

Interviewing for a Faculty Position

David R. Beukelman
<http://aac.unl.edu>

January 14, 2009

Yesterday, an alumnus of our program called and asked for a copy of the preparatory questions and guidelines that I had given her a few years ago when she interviewed for her current academic position. She was preparing a Ph.D. student for a series of academic interviews and wanted to share the information.

Questions

1. What are your long term research plans?
 - a. What do you expect your research focus to be in 5 years and 10 years?
2. What equipment and resources will you need to support your research activities?
3. How would you involve students in your research program?
4. How will you manage a research program in a rather this (rural/urban) area?
5. What content or courses would you like to teach?
6. What would you be willing to teach in addition to the above?
7. How would you describe your teaching style?
8. How much teaching have you already done?
9. What makes you interested in (this university)?
10. What makes you a good fit with (this university)?
11. What type of mentoring will you need/desire?
12. Relate a couple of things (activities, projects) at which you feel that you have been successful—why?
13. Relate a couple times when you failed—why did you fail and how did you management it/them?
14. What are your primary and secondary career goals?
15. Why did you enter a doctoral program at this stage in your life?
16. What experiences have you had in collaborative research relationships? (with research in your discipline, from other disciplines, or from clinical agencies)

17. What projects are you currently working on?

18. Describe your dissertation project? How far along will you be in August? December?

19. Why did you select this dissertation project?

Presentation Guidelines

1. Be prepared and rehearse in front of an audience,
2. Most in the audience will be more interested in you as a person, your communication ability, and your presentation style than the content of your talk.
3. One or two people will be very interested in content.
4. Better to say less--well, than much--poorly.
5. Be aware that your audience will have a range of backgrounds.
6. Offer to take questions.
7. Have backup plans if the AV equipment dies or is incompatible. Be effective, but not flashy with your AV. Have 20 handouts in your briefcase, if the computer projection system fails.

Guidelines

1. You are always interviewing—every second—on the phone, in meetings, during presentations, at meals and so on. NEVER FORGET IT.

Remember, even your time with the realtor, who shows you the town or city is part of the interview, as there is a reason why this realtor was chosen--relative or friend of the program administrator/faculty or regularly supports the university in this role.

2. No one is your best friend. They are always interviewing.
3. No alcohol.
4. Don't interrogate. Ask few yes/no questions? Ask few "why" questions. Ask questions with the form:
Tell me about,
How do you handle?
How did that happen?
Looks like a new computer—how did you get it?
5. Be interested in the research goals, teaching strategies, community interests of other faculty?
6. Be ready to talk to students (BE INTERESTED IN THEM).
Why did you decide to come to (university)?
Describe your experiences to me?
What are your career plans?

Have you gotten a chance to work with faculty on projects? Would you like to do so?

7. Be ready to talk to students about your teaching style, involvement of students, plan work experiences, research plans, etc.

8. Be ready to talk to administrators

Plans for the future of the department/program
Issues that will impact the program in the future
Characterize the culture within the program
Be ready to talk about availability—when you could start
Be ready to talk salary ranges
Thank for their time

9. If you wish to have the interview deal with family or marriage status, bring up the topic yourself. Then, they can talk about it. If you don't bring it up, they probably will not talk about it. However, decide in advance if you will talk about these issues if someone brings them up.

10. Don't be critical of your doctoral program, your advisor, former colleagues, others in the field.

11. Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something?

12. This is an important activity—and stressful—but at least look like you are enjoying yourself—nothing fake—just positive.

13. Don't wear brand new clothes for the interview. Wear them at least 3 other times before the interview.

14. Be interested in students, faculty, and staff during the interview.