The Nuts and Bolts of the Academic Job Market

Jenny Furlong, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Career Planning and Professional Development
Jfurlong@gc.cuny.edu
It’s important to go on the Academic Job Market with an understanding of…

- The climate of higher education
- The various types of institutions of higher education
- The resources that can help you
- The basics of the job search
- The importance of having a Plan B
The Climate of Higher Education Today

- Financial constraints
  - All institutions are feeling the strain of the current economic climate.
- Increased scrutiny of outcomes
  - from legislatures and funding agencies.
  - from students and parents.
- Growing numbers of non-traditional students
  - The “typical” college student is changing.
- Dramatic changes in content delivery
  - The growth of MOOCs, etc., and responses
Graduate Students

Once-Flourishing Economics Ph.D. Program Prepares to Die

September 9, 2013

Lindsey J. Woodworth, a Ph.D. student in economics at the U. of Florida, said: "When I enrolled in this program I never thought it wouldn't exist by the time I finished."

By Stacey Patton

For decades the Ph.D. program in economics at the University of Florida flourished. Highly regarded econometricians, like the late Henri Thiel and G.S. Maddala, taught there. Until the late 1990s, the department had been ranked among the top 20 of American public universities by prominent economics journals and associations.
Sources of Information and Support

- Your department (advisor and other faculty members)
- Your scholarly association’s web site and online resources
- Resources at the OCCPD – CV and cover letter critiques, interview practice, information about non-academic careers and more
- Careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu
- *The Academic Job Search Handbook*
- *The Chronicle of Higher Education* – many articles in the Careers section
You Need to Make Connections

- Think of yourself as a colleague, not a (lowly) graduate student.
- Take a proactive approach to your search.
- If others offer to help take them up on it but don’t expect them to do it for you.
- Research each institution before you contact them and again before an interview.
- Meet people at conferences.
- Stay in touch and keep relationships alive.
Develop and Maintain your Web Presence

- Join Academia.edu (and LinkedIn.com)
- Develop your own website (you can use a tool such as WordPress, or do it yourself).
  - [http://careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2013/08/creating-an-online-portfolio/](http://careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2013/08/creating-an-online-portfolio/)
- Should you include a link to your blog? Twitter handle?
  - On your academic CV, a link to your website is probably sufficient.
You Need to Be Flexible

- **Type of institution**
  - Look broadly and consider a variety of institutions including liberal arts colleges, community colleges, and comprehensive institutions.

- **Geographic location**
  - Try to be positive about locations that don’t interest you. Learn about them and talk to people there.
How my Office Can Help…

- Document review
  - CV’s and cover letters
  - Statements of teaching philosophy
  - Research statements

- One-on-one meetings with a career counselor
  - Another perspective on your career strategies/satisfaction

- Events
  - Upcoming event (November 21) will feature the chief economist from IBM

- Content-rich website
  - Be sure to check out some of the links I’ve mentioned
  - Sign up to get our updates
Basics of the Academic Job Search

- Identifying and applying for job opportunities
  - Job Openings for Economists
  - Also, hercjobs.org (good for dual-career searches)
  - Also, many links on economics placement website
  - Most hard deadlines in October and November

- Preparing for interviews
  - First-round interviews at AEA in Jan 3-5 in Philly
  - Fly-outs later in January through March

- When will you get an offer?
  - Wide range of time here. Before May 2014.
Written Materials for the Job Search

- CV or vita
- Statement of teaching philosophy
- Research statement
- “Evidence of excellence in teaching”
- Web site
- Writing sample
- Teaching portfolio
- Cover letters or letters of application
  - What you say and how you write are important
  - Tailor each letter for the institution
- Transcripts (official and/or unofficial)
- Letters of recommendation
Samples, Samples, Samples!

- How do you find samples of these materials?
  - CV template from the department
  - Do you have friends and colleagues who’ve done a (successful) search recently?
  - Our website: [http://careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu/](http://careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu/)
    - Advice—and links to samples—here.
What is Interfolio, anyway?

- In the past, student services offices of graduate schools managed “credentials” services for Ph.D. students. Staff members would process faculty members’ letters, copy them, and send them out for students, for a fee at many institutions.

- As digital files became the norm, Interfolio replaced in-house services at many doctoral institutions (See Interfolio’s client list http://www.interfolio.com/clients/).
Interfolio Considerations for Students

- At the Graduate Center, we offer current students a one-time three-year account in Interfolio, plus subsidized mailing credits.
  - Students can sign up at the CareerPlan website: http://careerplan.commons.gc.cuny.edu/interfolio/
- Students can request institution-specific letters, but they must label them as such when they make the request.
If students want a letter tailored to a particular institution or opportunity, they must title the document appropriately, i.e., “Georgia Tech letter from Dr. So-and-so.”

Make sure to request confidential letters.
You can use Interfolio to share your job-search documents with faculty if they haven’t done so already.

You can and should specify whether the letter is general or specific here. You can also send faculty the position description and/or a message.
When a student requests a letter, the faculty member will receive an email. S/he can sign into his/her account and upload a digital version of the letter. Or, s/he can print out the request form and mailing instructions and mail it to Interfolio.

Dear Dr. Jennifer Furlong,

A student is requesting that you submit a Confidential Letter of Recommendation or Evaluation via Interfolio for inclusion in their dossier.

The requester asks that you please submit this document by 7/31/13.

HOW TO SUBMIT A LETTER TO INTERFOLIO

You may upload an electronic version of your letter to Interfolio, or you may mail a printed copy of your letter to Interfolio and we will take care of the rest.

To upload an electronic version of your letter:

- Sign in to your account at [http://www.interfolio.com/](http://www.interfolio.com/) to see your pending request(s), and simply upload the letter as prompted.

Document ID: AF52D451FC

If you wish to mail a printed copy of your letter, please click the following link to print the request form and mailing instructions: [https://secure.interfolio.com/ta7hwr.cfm](https://secure.interfolio.com/ta7hwr.cfm).

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Best,
The Interfolio Customer Support Team
email: help@interfolio.com
call: (877) 997-8807
tweet: @interfolio
learn more: [http://www.interfolio.com/](http://www.interfolio.com/)
Now when the faculty member logs in, s/he can see student requests.

Tip: Make sure to request confidential letters of recommendation!

Your faculty member will see your name here. Click here to upload a letter.

Requests will always have deadlines assigned by you.

If you are requesting a letter for a particular position, that should be visible in the document title.

Tip: Make sure to request confidential letters of recommendation!
Apply for job openings

- Apply for positions that appear to be a good fit for you.
- Read the announcement carefully and send what they ask for.
- Show you understand what kind of institution you are applying to.
- After sending, check to make sure materials were received.
Prepare for screening interviews

- Phone interviews
- Video interviews
- Conference interviews
  - Develop a short version of your research.
  - Make sure you set up a time to talk that is convenient for you.
  - If you are not a native speaker of English, be aware that a committee might be evaluating your English skills.
Prepare for fly-outs

- Practice your job talk.
- Develop a cocktail party version of your research.
- Prepare to talk about your teaching, your research, your goals, and yourself.
- Know what you’re going to wear.
- Think about how you’ll stay at the top of your form.
- Before any interview, clarify all arrangements and research the institution and interviewers.
What Will Happen during Your Campus Interview

- The job talk (and the Q and A afterwards)
- Meeting the department
- Meeting administrators
- Teaching a class
- Meeting with graduate students and/or undergraduates
- Social situations
What You Might Negotiate

- Decision date
- Salary
- Teaching load and teaching schedule
- Moving expenses/housing help
- Job-hunting help for partner or spouse
- Starting date
- Research assistance
- Computer resources
- Summer research funding
- Travel funds and conference expenses
Wrapping up your Search

When You Have Accepted a Job
- If terms of the offer changed during negotiating, get a new offer letter.
- Thank everybody.
- Notify other institutions that interviewed you and withdraw from the search.
- Notify your network of contacts that you have accepted an offer.
- FINISH YOUR RESEARCH.

When You Don’t Have a Job Offer
- Thank all who helped you.
- Keep working on your research.
- Talk with your advisor and others about how you can strengthen your candidacy.
Deciding When to Use Your Plan B

- Ask yourself:
  - Will I go on the market again? How many times am I willing to do so?
  - Will I pursue one-year positions or postdoctoral fellowships while searching for a tenure-track position? How many times am I willing to move?
  - Are there personal considerations (partner/children) that might affect this decision?

- Research what you might do if you leave the academy?
  - Approach this task as you would any research project – your goal is to find the most effective sources of information.
  - Schedule an appointment and take advantage of the resources at OCCPD.
  - Additional resources: So What Are You Going to Do with That (Basalla/Debelius), Put Your Science to Work (Fiske), Versatile PhD, ScienceCareers.org.
Preparing to Start Your New Faculty Position

- Begin now to **think of yourself as a faculty member**; you are the one responsible for your career.
- Know that **your first year will be challenging** regardless of how well prepared you are. That said, do as much as you can to be ready when fall arrives.
- **Set realistic goals** for your teaching and research – we’ve often heard new faculty members say, “don’t aim for perfection that first year, just get through it.”
- **Keep an open line of communication** with your chair so that you know what is expected of you.
- **Protect your time.** Make sure that you carve out time to do the things that will get you tenure at your new institution.
- Cultivate relationships with **mentors**.