RUTGERS
School of Graduate Studies

iJOBS Workshop Series: Applying to Biomedical Faculty Jobs

Primarily Undergraduate Institutions
Panel 1

June 16, 2022

Topics to be covered today:

How to select a postdoc that will eventually help you land an academic career
Discussing with your postdoc PI the project that you will take with you and getting them to help you advance your career
What other things you should be doing during your postdoc to be ready to apply for faculty jobs
Deciding R1 vs PUI
Finding academic jobs to apply to
Networking
Preparing the research statement
Preparing the teaching and diversity statements
Preparing the job talk
Preparing the chalk talk
Preparing for the interview itself and tips
Negotiating offers
Teaching for the first time and preparing classes
Service to the school
Preparing for tenure and expectations

Panelists

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R1 vs. PUI – Main Distinctions

R1 Characteristics

- Research Intensive
  - Extensive research infrastructure
  - High expectations for publications and grant acquisition
- Lower emphasis on classroom teaching
  - Teaching loads will vary among institutions
  - Large class sizes, particularly at the introductory level
- Graduate student mentoring emphasized
- Specialized departments/programs
- Typically a large institutions (> 15,000 undergraduates)

PUI Characteristics

- Lower expectations for publications and grant acquisition
  - Less research infrastructure
  - Productivity expectations will vary considerably among institutions
- Teaching Intensive
  - ”3:3” or “4:4” loads are typical
  - Smaller class sizes
- Undergraduate student mentoring emphasized
  - Definitely in the classroom, also in the research lab (if research expectations are relatively high for a PUI)
- More generalized departments/programs
- Typically a smaller institution (<7,000 undergraduates)

R1 vs. PUI – Questions to ask yourself

Continuum: R1 → R2 → PUI with research expectations → PUI with no research opportunity

- What parts of this continuum are a good fit for me?
  - How much time and effort do I want to invest in teaching vs. research?
  - What kind of students do I most value mentoring (undergrads vs. grad students)?
  - How comfortable am I writing grants and dealing with the pressure of securing funding?
  - How much teaching experience do I have?
    - If I don't have much teaching experience, how can I get more to determine whether I am really interested in teaching?
  - Do I want to be in a specialized program, or am I comfortable being in a more general department (e.g., a Biology Department or Chemistry Department)

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How to select a postdoc that will eventually help you land an academic career?

Ask yourself a few questions first:

- Where do you want to be in 5 years? R1, PUI, CC, or entirely unsure?
- What are you good at in research / teaching / extra? What do you need improved?
- What new research techniques do you need to learn to do your long-term personal research goals?

• If R1 focused –

- Seek a lab that engages in high yield research and heavy training in your long-term direction
- Try to find a well funded lab that has a successful record of helping trainees apply for grants, especially transition grants

• If PUI focused –

- Still seek a lab that engages in the novel training you need in a model system and overall research that can be conducted at a PUI/CC
- Find programs and support for exposure to teaching and mentoring

• If unsure / open to R1 & PUI – (no worries, you may not know yet!)

- Better to go with high yield research lab with grant funding opportunities and seek out teaching and mentoring opportunities/training

Discussing with your career plans with your postdoc PI

- Be upfront and honest about your intentions and career goals
  - Most PI's will be supportive
  - Some PI's may be offended if you take a different path than them
- Ask for opportunities to gain experience
  - Teach lectures, mentoring training, internship students, specific techniques, etc.
- Ask if you can take any of your research projects with you
  - DISCUSS LOGISTICS!!!

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What other things you should be doing during your postdoc to be ready to apply for faculty jobs?

3 faculty components: Research / Teaching / Community

Lots of free experience building opportunities

- Take advantage of seminars as much as you can, especially the professional focused ones
- Get started with community involvement.
- Start writing, Reading and Prepping
- Network / make collaborations AND Grow your mentor base

- **If R1 focused –**
  - Grant writing/training groups
  - Lab Management training
  - Mentorship of others

- **If PUI focused –**
  - Teaching seminars, especially with an online focus
  - Teaching / Mentorship courses/seminars
  - Find programs and support for exposure to teaching and mentoring

- **If unsure / open to R1 & PUI –**
  - All of the above as able

Finding academic jobs

- Where to apply?
  - Decide on a geographic region
  - Decide on school type
  - Research individual schools
  - Two body problem?
- Where to look?
  - Network
  - www.HigherEdJobs.com
  - Career website for specific college
  - Society postings
- Sorting through Job Ads
  - Look for keywords (i.e., tenure-track, subject areas)
    - But don't rely on keywords
  - **Read the ad carefully**
    - Specific courses, research interests, department type
  - Don't throw out an ad because it is not a perfect fit
  - Definitely apply to ads that are a perfect fit

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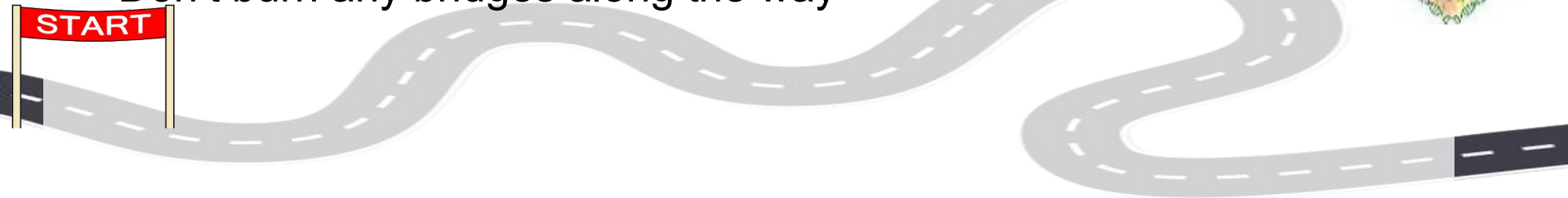
Charting the Course: Find the job!

Put your Network to Work

- More than ever…job searching is about **who** you know
- Build & strengthen your network in the education world
  - TA, adjunct, tutor… take on a research student you can mentor!
  - LinkedIn
  - & so many other ways (prior profs, teachers, grad students, career coaches, FOLOS podcast...)
- Don't hesitate to lean on your network
- Don't burn any bridges along the way



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Preparing the Research Statement

Start Early!!!!!! (NOW!)

- Get a group together
- Attend seminars and writing retreats for RS
- Ask a newly hired faculty member if they are willing to share their packet
- Have a great figure (or two)

- **If R1 focused –**
  - Highlight your key post-doc achievements
  - Highlight your grant track record
  - Highlight key collaborations, especially from well-funded networks

- **If PUI focused –**
  - Highlight how your new independent research program can:

1. Run on a tight budget
2. Yield projects entirely run by and focused for undergrads

Format

- 2-6 pages (including citations – optional)
- Title your research
- Abstract
  - 1 sentence long-term research goal
  - 1 sentence statement summarizing research significance
- Have a great figure (or two)
- Research contributions to date
- Planned research program
- Planned research problem addressing
  - 2-3 aims (Years 1-5)
  - 1-2 Future directions (Years 5+)
- Significance / Impact / Grants seeking

- MANY, MANY sites and sources to get info about format and approach to RS
- You may need multiple preparations if various schools have different limits

Preparing Teaching and Diversity Statements

Teaching Statement

- **Teaching Philosophy**
  - Focus on how you will **actively engage students**, rather than simply lecturing at them
  - Diverse approaches are best, e.g.,
    - Individual and group problem solving
    - Case studies
    - Reading and discussing primary literature
    - Actively participating in the scientific process related to your discipline
- **Provide examples of teaching you have done, what strategies you used, and/or what you learned from the experience**
- **List your Potential Course Offerings**
  - **Match the job ad**
  - **Do your homework**—see what courses are already offered, and suggest which of these you could also teach, as well as courses that aren't currently listed
    - In some programs, multiple faculty teach the same course. In other programs, there is no sharing of courses. Your teaching statement should accommodate both possibilities.

Diversity Statement

- **The key is to provide evidence that you will actively support a diverse community at the institution**
- **Describe your personal experience**
  - Are you, a member of an underrepresented group (don't forget 1st generation college students, differing abilities, LGBTQ+, as well as ethnic diversity)?
  - How have you been an ally of diverse populations, and can you describe that experience?
- **Describe how you plan to support diversity at your new institution**
  - What are the existing programs or circumstances that you might become involved with?
    - E.g., research programs for URM students
    - Are there organizations that you would support? Perhaps as a faculty mentor of a student group?
  - How will you create an inclusive and supportive classroom environment?
  - How will you create and inclusive and supportive lab environment?

Preparing the Job Talk

- **Know your audience**
  - Specialized program with deep knowledge of your discipline, or general department with few/no experts in your field?
  - Undergraduates in the audience?
  - This info will help you calibrate your level of technical detail/jargon

- **For a PUI research talk, you need to convey:**
  1. Broad themes and specific research questions
  2. What you've done in the past
  3. What you will do in your next 5-ish years
  4. How undergraduates will be specifically involved in your research program
  5. That you can effectively communicate your work to a broad audience—i.e., demonstrate that you can teach

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Charting the Course: Interview for the job!

The Chalk Talk: Classroom Demo/Research Talk

- At most PUIs the focus is on teaching, so this is a big part of the interview process – they want to see 1) How you function in the classroom setting, and 2) If you are a good fit for their students
  - Sometimes divided in half between classroom/research (depends on the institution)
- If given a choice, pick a topic you love, are excited about, and know inside-out
- Be innovative… not intimating

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- More about forming connections, than showing knowledge - show *how* you engage students (let them talk!)
- Keep it simple… and short! (stick to the time allotted)

Preparing for the Interview

- **The goal is to demonstrate that you would be a collaborative, complementary colleague who would provide great learning opportunities for the students. If there are research expectations, it is important to convey that you can address your questions given the infrastructure and teaching load**
- **Do your homework**
  - Familiarize yourself with the institution and department – number of students, basic structure of the curriculum, research expectations, faculty expertise
- **Have many questions prepared**
  - And ask the same question of multiple faculty – you might not always get the same answer, and the different perspectives might be illuminating
  - Questions should relate to, for example:
    - Curriculum, undergraduate interests, research expectations, research infrastructure, teaching loads, tenure expectations, nature of collaborations among faculty (teaching and research, within and between departments), relationship between faculty and administration (do faculty feel supported?), service expectations and “opportunities”
- **Be prepared to discuss your research, teaching philosophy and experience, research infrastructure needs (including willingness to apply for grants, if applicable to the institutional expectations), and really any aspect of your application and career experience**

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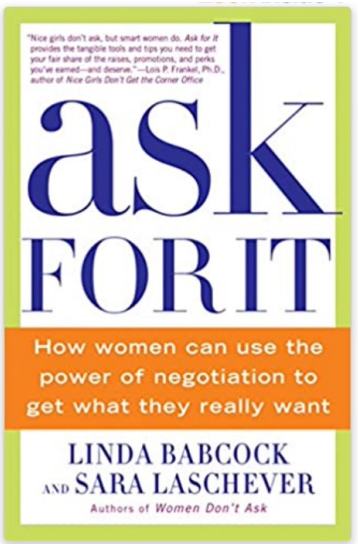
Negotiating offers

Be Prepared and Know your worth

- Look up (if you can) what the listed salaries are for your job title in your specialized area (and at the college/university)
- Know the average going rate for your job title everywhere (R1 and PUI)
- Compare with what your job title is requesting
  - Keeping same course vs. expanding vs. developing new
  - What level of research are you bringing and will be developing
- What other competing offers have you received?
- Are you willing to walk away from the offer?
- Other opportunities (course overload, summer teaching, research student funding)
- If you have a record as a “instructor of record” use that for extra steps on pay scale, if they have that.



More than just salary

- Research funding (start-up)
- Moving costs
- Housing
- Course release
- Equipment/Services
- Faculty/Professional development funds
- Benefit expansion
- Office stuff (rising desk, new desk/chairs, location)

Ask for it! All of it!

- They will not take away the offer because you asked for something → So ask for it! Worse case, they say no.

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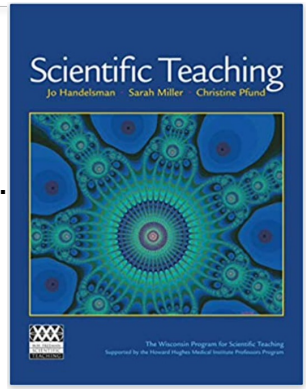
Teaching for the first time and preparing classes



- Look back at your favorite/worst classes (find the syllabus, lecture slides, notes, etc.).
  - What did you love/loath about this class?
- Ask yourself ”what is the most important things my students need to learn from my course?”
  - Select a medium to help you in facilitating the learning of these needs
  - Create your overall course learning goals to facilitate learning these needs
- Pick a book or find resources you can use to help you teach. (Good figures, easy to read through, good resources).
  - Lots of MOOCs and open resources available now, BUT… don’t be afraid to go with a book you know and like for a year or two while you develop your dream course.
- Outline a syllabus (ask for your new colleague's syllabus/school templates!)
  - Start laying out your modules/sections and keep filling in weekly, then by lecture/lab
- Try to stay at least 2 weeks ahead (lectures, assignments, etc).
  - Lab staff will likely need the semester planned out. 1st year they usually work with you more loosely.

- **1st year will not be perfect. You may not be ready until 1 minute before class. You will learn as much if not more than your students.**

Charting the Course: Do the job!

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Beyond Teaching…Service to the University

- More than just lectures
- Requirements for tenure: Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship & **SERVICE**
- What is service?
  - Faculty meetings, Student advising, Committee work* (Academic life, Faculty/Student Affairs, IRB, etc), Presence on Campus, Department service (hiring committees, conference organization, clubs)
  - Bridge between students, faculty, & administration = essential to the running of the institution
  - Can be quite demanding (so it is helpful to seek opportunities that align with you interests and/or are areas in education that you want to learn more about)
- For the first year or two, don't say no & keep all doors open, after that - pick/choose!

Preparing for tenure and expectations

- Read the requirements carefully as soon as you begin your position
  - Each institution will have different requirements
  - Collection of works over 5 (ish) years from day 1
  - **KEEP PROOF OF EVERYTHING!**
- At the end of each semester organize your files/papers
- Keep a spreadsheet of documents, dates, and page numbers
- Ask for thank you letters from event coordinators, committees, and colleagues that you assisted
- Writing your application takes at least 6 months, so plan accordingly

- Teaching
  - Course Evaluations
  - Grade Distributions
  - Demonstration of effective/novel pedagogy
  - New course development
  - Advising
- Research/Scholarship
  - Publications
  - Undergraduate/Graduate students involved in research
  - Conferences and Meetings
  - Trainings
  - Reviewing articles, editorial positions, book chapters
- Service
  - Department
  - College-wide
  - University-wide
  - Community