

# THE JOB MARKET

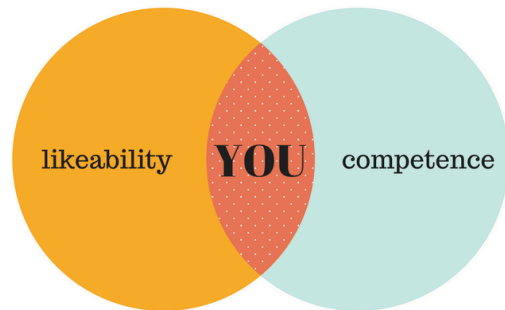
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*Fall 2017*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The goal of the job market is to establish yourself at the nexus of likeability and competence (suggestion compliments of Matt Josefy).

*A caveat of this document:* These are one person's suggestions (influenced by others before me) for one year on the job market in one area. Take them all with a grain of salt while remembering that, in general, earlier is better.



## THE TIMELINE

1. **Spring:** Prep your job market materials, your website, your job market paper, and ask for letters of recommendation. These can take quite some time! And, you likely want time to let them sit before coming back to them (especially your teaching and research statements).
  - a. I wrote an email to each of my letter writers asking them if they would write a letter for me and, if so, if they could provide it by a certain date (early June). In that email I also outlined why I wanted them to write it; I highlighted each person's unique perspective on me and my competency as a scholar, teacher, and colleague.
  - b. I was surprised by the personality characteristics that were mentioned in these letters. While they highlighted my research, etc., they also noted that I was "fun to be around" and were far less formal in that regard than I had anticipated.
  - c. Everyone's writers handle the process differently. I had one writer who gave me a general copy of the letter and kept one for himself. I submitted it on his behalf when possible and otherwise used Interfolio (or a different

software) to prompt him to upload that generic letter.

My other two letter writers provided me with a letter that was more specific, leaving space for the position title and the school's information. I had copies of both of those, would change the pertinent information (address, salutation, etc.), and then email them back to the writers so they could submit them when necessary.

2. **Summer:** Some applications were due as early as mid-June. Be prepared to start this process and keep it going up until AOM. This year job openings slowed down dramatically after AOM.

- a. Plan to submit your applications at least 2 weeks before their deadlines. Many schools start looking at applications before the deadline actually passes in order to make calls for fly outs as soon as the deadline passes.
- b. Consider ways you can get your letter writers, committee, and overall faculty on board.
  - i. I created a spreadsheet with all of the pertinent information for every school I planned to apply to and sent it out to my letter writers, asking them to make comments regarding individuals they may know there, other details they may know about the job, etc.
  - ii. Be very specific with individuals about what you are looking for (to the extent that you can) because they want to be helpful. For example, *I'm looking for a tenure-track entrepreneurship position at a research institution that can provide me with good resources but doesn't have tenure expectations of an Ivy League or upper echelon school. I'm open to a 2-2 load but would like a 3 course load if possible.*
  - iii. Before AOM, I sent out a blanket reminder to our entire faculty reminding them that I'm on the job market and included a link to my website and application materials.
  - iv. I sent out a weekly digest email to my letter writers with:
    1. Where I had applied that week
    2. Where I'd heard back from
    3. Where I would like each of them to reach out to on my behalf
    4. Any other pertinent information

They requested I keep them updated as I applied because they wanted to wait to reach out to their contacts until my application was submitted.

- v. I asked those closest to me (i.e., my letter writers, good friends at other institutions) if certain schools were hiring or planned to hire. For example, I asked my dissertation co-chair if she knew a UW alum who is currently at UConn. She reached out to him to tell him I was on the market and see if they were hiring.
- vi. I also reached out to anyone in my network to ask if their school was hiring. Although I didn't end up at any of those schools, I am *certain* that was a positive move. One response was along the lines of, *No, we're not hiring but so-and-so and XX school was just asking me if I knew of someone on the market this year who might fit their position. I'm going to pass your name along.* Another individual I reached out to is at an institution that wasn't hiring but knew I was interviewing with the school I ended up at and put in a good word for me.
- c. **Consider your interviewing and job market strategies.** Are you going to try to get interviews at AOM? If so, those application deadlines are earlier than they might be otherwise. Do some reconnaissance when possible to know whether AOM interviews are significant for the schools you're interested in. If so, aim to get an interview.
- d. At AOM: Spend your time where it's beneficial.
  - i. Don't plan to do much "scholarly" work (i.e., keep your presentations to a minimum).
  - ii. Plan for your schedule to flex. I got invited to receptions of schools I was interviewing with at the last minute. Other things come up.
  - iii. Lean on your network to understand what questions might be asked, etc.
  - iv. If you haven't made a connection with someone at a school before AOM, it's hard to make it a meaningful one at a reception. For example, attending the UT-Austin party that's at a loud bar and introducing yourself totally cold to the chair of the search committee probably isn't a great idea.
- 3. **Fall:** Hold on to your hat. This is where things get a bit weird in a hurry up and wait fashion. Keep your head down, get work done when you can, and prepare as much as possible.
  - a. Practice your job talk.
  - b. Practice it in front of your fellow students.
  - c. Practice it in front of friendly faculty.
  - d. Talk with as many people as you can about what you might expect at each

of your fly outs. Friends who had interviewed at these places in the past or were on faculty at these places prepared me well for what I might be asked or the types of questions/comments I might expect from the faculty.

- e. Find some organizational system that works for you in order to keep your flights, hotel reservations, etc. separate and easy to access. Consider creating a folder or label in your email for each place or putting your flight/hotel info on your calendar.
  - f. When you get flight information, forward it on to at least one person you love. God forbid something should happen but just in case, make sure a trusted friend or family member knows where you'll be.
4. **Winter:** If you're still on the market at this point, that's *not uncommon!* And I'm certain you're not alone. Repeat step three and take deep breaths.

## NUTS & BOLTS

1. Be prepared to spend money during this process. Inevitably I would get delayed and end up buying snacks/meals in the airport, etc. Some schools were very up front about reimbursing these costs, others weren't as forthcoming. It wasn't a huge expense but I did end up spending money I wouldn't have if I weren't on these fly-outs. Other costs: clothes, shoes, etc.
2. Book flights that work for you. My understanding is that as long as the cost is reasonable, schools recognize that they're going to be spending money during this process. I had one school kindly question the cost of my flight (~\$800) but it was easily explained by the parameters of my availability so I didn't get any other questions about it.
3. Use your network. This was a strategy I took that helped (potentially significantly) and didn't hurt.
4. Have an envelope in your bag where you put all pertinent receipts for each fly out and create a folder or tag in your email for all job market related expenses that need to be reimbursed (e.g., flights, Uber rides, etc.). As I spent money on meals at the airport, for example, I would put that receipt in the envelope for easy access later. It makes submitting receipts much easier, particularly during a busy time.
5. Get an external battery pack phone charger. This thing saved me.
6. TSA PreCheck. This also saved me.
7. Don't rely on having cell service or a charged phone. Have a hard copy of your itinerary if possible.
8. Get the number of someone to get ahold of when something goes awry. Save that

person's number in your phone ahead of time. (Someone forgot to pick me up for dinner at one school, my flights were delayed countless times, etc.)

9. Expect to be delayed at some point. Be prepared. Don't get flustered. (There was a fire alarm pulled and evacuation right before my job talk at one school.)
10. Expect technical difficulties at some point. Be prepared. Don't get flustered.
11. Ask the school for the best way to bring your presentation (usually upload it to a USB). Make sure you have access to a backup (e.g., Dropbox, email).
12. Use a password manager (LastPass is free and very good). Many schools have their own HR systems so you'll be making many logins/passwords. This will help keep them straight.
13. Consider time differences, especially with interviews at AOM and putting times on your calendar. Make sure your appointments are in the right time zone.

## WHAT TO PACK

- Carry on; don't check unless absolutely necessary.
- Don't reinvent the wheel. Whatever worked in terms of outfits at the last school will likely work at the next one.
- Find outfits you feel comfortable, strong, and confident in. Don't use the finite mental or physical energy you have to battle static cling or make sure your pants cover your tummy bulge.
- That said, check the weather in your location before you pack. Have a plan that allows you to flex as needed (e.g, swap a sweater out for a blouse, etc.).
- I tried to remember that even if my hair wasn't coiffed particularly well or I looked tired, many academics don't have much of a sense of style so as long as you hit a threshold, leave your fashion worries aside.
- What I packed in my purse/laptop bag:
  1. Comfortable shoes: well, I wore these while traveling
  2. Refillable water bottle
  3. Laptop/cords (all. the. cords.)
  4. Snacks
  5. Cash (especially smaller bills for tipping drivers)
  6. Slide advancer (just in case)
  7. Notebook and writing utensil
  8. USB drive with presentation loaded
  9. Women: pack a pad or tampon just in case. Just do it.

## NOW THAT YOU'VE GONE ON FLY-OUTS, WHAT NEXT?

1. Write thank you notes ASAP. Taking notes throughout your visit and talk (as well as immediately afterward) can be helpful. I would take 20 minutes at the end of each day to write my thank you notes, checking each person's name off the hard copy of my itinerary. Then I would schedule them to send (using Boomerang for Gmail) after I had left that city. Find a method that works for you.
2. *Before you get an offer, know what is important to you.* For me, it was freedom and autonomy to do my research. That meant that having access to research funds (and summer funding) was important as was a low teaching load with as few preps as possible. I didn't get all of that but by stating what I cared the most about it helped them help me and understand where some of my counter-points were coming from. Hopefully you get an offer or two or five!
3. Often offers are given via phone, with an initial request to chat sent via email.
4. NEGOTIATE. Especially you, women. You're not going to offend them if you do it in a meaningful way that explains why you're asking for what you're asking for. Maybe they don't have any wiggle room but they likely do and expect you're going to ask for something. Make it a conversation.
5. A note about process: There are often back and forths between you, the chair, and the dean (or another higher-up) before a finalized offer comes your way. They will often want you to verbally accept before sending you the official, written offer. They won't go through the rigamarole unless they know you're coming to that school. First comes the offer, then the negotiation, then the counter offer from the school, then your verbal acceptance (or rejection), then, if you accept, the official offer/paperwork.

## NEGOTIATING THE OFFER

This is a very stressful time in a different but equally difficult way from the interview process. It's a delicate balance of being assertive because this is a huge decision while recognizing that they have other constraints and other candidates (people like you!) waiting in the wings or getting offers from other schools. You don't want to pooh pooh their offer but you should ask for what you want/need.

When you get the call with an offer:

1. Thank them profusely and give them a specific reason or two why you're excited

about this offer.

2. Be honest about where you're at in your process (e.g., aren't done with your fly outs, are mulling over your options, are looking to make a decision soon, etc.) and share that with them.
3. Ask about their process (e.g., what are the next steps? how does this process unfold?)
4. Ask about their timeline or, if you have your own timeline, ask if it's okay that you get back to them within XX days/weeks. Then say something like, "How would that coincide with your timeline?" (I think a timeline of two weeks is reasonable.)
5. Ask when it might be appropriate to have a more detailed conversation about the offer (wherein you can counter). I said I wanted to talk it over with my husband and my advisor, etc. and then would get back with them in XX time (a few days, a week) to discuss it in greater detail.

Then:

6. Tiffany Trzebiatowski suggested you wait as long as possible with every offer because you never know what might happen. This was true for me as well!
7. Figure out what your counter offer might be. When it comes to that conversation our former department chair suggested I frame it in terms of what "might best facilitate my success, which is something that is important to me and, I believe, is important to you (the school)." It was really helpful for me particularly in guiding the conversation.
8. Potential items of negotiation (check with others in your department, your departmental admin, and recent grads):
  - a. Summer support (how much? for how many years? what about after those years? etc.)
  - b. # of courses
  - c. How are those courses are loaded (2-1, 3-0, etc.)
  - d. # of preps
  - e. Access to research funds (if you have your own fund, how much is it? every year? how many years? if you don't, where does it come from? what's the process for getting it? what does it typically support for other faculty (i.e., two conferences a year?)?, will it enable you to do X, Y, and Z to support your research?, etc.)
  - f. Early summer support (not all schools do this but some people get summer support for a month or two before they technically start the job, which is super handy for us poor grad students)

- g. Can you take a paycheck early? One school did this, which can be helpful to float the expenses of moving.
- h. Moving expenses (what does this cover? is it a use it or lose it type of deal? is it a set amount you get? will it cover a house hunting trip? is this arranged by the school or by you? etc.)
- i. Standing desk (thousands of dollars that's hard to justify later without a doctor's note)
- j. Computer/tech support (new computer? what kind? monitors? any particularly statistical package or software you need? etc.)
- k. Salary (obvi)
- l. Parking
- m. Bonuses (do you get merit bonuses for publishing?)
- n. Access to grad students/PAs (are PAs/TAs available for assistance? are they typically used to grade for classes or can they also be used for project-based work? how does this work? etc. etc.)

## POTENTIAL STRESSORS

*What exactly makes the job market stressful? Here are a few things I found particularly difficult:*

1. Pumping while being on the job market: It's hard having an infant while on the market.
2. Keeping my energy up:
  - a. Travel gets exhausting.
  - b. Carrying the conversation for 12 hours a day is tough, especially with strangers.
  - c. Don't be afraid to ask different people the same questions. When in doubt, ask "So what have you been working on?"
  - d. Making sure that your brain is firing on all cylinders is exhausting. Get sleep where you can. And stay present as much as possible.
3. Making decisions: Minimize decision-making as much as possible (hence the same wardrobe).
  - a. When possible, I looked ahead at the menus of the restaurants where I knew we were going. It was one less thing to think about. At my last fly out I couldn't even choose an entree because I was so depleted mentally. Everyone looks to the candidate to make decisions (Inside or outside? Table



- or booth? Mexican or Italian food? Fish or chicken? etc.). It's exhausting.
- b. Not sure if you should get a drink? My friend liked to say, "I'll follow your lead."
4. Offer timeline: Some of my offers were expiring within hours when I got another, more desirable offer.

## REMEMBER:

*Find a strategy that works for you and your strengths!*

There is a job for everyone coming out of UW-Madison if you are reasonable and do the work.

Don't pay attention to the job market spreadsheet (or do so understanding that there's VERY asymmetric information).

There are so many other influencing factors in this process; it's probably not about you. That said, this is a *highly* relational process wherein schools are trying to eliminate as much risk as possible. The way they do so is by relying on personal connections.

**Personal connections matter.**

**Do whatever you can to minimize the decision-making you need to do at any one point in time.** Your brain's decision-making power is finite and you need to save it for your job talk and for individual conversations, not choosing what to wear or what to eat.

**Be yourself.** People genuinely want to help you and want to know what makes you tick. The only way they can do that is if you do you.

**Don't be afraid to ask for what you want.** Need water? A bathroom break? Coffee? Don't hesitate to ask.

Lean on trusted individuals (partner/spouse, friends, advisor, faculty). They can offer great insight in managing a difficult process and, at the very least, empathy and a listening ear.