Interviewing for academic and non-academic jobs

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Outline

1. Objective-Based Interviewing

2. What To Expect

3. Interviewing Techniques
   - Preparation
   - Convey Your Secret Weapons
   - Structure Your Answers
   - Practice

4. Following Up After Your Interview
Help Them Hire You

- They already think you’ll be GREAT for the job.
- They WANT to know the best reasons to hire you so they can convince their colleagues.

Think about yourself from the perspective of the interviewers

- Think about what they value
- **Appeal to those values!**
  - Research universities value research
  - Cal State schools value teaching AND research
  - Liberal Arts colleges value undergraduate research
  - Small schools value personal connections to the students
  - Any department might emphasize inclusivity, outreach, or any other specific thing
Set Objectives for the Interview!

Objective-Based Interviewing

- Choose several key aspects of yourself in advance
- Incorporate those aspects into your answers
- (Don’t merely answer their questions)

- Write down several things that you want to mention.
- List your own personal Secret Weapons

Focus on What They Value Most

- Publications
- Awards and Fellowships
- Unique Experiences
- Online Teaching
- Being a Sole Instructor

- Leadership Roles
- Personal Connections
- Ability to teach Diff. Equations or Statistics
- You will take the job.
## What to Expect

### Possible Elements
- Brief interview: 20-30 minute conversation with 1-8 people
- A seminar, colloquium, or math club talk by you
- Hour-long interviews with many different faculty members and university officials

### Have These Things With You
- Copies of all of your job materials
- A list of your Secret Weapons
- A list of your Interview Objectives
- A list of questions you have for them
- A notepad for taking notes
Tell us about your research.

Tell us more about item X on your CV.

How was the transition to remote learning at UCI?

How are your course evaluations?

We have a cultural diverse student body. How does having a diverse classroom affect your teaching?

Are you thinking of applying for grants or external funding?

Do you have any upcoming deadlines for other job offers?
More interview Questions / Topics of Conversation

Why do you want to come to our school/business?
Is your research suitable for undergraduate research projects?
What courses are you most comfortable teaching? Not comfortable?
We have a cultural diverse student body. How does having a diverse classroom affect your teaching?
Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
Why should we hire you?
What does “liberal arts” mean to you?
What do you need to support your research?
Do you have potential for interdisciplinary research?
Tell me about your teaching.
What is your ideal balance between teaching/research/service?
What is something that you did in the classroom that didn’t work as well as you might have liked? What did you learn from this? / How did you respond?
Possibly a Talk on Research or a Teaching Demo

- Find out what they want to see
- Find out who will be there
- For a research talk
  - Spend 1/4 to 1/3 of your talk putting your results in CONTEXT
  - Don’t prove everything
  - Pitch the beginning of your talk to the whole audience
  - Pitch the middle of your talk to the people in your field
  - Blow them away at the end
  - Your Research Statement is a good guide
- For a talk to impress them with your teaching
  - Show them that you can be accessible to undergraduates
  - Show what makes you an excellent teacher
  - Engage the audience
Do Your Homework

A great 4-minute video about staging your interview
https://youtu.be/rQwanxQmFnc
A good website for the academic job search in Math, with a great Interviewing tab, lots of articles, some are specifically math, some are not.
https://marktomforde.com/academic/gradstudents/gradstudents-jobsearch.html
UCI Division of Career Pathways Interview Strategies:
https://career.uci.edu/graduate/non-academic-careers/interviewing/
UCI Division of Career Pathways Grad Student page:
https://career.uci.edu/graduate/
Do Your Homework

Prepare Thoroughly For Each Interview

- Thoroughly explore the department’s web page
- Look up each of your interviewers!
- Contact any possibly interested faculty there
- Rethink your secret weapons in terms of their perspective
- Look up programs, courses (with numbers), and research projects that you would like to ask about.

PRACTICE OUT LOUD!
Convey Your Secret Weapons

Find a Way to Say What You Want to Say

- Think about the overall topic of every question
- Match your Secret Weapons to that question
Build a Framework for What You Want to Convey

- Say what you’re going to say, then say it
  (and then say what you said)
- Enumerate the points you’re about to make
- Verbally create a bulleted list
- Google the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result)
- End your answers decisively
Examples

- Tell us about your dissertation
- How do you teach?
What works?

- Evidence is more convincing than claims and dreams
- Anecdotes can be convincing and **memorable**
- Try to address the big picture
- You must **sell yourself** and **stay positive!**
Breakout Rooms

- Think of three of your Secret Weapons
- Pick an integer $\in [1, 10]$, and ask:

1. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?
2. Why should we hire you?
3. What is your ideal balance between teaching/research/service?
4. What courses are you most comfortable teaching?
5. How does having a diverse classroom affect your teaching?
6. How do you teach?
7. Tell us about your dissertation
8. How was the transition to remote learning at UCI?
9. Is your research suitable for undergraduate research projects?
10. Why do you want to come to our school/business?

Incorporate One Of Your Secret Weapons Into Your Answer!
How Did it Go?

You have to PRACTICE OUT LOUD

Practice with each other and/or me
You Will Ask Them Questions

Complete Your Interview Objectives!

- Do you have support and mentoring for grant writing?
- Do the faculty collaborate with each other?
- What is housing like in the local community?
- Can you tell me a little about [Insert a Course/Research/Outreach Program that you know one of your interviewers is involved with]?
- Ask about things they are proud of
- Note: this is not the time to negotiate
Following Up After Your Interview

Say “Thank You” to Everyone

- Very soon after the interview, email each person that interviewed you.
- Thank them
- Reiterate your interest in the position
- Refer to something specific that you discussed
- Ask follow-up questions

(Contact other places that you are very interested in, and let them know you are being sought after)
Conclusion

Things to take away

- Prepare (study interviewers and the school/company)
- Think about your interviewers, and **appeal to their values**!
- Be Positive
- Convey your Secret Weapons
- PRACTICE out loud
A great 4-minute video about staging your interview
https://youtu.be/rQwanxQmFnc
A very good website for the academic job search in math:
https://marktomforde.com/academic/gradstudents/gradstudents-jobsearch.html
UCI Division of Career Pathways Grad Student page:
https://career.uci.edu/graduate/
UCI Division of Career Pathways Interview Strategies:
https://career.uci.edu/graduate/non-academic-careers/interviewing/