# Tips for Interviews and Visits

## Details, details

* Request an itinerary in advance; familiarize yourself with the people you will meet.
  + More than one interview? Informal gatherings? What constituencies are represented at various events: students, faculty, administration?
  + Consider your own needs for technology for any talks you are scheduled to give.
* Seek clarification on any aspect of the travel arrangements; avoidable problems should not be allowed to give your potential employer a bad impression of your visit (or you).
  + Transportation from the airport to the institution: pick-up or on your own?
  + Expenses: what is being paid directly by host, what expenses are your own, what expenses are reimbursable and what is that procedure?
* Take notes on names and roles the people you interview with and meet to send thank you notes after the visit.
  + Send handwritten notes immediately and make them personal. Include students, staff, and faculty. Especially remember the administrative assistants or office managers who likely did detailed logistical work to make your visit possible.

## You are always “on”

* Every interaction – no matter how trivial it may seem – is being evaluated.
  + Be yourself. Maybe not all, but *someone* (and probably several), will pick up on it if you are “fake.”
  + Be honest; admit when you do not know something.
  + Be warm and respectful when meeting *everyone*, no matter what their role or function. Establish rapport with everyone.
* Dress and behave professionally at all times.
* Bring additional copies of all your job search materials.
* Learn to talk about yourself comfortably.
  + Be neither exclusively positive nor overly negative about yourself. Know your attributes by talking to trusted colleagues, friends, and mentors.
  + Avoid a defeatist tone in “negative” comments by using phrases such as “A skill I would like to develop…” or “I want to improve my ability to…” Statements in this area should reflect self-awareness and openness to criticism.
  + Avoid a bragging tone in “positive” comments by using phrases such as “I’ve had success with…”
* Be a good listener.
* Reserve judgment until *after* the whole visit. Web research can only go so far, so do not pre-judge. Likewise, being in the midst of the pressures of the visit is no time for final judgments – either positive or negative. Such rushes to judgment can undermine the usefulness of the rest of the visit.
* Enjoy the process. Even if you do not get an offer, you are building experience and networking with colleagues.
* Be patient during and after the visit. The academic hiring process can be long.

## Be prepared

* Think about what you might be asked. Review potential questions for different types of settings or from people of different roles in the institution. (see additional handout)
  + Prepare “STAR”-based examples: Situation or Task, Action, Results. Memorize multiple examples for each of the following: teaching, scholarship, service, communication/teamwork, and leadership.
  + Memorize the ways in which you are a good “fit” for the position, the department, and the institution.
* Research the institution.
  + Know the department, its people, and their scholarly work.
  + Get familiar with their course offerings; identify a course in which you are particularly interested.
  + Know the institutional level goals and identity.
  + Leverage your network: do you know someone who knows someone?
* Prepare insightful questions to ask them. (see below)
  + Concrete expectations of the position: teaching load, tenure process, advising requirements, service.
  + Transitioning as a new faculty member: orientation to department and institution. Is there a process? What would first semester look like in detail?
* Consider how you will respond to an offer made during the visit.

## Questions you may want to ask

* What are the guidelines for tenure? How many publications/presentations are necessary? Are there any department/college ratios at the institutional level imposed on who gets tenure?
* How would you describe \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ College/University’s culture? What have you found surprising?
  + I’ve heard that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is characteristic here; is that true?
* Is this opening a newly created position? If not, how did it become open?
* How is teaching effectiveness assessed? To what extent are student evaluations considered?
* How is overall performance (teaching, scholarship, service) assessed? How frequent are performance reviews and how are they conducted?
* What question are you glad I didn’t ask?
* What are the aspirations of this department? Of the university?
* How does \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ College/University address academic integrity with students? With faculty?
* What opportunities are there for service to the department or institution in administration or involvement in student life?

Adapted from: “Preparing for the Academic Job Search” handout, Graduate Session 2: Job Market Symposium, 35th Annual Conference, Association for the Study of Higher Education, November 2010.