should be different from your defense**
  - **discuss work you will do as a new faculty member**
- Generalize from your work to a larger class of problems/techniques
- If unrelated, say:
  - “doing this work has inspired me to apply these techniques / mechanisms / principles to this other class of problems”
- Practice in front of your advisor or colleagues

# Day of the Interview

- A very long day (~12 hours)
  - Do some little things to stay relaxed
  - Bring a notebook and take notes
  - Find out before hand about members of the department, but no need to go overboard
- Expect to be grilled → that's a good thing
- Example questions:
  - What are your metrics of success in 3, 5, 10 years?
  - Pick a class and describe how you will teach it
- Dealing with difficult faculty members

# Questions for Interviewers

- How much do graduate students cost?
- How do you find the productive ones?
- What are some internal mechanisms for funding?
- How does the tenure process work?
- What's the best way to initiate collaborations?
- How to establish industrial contacts?
- What equipment / facilities are available? How much do they cost?
  
- Spend an extra day to look around the campus and the city

# If There is an Offer...

- Get as much information as possible
- Arrange for phone calls with faculty members you met during the interview
- Find out about equipment and facilities that you may need
- Salary figures are often public
  - Contact the Faculty Association
  - Find out the max, min, average, annual raises, etc

# Negotiating the Offer



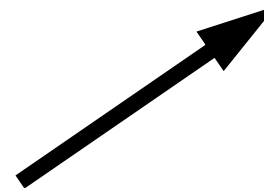
You



Department Head



You



Department Head

## Department Head's Constraints

- Budget
- Precedence

# What to Negotiate for

- Salary
  - A question of fairness
  - Salary figures are often public
  - Compare with other universities
- Start-up Package
  - Designed to get initial results that will then allow you to apply for peer-review funding
  - A question of **need**, not of fairness
  - **Establish your need with 2-3 mini-proposals**
  - Estimate the number of student-years that you need
  - Estimate cost of equipment and expenses
  - Note what is already available

# Other Parameters to Negotiate for

- Joint/associate appointments
  - Advantages: Teaching load reduction, access to students, access to people and equipment
  - Disadvantage: Complex tenure process, more departmental responsibilities, more bosses
- Teaching ramp-up
- Start date
- Lab/office location
- Lab renovations (separate from start-up)
- Separate funding for your teaching activities

# How to Negotiate

- It is expected that you negotiate
- **Do not be in a hurry**
- Get as much information as possible
- Order is important
  - Establish what you need first
  - Finalize salary near the end
- Be creative!
  - Figure out what's important and what you are flexible on
  - Trade the less important pieces for what you really care about
- If 2<sup>nd</sup> interview is not offered, arrange your own

Most Important point:

- **“You don't get what you don't ask for!”**
  - But you must justify everything that you ask for

# Summary of Key Points

- Market forces can dictate when you apply
- Figure out your research niche
- Describe your future research in your job talk
- Be prepared to be grilled in the interview
- Negotiations is a constructive process
  - Get as much information as possible before negotiating
  - Establish your needs before negotiating the start-up package
- “You don’t get what you don’t ask for”
- Finally: Get advise from multiple people and then make your own decision