

The Job-Search Process

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You're graduating!

- Exciting but nerve-wracking time:
 - finishing up thesis
 - looking for a job
- Don't be too hard on yourself!

Finding your job

- Your application
- Preparing your job talk
- Preparing for an interview
- The big day!
- After the interview...
- Managing offers
- But that's a long way off!

September

May



What do you want?

- What kind(s) of position are you looking for?
 - Research university? Research lab?
Teaching college? Post Doc? Development?
- Where are you (and any significant other) willing to live?
 - West coast? East coast? International?
Urban? Rural? ...?

September-October



What's available?

- Job market changes every year
- Information sources:
 - CRA web site
<http://www.cra.org/highlights/student.html>
 - Communications of the ACM
 - <http://athena.systems.org/mailman/listinfo/phdjobhuntHers>
- Talk to your advisor, other mentors, ...
- Post docs generally through word of mouth.

September-October



Tips

- With the help of your advisor, identify “stretch,” “eye-level,” and “safety” institutions.
- Don't apply somewhere you are 100% sure you won't go.
- But, keep an open mind! You might be surprised what you end up liking the best.
- Note due dates (November, December)!

Your application

- Cover Letter
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
 - Research and teaching experience, jobs held, talks given, papers published, refereeing, other service...
- Research Statement
 - What is your vision for your research?
- Teaching Statement (except for labs)
 - What is your vision for teaching?
- Letters of recommendation (3-5)
- Transcript (sometimes)



Tips

- Look at materials from friends from previous years (those who did well :-).
- Start drafting early!
- Show result to advisor and other faculty members.
- Revise, revise, revise!
- It is worth investing a lot of time.

Identifying letter writers

- With advisor, develop a list of candidates:
 - **Familiar** with your research
 - **Respected** in the academic community
- Possible sources (in addition to advisor):
 - Internship advisors
 - Members of your research community
 - Members of your reading committee
 - Other professors at your institution



Early November

Tips

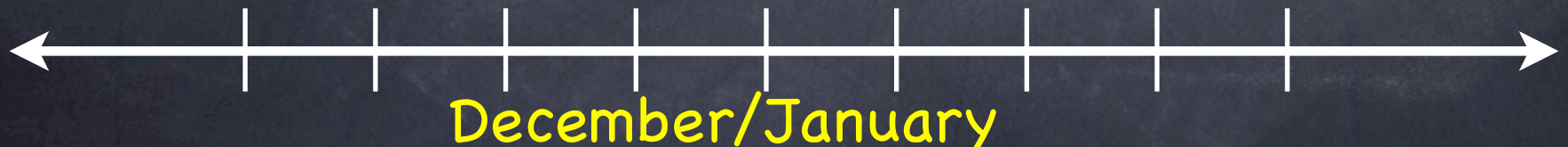
- Ask letter-writers **way in advance** of deadlines. It takes a lot of work to write a good letter!
- If they say 'no', don't press; find someone else.
- Give them a copy of your application materials.
- Ask them if they need any more information.
- Give them a list of the institutions/deadlines.
- Keep track of which schools have which letters; send **gentle reminders** if necessary.
- Thank them & tell them where you end up!

Wait...

Preparing a job talk

Remember that, while the goal of a conference talk is to inform a specialized audience about a particular research result, the goal of a job talk is to convince a **broader audience** that you have identified an **important and difficult problem**, that you have come up with an **innovative and effective solution**, that you have concrete ideas for a **future research agenda**, and that you will be a **strong contributor** to their scholarly community.

- Edward D. Lazowska



Tips

- Iterate with your advisor: outline and talk.
- Give practice talk to wide audience at your institution and incorporate feedback.
- Implore audience to ask questions, even weird ones.
- Assume questions being asked are easiest possible, rather than most difficult.
- Video your talk and (gulp!) watch it.
- Practice until you are comfortable but not bored.

Preparing for an Interview

- Do your homework!
 - The web, your advisor, research colleagues, ...
- Questions to find answers to:
 - What are faculty members doing?
 - What research projects are going on?
 - How might your work relate to theirs?
 - What is the curriculum like?
 - How would you fit into the department?



Questions to answer

- Tell me about your thesis and other work you have done?
- What do you want to work on next and why?
- Why you are interested in this institution?
- What courses would you like to teach and why?
- Why are you interested in teaching?
- What is your philosophy of teaching students?
- Do you have questions for me?

Questions to ask

- What is like to work here?
- How are decisions made in the organization?
- Are professors/researchers encouraged to collaborate with each other?
- Does the organization have regular social events?
- How are students supported?
- How do students find advisors?

More questions to ask

- How are teaching assignments made?
- How are new courses introduced into the curriculum?
- What is the teaching load?
- What is the committee assignment process like?
- How does the department relate to the rest of the university?
- How will I be evaluated?
- What is the tenure process like?

Tips

- Make sure you get to talk to a woman professor or two; watch how women are treated in the department.
- Make sure you get to talk to a bunch of students to “see” the department from their perspective.

The big day(s)!

- Don't book yourself into crazy travel!
- Get plenty of sleep & eat well.
- Enjoy and have fun (to the extent you can)
- Try to imagine yourself in the environment:
 - Do you have a good time?
 - Do you want these people as your colleagues potentially forever?

Tips

- Interpersonal skills are important.
 - Do they want you as their colleague?
 - Don't say negative things about other institutions or people. It can come back to haunt you!
- Consider when or whether to mention any two-body challenges.
- Make sure your host tells you what to expect in follow up.

After the interview

- Go home after first interview, to recover and get support.
- Schedule down time generally!
- Talk to advisor: may be getting feedback.
- Send notes thanking people you particularly enjoyed talking with.
- Follow up with anything you said you would do.

Wait...

Managing offers

- Celebrate success;
Don't take rejection personally
- Evaluate strengths/weaknesses of each offer
- Negotiate!
- Talk openly to your significant other
- Imagine yourself in each place, how you feel



But that's a long way
from now...

In the mean time...

- Publish (good) papers!
- Network at conferences so people know you (letters!)
- Do internships at various kinds of institutions
- Watch professors around you
- TA, help write a grant proposal, serve on committees
- Pay attention to how your institution does hiring
 - Go to job talks!
 - Meet with speakers in student session
- Be able to talk knowledgeably about many areas of cs.

Questions?