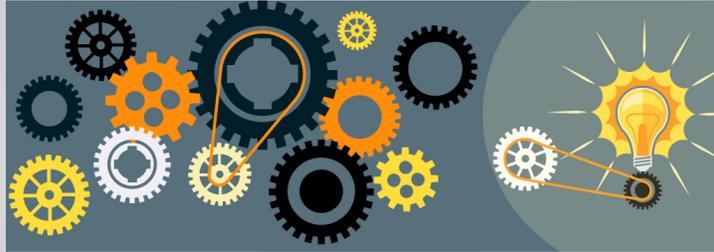


# Obtaining and Negotiating a Faculty Position

<http://www.hhmi.org/developing-scientists/making-right-moves>



Jeannine Brady

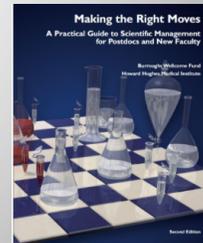
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**Disclaimer:**  
This Presentation was  
Organized Pre-Pandemic

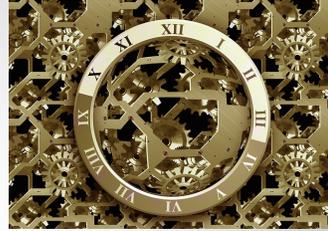
Specific adaptations will be  
discussed as appropriate  
throughout the talk.

The pandemic has created some  
unique opportunities and is not  
necessarily a permanent  
impediment.



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When should I  
start preparing?



ASAP  
Your CV is going to be your currency.

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## Your CV

- Name and contact information
- Education credentials including institutions degrees and dates
- Professional positions including employers and locations, dates and brief job descriptions
- Board certifications and eligibility for clinician scientists

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## Your CV- continued

- Awards and Honors- including pre- and post-doctoral fellowships
- Sources of independent funding
- Publications (your name in bold, \*note for equal authorship- do NOT rearrange order)
- Invited keynotes and conference presentations
- Teaching or mentoring experience, awards and interests
- References (with permission)- including names, titles and contact info

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## What type of position do I want?

- Top tier institution? Or is a less intense atmosphere more suited to you?
- Research intensive?
- Research and clinical practice? % Each?
- Teaching with some research? % Each?
- Is geography important?
- Are there personal or family considerations?

Make a written list of your priorities.



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## The Job Search: Where do I start?

- Job announcements (print and online) in scientific journals
- Websites of academic institutions
- Job announcements sent to your department
- Employment notices by professional societies or placement services at conferences
- Mail list serves for post-docs
- Informal sources (Get the word out that you're looking!!!)

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## Some Career- Related Websites

- The University of Washington's *Re-envisioning the Ph.D.* provides Web resources related to post-docs and academics.  
<http://www.grad.washington.edu/envision>
- Science magazines ScienceCareers.org Website contains a career development resource for post-docs and beginning faculty.  
<https://www.sciencemag.org/careers/how-series-collections>
- The *Chronicle of Higher Education's* online newsletter "Career Network" has career new and advice and publishes new scientific faculty and research jobs every day.  
<http://chronicle.com/jobs>

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## Narrowing Things Down: what to consider

- Institution's mission, values, political and social climate, and quality (rankings)
- Department's mission, research activities, curriculum, and collegial atmosphere
- The parameters and expectations of the position- is it tenure or non-tenure track? multi-mission?
- Faculty policies regarding parental leave? tenure clock extension?

Don't apply if you're not qualified or not really interested.

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What goes around comes around.



Remember: It's a small world. People talk. **Your reputation is your most valuable commodity.**

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## The Application

- Follow instructions
- Be concise
- Avoid factual, grammatical or spelling errors
- Get your application in on time
- Make a good first impression

*While a nicely prepared application will obviously not get you a job, a poorly prepared one makes a bad impression no matter how many papers you have published.* Johannes Walker, Harvard Medical School

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## The Cover Letter

limit to one page

- Brief self-introduction
- Statement specifying the position for which you are applying
- Statement about your research accomplishments: What is novel and interesting?
- Brief description of your research plans: What is important or creative?
- Brief description of teaching or clinical experience if this is emphasized in the ad
- Any special circumstances?

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## The CV

We already spoke about this, but start building it NOW, no matter what type of job you might want in the future.

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## The Research Proposal



As requested. Sometimes may have more than one.

- Statement about the problem and key unanswered questions
- Description of plans, 3-4 Aims addressing a fundamental qx. Demonstrate you have the background to achieve what you propose. Be creative, but also realistic.
- A few embedded figures to keep things interesting.
- A description of your post-doctoral work with emphasis on what is novel- indicate what aspects you will be able to bring with you.
- A list of references including publications and submitted MS, as well as pertinent refs by others.
- **Indicate submitted/pending grants. Let the committee know what types of grants you intend to submit and to whom.**

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## Statement of Teaching

If the job has a teaching component, add a separate section to your application describing your interest in and approach to teaching as well as your experience.



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## Letters of Recommendation

- May be requested immediately or later in the application process.
- Usually written by graduate and post-doc advisors and others who know you well.
- It is OK to submit 1-2 more letters than requested.
- Give the authors plenty of time to prepare and provide them all relevant submission info.
- Check to verify that letters have been received.

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You've scored an interview!!!!  
Now what?



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## Preparing your Seminar

- A job talk usually lasts 45-50 minutes with 10-15 minute Q&A. Better too short than too long.
- Divide your talk into clear and concise sections.
- Provide clear **basic** introductory material. Give an overview at the beginning and restate your conclusions at the end.
- Make clear how your work contributes to the field and why it's important. Tell a cohesive story.
- You don't have to show every experiment you did.
- Acknowledge those who helped your research-including funding sources.
- Be armed with data slides not included in the talk in case of questions.
- Rehearse in front of peers and request their questions and frank criticism.
- Practice. Practice. Practice.

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## The Big Day Approaches



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## Advance Preparation

"To be prepared is half the victory."

Miguel de Cervantes

- Organize logistics: travel tickets, hotel, arrangements for pick-up, schedule of events.
- Allow plenty of time for travel.
- Find out about the academic interests of the people you are likely to meet.
- Learn as much as possible about the institution and surrounding area.
- Bring a back-up copy of your talk as a PDF.
- Be prepared to talk about clinical practice if that will be part of the job.

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## What Institutions are Looking for

It depends...

- Publishing in top tier journals and strong evidence of independent funding potential
- Setting up and maintaining a research program while managing a substantial teaching load
- Dedicated commitment to graduate or undergraduate education
- Being an intelligent mature scientist with potential for sustained productivity
- Dovetailing with or broadening the niche of existing faculty
- Following up on initial ideas with other related ones
- Showing interest in the world around you- i.e. the future of the department and what you bring to it

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## The Interview!

*You never get a second chance to make a first impression.*



- Expect a daylong process or overnight visit.
- Expect to meet the search committee, faculty including the department chair, and graduate and post-doctoral trainees.
- Normally the institution inviting you pays for your travel and accommodations.
- Your seminar will be the pivotal piece of your interview day.
- You will be on display at all stages of your visit.
- Dress appropriately. Wear well-fitting clothes and comfortable shoes. Be well groomed but skip the heavy cologne.

Tip: Don't drink more coffee than you're used to and ask to use the restroom if you need it.

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## Covid Adaptations

- Make sure that potential technical and internet connectivity issues are addressed prior to your interview.
- Double-check screen sharing, etc. with your onsite contact in advance.
- Guard against barking dogs, meowing cats, crying babies, flushing toilets, unexpected interruptions.
- Dress as you would for an in person interview.
- Ask if there are any background guidelines. Keep it simple, and not too cute.

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## Meeting Potential Colleagues

- Expect several one on one meetings with faculty. Show interest and ask lots of questions. Faculty members are looking for a colleague who will benefit their own work and/or department. Be yourself.
- Expect to meet with students, post-docs, residents or other trainees, usually over lunch or in the lab. Be wary if this does not happen. The search committee will solicit feedback from the trainees.
- It's OK to have a beer or glass of wine at dinner if others are, but limit it to one.

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## Covid Adaptations

- No one is expecting handshakes during person to person interactions anymore.
- Follow your host's lead for non-contact salutations.
- A smile and a nod is appropriate.
- Again, don't get too cute. Winks, finger guns, Vulcan salutes, peace signs, hang loose gestures will likely not make the best impression.

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*When you're talking to the faculty it's important to appear interested in everybody's work. You don't have to be an expert on the topic. If you know something about it, it's good to chime in with a suggestion or a question. If you're clueless it's fine to say, "This is really fascinating, but could you give me a bit more background?" It's also important to give a dynamite seminar so that people who don't have a chance to meet with you privately will have a chance to hear about your work, how you express yourself, and what kind of context you put your research in.*

Thomas Cech, HHMI

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## Delivering your Talk



- Arrive early to set up equipment and be familiar with the room. Ask your host for help with this.
- Steady your nerves. Plant your feet and focus on your breathing. Don't fidget.
- Smile, thank your host and greet the audience. Let them know you're glad to be with them.
- Let your enthusiasm for your research show.
- Tell where and with whom the work was done.
- Plant seeds to encourage questions later. "I don't have time to give details but would be happy to talk about that during the discussion."

*Some fraction of the audience is always asleep during any talk, no matter how exciting the subject. Find a few people who are listening attentively and give your talk to them.* Johannes Walker, Harvard Medical School

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## Questions and Discussion



- Repeat questions for the audience. If you need time to think, ask the questioner to restate the question. If uncertain of what's being asked, repeat your best interpretation of the question and offer your best answer.
- Answer the question and stop. Don't ramble. Ask if you've properly addressed the question.
- It's OK to say "I don't know." But offer to find out and follow up with the questioner. Don't make stuff up!
- If questions are slow coming, point out and discuss an aspect of your work you passed over quickly. This may trigger a new line of questioning.
- If challenged, be judicial. Stand your ground politely but don't get defensive. Suggest follow-up discussion.

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## Giving a Chalk Talk



- Chalk talks are less formal and often happen during a second visit.
- This should not be a polished slide presentation- but still should be carefully prepared.
- Give an overview of your research agenda including short and long term goals.
- State several specific problems you want to work on and how you plan to proceed.
- Be prepared to write on the board. Have a few overheads or slides of preliminary data.
- Show you are familiar with details of the techniques you will need to master.
- Expect to be interrupted. This is a great chance to show you can think on your feet and will be an interactive colleague. Engage your audience, especially potential collaborators.

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## Concluding the Visit

- Usually you will finish up with the search committee or its chairperson. You'll likely be escorted to the airport.
- Expect to learn when a decision will be reached. If not told, ask. The process may be fast or slow.
- Follow up with a formal thank you letter or email to the chair, reiterating your interest.
- Follow-up with any promises to share data or provide references.
- If you think of anything afterwards, follow-up with post-interview questions to the chair or others who offered help.
- **Inform the committee immediately if you decide to withdraw your candidacy or take another job.**
- **Don't stalk the committee or administrative assistant!**
- **Don't be offended, or trash talk the institution, if you don't get the job. You may well interact with these folks again.**

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*We always ask the administrative assistant how she was treated by the candidate, both on the phone, and during the visit. This is always very illuminating. I think candidates need to pay attention to how they treat the staff.*

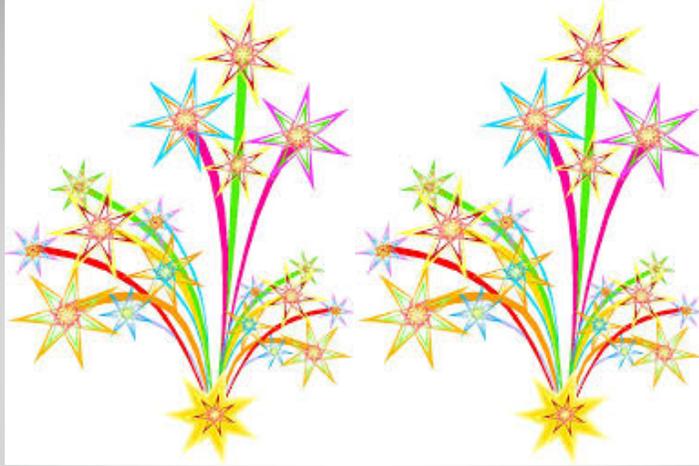
Ann Brown, Duke University School of Medicine

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## The Second Visit!

- You've crossed the first hurdle. They like you and your science. Now they want to learn how well you will integrate and contribute to the mission of the department and institution.
- Expect to give a chalk talk.
- Expect to meet with the search committee, department chair, and possibly the dean.
- Now is your opportunity to ask more in depth questions about the academic environment and your expected role within it. Find out the process and rate of tenure for junior faculty at the institution?
- Expect to be asked what you are looking for in a position.
- Ask your host if there is a departmental or college strategic plan.
- If there are special circumstances, eg. trailing spouse, now is the time to discuss these in more detail.
- Expect to be shown around town. If this is not offered, ask your host how best for you to explore the area.

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The department chair or chair of the search committee has extended a tentative offer. Now what?

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## Negotiating your Position

- Learn the details of the offer.
- Review your initial priorities and evaluate how this job stacks up to that list.
- Calculate what you are worth in salary and determine if the offer measures up. AAUP publishes annual compensation data. [https://www.higheredjobs.com/documents/salary/category\\_affiliation\\_rank\\_16.pdf](https://www.higheredjobs.com/documents/salary/category_affiliation_rank_16.pdf)
- Other resources: <http://pubs.acs.org> and <http://www.aamc.org>

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## Negotiating your Position- cont'd

- List resources you think you'll need to succeed in your scientific career. Decide what is necessary and what you can forego if shared equipment is available. Include office and lab space needs, computers and software, materials, equipment and personnel in your start-up request. Ask about local support staff, help in obtaining grants, support for travel to conferences, and faculty mentoring programs.
- For clinical positions, make sure there is an agreement about protected research time.
- **Get everything spelled out in writing!!!**
- Don't turn down other offers based on a verbal commitment.

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## What You Need To Find Out

- Your job title and what it means
- What are your research, teaching and service responsibilities?
- Is it a 9 or 12 month appointment? If 9 month, can paychecks be prorated over 12 months. Can you pay yourself summer salary from a research grant?
- Is it a dual appointment? If so, who will be covering your salary? Where is your tenure-home?
- The length of your initial contract and terms of renewal
- Base pay, benefits and other compensation and future raises. Is the salary guaranteed and if so, for how long?
- What are the institution's policies on outside activities?

Ask for a copy of the institution's faculty handbook or any other personnel policy manuals.

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## Other Forms of Compensation

- Health coverage, life insurance, disability insurance and retirement benefits
- Other family-related benefits: tuition support for family members, access to recreational facilities
- Whether moving expenses will be paid or assistance in obtaining housing
- Clinical or research bonuses

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## The Offer Letter

This is usually your contract. Take it seriously. In addition to the basics, eg. title, salary, research support and start-up package, it should also detail the schedule, process and requirements for tenure.

*I tell all of my post-docs who are negotiating for faculty positions: Once you sign on the dotted line, don't count on getting anything you haven't already been promised, no matter how reasonable it might seem. Thomas Cech, HHMI*

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## Multiple Offers?

- Keep all parties informed of the status of your other applications.
- Use leverage to ask another institution to match an offer- but only if you intend to accept.
- If you're not serious be prompt to refuse in fairness to other candidates. But don't decline all other offers until you have your first choice in writing.
- Ask for an extension to a deadline if need be, but don't miss a deadline.
- Discuss pros and cons with those you trust.
- Sleep on your decision, but once made don't look back.

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## Further Articles and Resources about Navigating the Academic Job Market During the Pandemic

- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01656-3>
- <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01656-3>
- <https://www.amazon.com/Professor-Essential-Guide-Turning-Ph-D-ebook/dp/B00PEPR5LS>
- Look for seminars and panel discussions on this topic online. Several academic institutions have already sponsored virtual events and career fairs.

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**GOOD LUCK!!**

**QUESTIONS?**

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