

MANAGING THE (CURRENT) MARKET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Where to Apply.....	2
Close Reading the Job Ad.....	5
Planning and Organization.....	7
Written Materials.....	10
The Interview.....	13
Campus Visits.....	18
After the Interview.....	20
Emotional Impact.....	21

INTRODUCTION

Negotiating the academic job market has always been a difficult task. Selling yourself is never easy for anyone and for academics—who have literally spent years of hard work on a dissertation—the prospect of rejection is particularly daunting. While getting a job is a process that has always been fraught with anxiety, in the past few years, the market has changed drastically, becoming so pressurized that colleagues’ stories of how they were hired before 2009 seem quaint and foreign to those of us who have come after. We decided to construct this guide in an attempt to describe the *current* market, rather than the one which previous generations of academics have dealt with.

Therefore, this document is culled from the accounts of very recent hires—all of whom are Graduate Center alumni and all of whom have obtained their full-time positions only after the latest hiring crunch. Additionally, we’ve asked faculty members both at the Graduate Center and elsewhere who have very recently served on search committees to share their thoughts on what makes a successful and impressive candidate NOW. In some cases, we note, these are the same people, which ought to give you confidence! We hope that their experiences will help you to manage your own time on the market fruitfully and efficiently. At the same time, we also want this collection to convey how the job market becomes a shared history for academics. After all, whatever our disparate fields, we will have this experience in common with each other. Therefore, as you go through this process, remember that you are not alone. Along with your own personal support-system, you will also have the help of the English Program, which has a dedicated administrative position whose primary duties revolve around helping students with placement and negotiating the job market; the current DEO for Placement is Prof. Ammiel Alcalay; in addition there is a standing committee for placement.

In conceptualizing the job market, we found ourselves returning over and over to a single metaphor that we think may prove useful to you as well: online dating. From scrutinizing

the job calls for subtext, to wondering how much spin on your own documents is *too* much, to the anxiety about initiating contact, to the nervousness of an actual first meeting, there is a great deal of similarity in the effort to find a partner and to get a job, armed only with necessarily brief descriptive materials that need to be both accurate and attractive. In both cases there is a lot at stake (“your future!”) and in both cases it can be tough to remember that what you are looking for is a match. In other words, regardless of how much it might seem that you are trying to “win” the prize of a relationship or a job, in fact the selection must be mutual. Each party must be right for the other.

We’d like to thank our contributing writers: Ammiel Alcalay (*Queens College and The Graduate Center, CUNY*), Todd Barosky (*Saint Martin's University*), Louise Geddes (*Adelphi University*), Carrie Hintz (*Queens College and The Graduate Center, CUNY*), Steve Kruger (*Queens College and The Graduate Center, CUNY*), Elizabeth McCormick (*LaGuardia Community College, CUNY*), Tanya Pollard (*Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center, CUNY*), Carrie Shanafelt (*Grinnell College*), and others who wished to remain anonymous. We’re also grateful to Mario DiGangi, Ammiel Alcalay, Carrie Hintz, Nancy Silverman, and all the other English Program faculty and staff at the Graduate Center who devote their time to helping with placement and giving all anxious job-seekers such excellent support.

Emily Lauer, *Suffolk County Community College, SUNY*
Balaka Basu, *University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

WHERE TO APPLY

Part of looking for a good match is knowing the terminology. Here are some acronyms and designations you may encounter:

- VAP: Visiting Assistant Professor(ship). This is usually a full-time gig, but not tenure-track and it will generally have an expiration date. Some institutions get a VAP when a faculty member goes on maternity leave or sabbatical. That faculty member will return to the institution at the end of the designated contract for the VAP. Every now and then, through a wide array of different circumstances, a VAP can become a permanent position.
- Full-time renewable: The job is not tenure-track, but you will have a full teaching load, and probably institutional support for conference attendance, etc. Your position will be “renewed” after each year or so in the same way adjuncts get rehired semester by semester.
- TT: Tenure-track.
- Administrative: A job at a college or university that does not include teaching. This could be anything from a Dean to a project manager for a grant-funded initiative.

- Writing Center: A job coordinating or working in a tutoring center for college composition rather than teaching in a classroom. Consider this if you have worked in a writing center or had a WAC.
- Post-doctoral Fellowship: A full-time job with a specific end-point. At some institutions this can be like a VAP with a full-time teaching load and an expectation of committee work, but at others it may carry a light teaching load and a research expectation. Varies widely.
- Library: Some colleges and large research libraries hire English PhDs to run specific special collections or reading rooms. Consider this if you have done archival work.

There are also many different kinds of institutions that may advertise for any of the jobs above. Even if all these terms are familiar to you, think about which ones might be deal-breakers for the kind of career you'd like to have:

- Early College: A program for high-school aged students to take college courses. If you apply for a job at an early college, your students will be younger than standard college age.
- Two-year, junior, or community college: an institution that offers students an Associate's degree and encourages students to transfer to four-year institutions after they have completed the equivalent of Freshman and Sophomore years. The teaching load will probably be high and the publishing expectations may be comparatively low. Some two-year institutions may function as trade schools. Read the school's website carefully.
- SLAC, R1, or R2: Although these terms are technically outdated, people still use them. SLAC stands for a "Small Liberal Arts College" whereas R1 and R2 are designations for research intensive universities, with an R1 having a greater "intensity" of research than an R2. A university is an institution that has both graduate and undergraduate programs, whereas a college generally has only undergraduates. Note that these designations of "research intensity" are university wide, but not all departments or programs need participate at the same level. Likewise, the institution as a whole may be a "doctorate granting university" but the English program may only have a master's degree. You need to investigate the department to find out how they fit into the university or college as a whole. With a SLAC, you can expect the emphasis on teaching AND research to be very high; with an R1 and R2, the emphasis on research is likely to be higher. SLACs also tend to have smaller, more intimate academic communities as opposed to the larger ones at research institutions.

Every institution has a different culture and you should consider where you will feel comfortable (and which kind will feel comfortable employing you). Some indications of culture include:

- **Public vs. private:** Working at a public university can be different from a private one: as a professor at a public university or college, you are technically employed by the state or city government.
- **Urban vs. rural:** The implications of this choice are fairly self-explanatory, but consider where you want to live, where you would live if you had to, and where you absolutely could not survive. (Tip: do not apply for any jobs in the third category, because in the best case scenario—you get the job—you are now faced with an impossible quandary.) Note, however, that jobs at institutions with prime locations are always more competitive than jobs at potentially “better” institutions elsewhere. You may have more trouble getting a sub-standard job in New York, Boston, New Orleans, Chicago, or San Francisco than you would getting a far better job in St. Louis, MO, Buffalo, NY, or Brookings, SD. You need to weigh what is most important to you. Also remember that college towns tend to have their own particular character: while you might not think you would enjoy living in Ohio, you might still like living in Oberlin. Finally, none of this is fully real until it’s real—you might not think it possible to live in a particular place until you’ve actually gone there to see what it’s like. Try to keep an open mind as you “tier” your applications.
- **Religious affiliation:** Working for a religious institution carries its own unique demands, which ought to be considered while applying for jobs. Note that if the institution is religious, it will say so in the job ad, even if the name of the university or college doesn’t indicate its affiliation, as with the University of San Diego, which is Catholic. In the New York City area, religious institutions of higher learning include among many others Yeshiva University (Orthodox-Judaism), Fordham University (Jesuit), Manhattan College (Catholic), Union Theological Seminary (Christian). Each will have its own character.
- **Unions:** Is the faculty unionized? If so, how much power does the union have over things that will affect your life, including class size, teaching load, requirements for tenure and/or promotion, salary increases? If the faculty is not unionized, are there other safeguards in place to protect those things?
- **International:** It can be romantic to apply to a job abroad, but if offered the job would you really take it? What would it entail to move your life overseas? Recall that in order to employ foreign nationals, often institutions are required to provide documentation that “no other resident” could possibly perform the job, and thus are likely to consider their own citizens before foreigners. However, this is not always the case, especially with jobs, for instance, in the Gulf (Dubai, Qatar, Abu Dhabi etc.).

“RESEARCH” VS. “TEACHING”: CLOSE READING THE JOB AD

The ad itself can tell you a great deal about what the job will actually be like, although it takes some practice to be able to parse this message effectively. For instance, while most professorial jobs require both, you will probably be able to tell from the job advertisement if the emphasis will be on teaching or on research. The required teaching load and the references to publication are usually specific.

For example, this is a research job:

The University of Somewhere Department of English invites applications for an assistant professorship in the literature and culture of the long nineteenth century (British Romantic and/or Victorian). We expect to hire one candidate for either this assistant professorship or an associate professorship. For candidates applying to the Assistant Professor level, conferral of Ph.D. by June 30, 2013, is highly preferred, and Ph.D. degree must be conferred within one year of start date. Candidates for an assistant professorship are required to submit **a cover letter, CV, abstract of dissertation or book, and writing sample (25-35 pages)** online at the University of Somewhere's Academic Career Opportunities website, for Posting Number ###. In addition, three letters of recommendation must be submitted by referees or a dossier service to the department's chair by email to chair@somewhere.edu. Online applications must be completed before midnight Central Time on Sunday, November 4, 2012. Letters of recommendation must be received by Sunday, November 18, 2012.

Note the lack of reference to teaching materials (or indeed teaching at all) and the emphasis on publications and writing. Similar job ads might also have a reference to a low teaching load like 2/1, 2/2, or 3/2. While such an ad might mention “teaching excellence” as a qualification, it is clear from the materials requested that the search committee/department is far more interested in original research. In this example, the ad indicates that they wish to hire at the associate OR the assistant level, so it's a pretty safe bet that they want someone who has ALREADY published widely in the field and will continue to do so.

Alternatively, consider the following ad:

*The English Department at Redactedville College invites applications for the position of full-time tenure-track Assistant Professor of British Literature. A PhD in Victorian British literature is required, with secondary specialty in 19th-century American or 20th/21st-century British literature desirable. Candidates with strengths in the history of the English novel, women's writing, and/or transatlantic approaches, are particularly encouraged to apply. **Course load is 21 credits per year, with a mix of 3 and 4 credit courses. Class sizes typically range from 10 to 25. Advising, service to the college, and participation in the college's general education programs, as well as ongoing research and professional development in their field, are expected of all faculty. Fall 2013 is our anticipated***

*start date subject to pending budgetary approval. First-round interviews will be held at MLA. **Please incorporate into a single PDF a cover letter, CV, and statement of teaching philosophy,** and send the PDF to humanresources@rville.edu by November 1, 2012.*

Here, note the lack of reference to research materials (abstracts, writing sample, etc.). While “ongoing research” is mentioned, it is clearly secondary to the information regarding course load, class-size, and other teaching-oriented aspects. Although the same candidate would probably apply to both these jobs, the cover letters would need to be slanted accordingly. Also note that the second ad contains the line “pending budgetary approval.” The savvy close-reader knows that this means the job may or may not end up existing or, in the case of public universities, this could be a legal stipulation for the ad, giving the state a legal “out.”

Suppose your thesis was on Virginia Woolf, with one chapter on her reading of Renaissance texts, another on her readings of Romantic writers, and a third on her reading of the Victorians. Ought you to apply for these jobs? For Redactedville College, you’ve switched the desired primacy of fields around, with their desired secondary being your primary focus; for the University of Somewhere, you have chapters that deal with the long 19th century, but it’s not your main area. In both cases, you will have to spin quite a bit to tick their boxes, but that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t stretch. However only you can decide if it’s worth expending the time on “spin” when you are probably more likely to be competitive for jobs in Modernism. If you do decide to go for it, remember that you will be more successful if you have publications/teaching experience that will provide evidence of expertise in the field they want. You are presenting a picture of yourself as a scholar and you need this image to be representative of who you are as well as who you want to be for them. Suppose you, the Woolf-scholar, did end up getting this Victorian job: would you be happy working on Woolf only in the context of George Eliot for a while?

Remember to use all your formidable interpretive skills to parse the ad—keep in mind that most jobs pass through a set of Affirmative Action guidelines to maintain a level playing field. The search committee creates a grid that has to reflect their assessment of the candidate according to the criteria laid out in the ad. So, for example, “Ability to teach Early American, African-American and 19th c. American” is very different than “Ability to teach Early American, African-American or 19th c. American.” In the first case “and” means that the candidate must have strengths in all the areas; in the “or” scenario, the committee can choose which area to emphasize.

Here are some firsthand accounts from recent Graduate Center alumni about how they dealt with these kinds of questions when applying for jobs:

- ❖ *“I only applied to jobs in writing or Victorian studies that were in NYC or Long Island. There were a handful of jobs in writing (and exactly one Victorianist position), so I began to modify my goals. I had never thought about teaching writing or teaching at a two-year college (or a high school), but I was interested in pedagogy and had been teaching students to write all over CUNY for the six-*

years I was in the GC English program. Since I'd worked as a Writing Center Tutor and a WAC Fellow, I thought I could make a case for myself for rhet/comp jobs."

- ❖ *"So you find yourself finishing graduate school with no tenure-track job in sight, no particular geographical ties, and years of great teaching experience under your belt. It is time to consider applying for visiting assistant professor positions! VAPs can emerge for several different reasons. A crucial faculty member could be on leave from teaching for research, parenting, or administrative work. The department might be exploring the possibility of opening up a new position in that area of study. There could just be an uncommonly high number of students in a particular area for a short time. When you apply, you can't know which of these is the case, but you should enter the process under the assumption that a one-year position really is a one-year position [even if] sometimes there are opportunities to extend..."*
- ❖ *"There will be many jobs that you could perform, but given your dissertation, transcript and teaching record, you are unlikely to be considered to fill. On the other hand, there are positions for which you would be considered, but given the location and the nature of the job itself, you wouldn't want to fill them. In order to make the most of your limited time and energy, you need to have priorities. So stretch, but be self-aware. Pretending to be someone you're not is wasteful and exhausting, and to be rejected for a job you never expected to get, or getting a job that you never intended to accept, can both be painful in their own way."*
- ❖ *"I was on the job market two years and I got better at it as time went on. The first year, I applied to anything I thought I could do; the second year I looked very carefully at each job call and asked myself the question: Will the search committee think I am a good candidate for this job based on my paperwork? Would I be happy actually taking this job?"*

PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

It's common to advise treating a job search as though it was itself a job. It is certainly time-consuming and requires learning a variety of new skills, but it isn't really like the job you want. Instead, it may be useful to think of the job search as an apprenticeship – you will be jumping through hoops to prove you can do the job you'd like to really have.

The administrative parts of the job search are essential, and they have the potential to subsume all other parts. Basically, you need to develop and then stick with a system for (a) managing the materials you will need to gather and revise and (b) keeping track of what you've applied for when and what you'll need for the applications that are due next.

Learning the hiring year's rhythm is essential. In the past, this rhythm used to be more definite, with advertisements appearing in the early fall, deadlines for application materials in the late fall, interviews at MLA (then between Christmas and New Year's

Day, but now in the first weeks of January), campus interviews in the winter, and offers extended in the early spring. While traces of this schedule still remain, now advertisements appear throughout the year, and decisions are often made much later, with candidates often being hired only weeks or even days before the semester begins. Ads for the year may appear as early as July and August, with deadlines ranging from Sept. 15 through Dec. 15th. First round interviews for such ads may be arranged either at MLA, or by phone or Skype, anywhere from late November through February. From this first round, search committees will generally invite three candidates to campus for interviews in late winter/early spring, extending an offer to one as soon as all the visits have been completed. Because of this continuous calendar, the job search can take over your life. Professor Ammiel Alcalay recommends that you “consider carefully where you decide to put your efforts as you proceed: would it be wiser, for instance, to spend more time preparing an article for publication or finishing a chapter of your dissertation, rather than applying for every possible job? Especially if you are applying early, spending time working on a publication will make you a better candidate for a more realistic round of job applications than flinging yourself into the fray before you’re ready.”

The MLA Job Information List for the academic year is usually released in mid-September (usually the 14th or the 15th). You have institutional access to this list through the Graduate Center. However, ads may also be posted on the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, HigherEdjobs.com, InsideHigherEd, H-Net, Academic Careers Online, and HERC, as well as through departments, programs and on subject-specific listservs, associations, and websites. A good resource is the Academic Jobs Wiki (at http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/Academic_Jobs_Wiki), which is generally kept well updated. See for instance: http://academicjobs.wikia.com/wiki/English_Literature_2013 which has links to all sub-fields within English as well. There will be a similar entry for whatever year is current. You can use this wiki to hunt for ads and also to see if/when certain levels of responses (additional materials requested, interview scheduled, campus visit scheduled, offer extended, offer accepted, rejections sent) have occurred.

One route to consider is that of the “trial year.” In other words, the year before your dissertation is complete, do a trial run. Over the summer, scan the job ads and pick out a few to which you want to apply. Recognize that the days of getting hired without a degree in hand are mostly over; you are simply doing this to get your feet wet, without the expectation of getting hired or even getting interviews. (If you do get some bites, this is excellent! If not, don’t worry. Think of it like the PSATs vs. the SATs.) This “trial year” has the advantage of giving you an “extra” year to get your templates ready: the basic letters, statements, and other materials that you will adapt to suit specific job calls. You may even find that the process of assembling these templates will help you with finishing your dissertation or refining your teaching technique: as you codify the presentation of yourself as an academic, developing pithy, concise ways to communicate it to others, you may come to new realizations about the relevance and importance of your scholarly work. Then, after your dissertation is completed, you will meet the new hiring year with the bulk of the writing already accomplished, leaving you time to spend revising, honing, and fine-tuning your materials, making you a far more effective candidate.

This trial year also gives you time to learn the ins and outs of putting together a dossier on Interfolio.com, which most students at the Graduate Center use to send out their application materials. All your materials can be uploaded and then delivered either electronically or by post through the site, including letters of recommendation, which your recommenders will upload themselves. See <http://www.interfolio.com/services/dossier/>, <http://help.interfolio.com/categories/20058802-Dossier>, and <http://interfolio.zendesk.com/entries/21872162-delivery-pricing-and-shipping-options> for more information. Keep in mind that Interfolio is not an “instant” service; emailed deliveries made by 5pm will be sent that day, but other delivery options take longer, ranging from 1 business day to 14. It’s always best to allow yourself a few extra days before the deadline to submit your materials. If you’re applying through a university website’s electronic application, remember that a few hours before their deadline, the servers invariably become overloaded with many applications and you may have trouble uploading yours. Doing it earlier is better.

As you prepare for the market, be aware that your online footprint needs to be in keeping with the identity you are presenting to the search committee. It’s more and more likely that a search committee interested in your materials will spend a few minutes Googling you and seeing how you appear in the various social networks that make up such a large part of our existence these days. Spend some time examining your presence online and scrubbing it if there are parts you don’t necessarily want a hiring committee to see. Make blogs, Tumblrs, Twitter accounts and your Facebook profile private if necessary. Remember, on the other hand, that zero online presence also may not read well; consider creating a professional website, Facebook, and/or blog that you are willing to identify with your professional self.

Another important part of the planning and organization stage is keeping in touch. Read and contribute to the “Placement” listserv. Attend conferences and while you are there, seek out past and present colleagues and classmates. Speak of your own job search in an upbeat way. Offer congratulations for people’s achievements and put people in touch with each other when you think they have interests in common. Be a contributing part of the community you’d like to join permanently.

- ❖ *“My practical advice for graduate students entering the job market is this: stay organized. The process of applying for jobs is protracting and immensely tedious. It has a way of cannibalizing the time and energy you would otherwise devote to your graduate work, your ongoing scholarly activities, your teaching responsibilities, your professional commitments and your personal life. But the more organized you are, the most efficient you become. Efficiency not only helps you free up time in your tight schedule, but also makes you less susceptible to sloppy mistakes. Finally, organization gives you control, or at least the illusion of it; and this illusion can be the surest safeguard against a paralyzing despair.”*

- ❖ *“I organized my electronic and paper filing systems; familiarized myself with the ins and outs of Interfolio; created a spreadsheet of all my applications that listed contact information and requested materials; and drew up a calendar of the different deadlines and a weekly to-do list that reflected my priorities.”*
- ❖ *“I drafted rough templates of all the documents I would have to submit for each job category and university type. For instance, I had cover letters for different early-Americanist positions (pre-1800, pre-1865, nineteenth century, etc.) and had different statements of teaching philosophy for large diverse public and small religious private schools. Each job posting is unique and some are quite specialized, so it helped to have broad templates to work from as I tailored my documents to fit a given job description.”*
- ❖ *“I formatted all my documents in a similar fashion. This made them easier to keep track of and to edit, and it had the additional benefit that when submitted in an application they looked professional and holistic, as though they actually belonged together in one coherent package.”*

On timing:

- ❖ *“By December, I hadn’t heard from any of the six jobs to which I’d applied. I went to MLA to give a talk as scheduled with mixed feelings. On one hand, this small set back meant I would never get a job, ever. On the other hand, maybe I wouldn’t have to write that damn dissertation anyway. I heard that three of the job searches had been cancelled. I was not (yet) qualified for the competitive academic Victorian job. That left two positions. One was being held for an inside candidate.”*
- ❖ *“I made an excel spreadsheet to track deadlines and what materials would be required for each application, and then when I sent out the application. I was teaching four classes and had two other part time jobs, so I designated a few hours a week to reading job calls and then applying for jobs. I had to be organized about it because I didn’t have time to treat each application as unique.”*

WRITTEN MATERIALS

Examples of materials can be found at <http://gcenglish.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>

Have a master list of documents/templates you develop (i.e. cover letter for teaching-heavy two-year college job; cover letter for research-heavy four-year college job, teaching philosophy, statement on importance of diversity); that way you can modify from a template each time instead of recreating from scratch or modifying a version that has another institution’s name and specifics on it. And as one of our contributors noted, *“Tailor your letter appropriately, and don’t go for overkill.”* Remember that the search

committee will be reading hundreds of letters and clarity and briefness will thus serve you well.

You will be asked to produce some combination of the following materials:

Cover Letter. 1-3 pages. Some people suggest that this should never go into a third page; however, opinions vary. It should certainly NEVER exceed 3 pages. You can obtain electronic letterhead from the program office. Generally: spend one paragraph on your dissertation, one paragraph on your teaching experience, one paragraph on your future research, one paragraph on your academic service (this part tells them what work you, as a junior member of the department, will be able to take off their shoulders), and one paragraph on why you will be such a good fit for their department and institution. Obviously this rubric will vary widely for different jobs. What should not vary is that the letter ought to reflect you rather than some potentially impressive yet fictional other person. However Prof. Alcalay warns that “This can get tricky: you want to reveal who you are but within some limits. One of the rhetorical strategies of the cover letter is to make its readers want to find out more about you. Thus, you cannot possibly say everything about you, your research, or your teaching experience that needs to be said, and holding something back is often a good approach. In this light, often the most difficult section of the letter is the description of your dissertation. Keep in mind that committee members reading your letter will not necessarily be in your field or even know about some or many of the particulars your dissertation features. What you are trying to do in this section of the letter is translate the very specific research of your thesis into more ‘generalizable’ terms, whether disciplinary, historical, methodological etc. So you need to ‘place’ your work in a context that readers from many fields and sub-fields can recognize.” Also remember that a search committee is less interested in a laundry list of past accomplishments (which they will get from your CV anyway) and more interested in who you will be when you work with/for them. What will you be doing in the future as a scholar, teacher, and colleague? Sometimes faculty members of the program generously offer their time to vet your cover letter and CV. Use their feedback to revise.

CV. This will be tailored to suit each job. Remember to include a catalog of courses taught.

Writing sample(s). This could be an excerpt of your dissertation, or an already published piece, depending on what you are trying to highlight (i.e. a certain field of expertise, a prestigious publication venue, etc.) Page lengths requested generally fall between 10 and 30 pages. The greater the page length, the more research-heavy the position is likely to be. It is often best to choose what you think of as your finest piece of writing, even if it falls slightly off topic.

Teaching portfolio. This often includes some combination of the following: philosophy, diversity statement, faculty observations, student response forms, sample course outlines and assignments, and grading rubrics. A good way of approaching the teaching portfolio is to gather more material than anyone could reasonably want or read; once you have done that, organize it very well and provide a kind of cover page guide summarizing what is there and allowing committee members to peruse accordingly. You may also be asked to provide “proof of teaching excellence.” In addition to student evaluations, observation reports, and other materials, keep a record of student achievements, recommendation

letters you've written, any mentoring you've done, prizes your students may have won, graduate schools they've gone to, etc. Most other candidates will not have the extent of hands-on teaching experience that CUNY candidates have, so make sure to try and record the reach of that experience.

Research statement. This should include what future research you are planning to undertake, while under their institutional umbrella. This is the academic Twilight Zone and one of the most difficult spaces to project yourself into and inhabit. You've just finished or are struggling to finish your dissertation and are now being asked to conceptualize and present yourself as someone coming up for tenure. Ventriloquism doesn't work; you actually need to think about this.

Official Transcripts are available from the Registrar's Office; unofficial transcripts can simply be printed from StudentWeb, which you log into using your Banner ID.

Dissertation Abstract. If you have completed your dissertation, use the official abstract. If you have not yet completed your dissertation, you have the opportunity to tailor the description of your project to fit the specific job call. Be careful to "spin" rather than fabricate because fabrications in the abstract may lead to contradictions with your recommendation letters.

Recommendations. One recommendation will come from your dissertation supervisor. The other two could come from your dissertation committee members, or other professors you've worked with or written for. If you are likely to apply for teaching-heavy jobs, consider asking someone who has observed your teaching for a "Teaching" recommendation letter. Don't feel shy about approaching professors for recommendations, but remember to give them plenty of lead-time (at least three weeks), and to keep them aware of important deadlines. Three recommendations are usual, but you may request more for your dossier, so that you can send the most appropriate collection for each job call. However, Professor Steve Kruger advises, "if they specify only 3 [rather than a dossier], I'd send only 3 ... I'm a believer in reading the ads literally."

As you struggle to compile these sets of documents, each set only slightly different from the rest (but enough to add a not-so-slight amount of work), you might begin to wonder why you have to do this and if anyone is ever going to read it. According to Prof. Kruger, there is a good reason for hiring committees to require so many different materials: "We do read this stuff, and believe it or not, do it for all applications (whatever's been asked for has been decided to provide valuable information to the committee; the reason these aren't standardized, is, I guess, that there's not a discipline-wide consensus on how best to vet applications for hiring.) It's true that most schools use a rubric but the fact is that the hiring committee reads a bunch of stuff in order to be able to fill out the rubric in a responsible way." Prof. Alcalay adds, "In general, only send exactly what the ad asks for; in some cases, an application that does not include what is asked for or includes additional materials can be set aside and/or disqualified."

- ❖ *"The best advice I received while writing (and rewriting, and rewriting, and rewriting . . .) cover letters was that they should strive to be holistic. All cover letters are formulaic, but so are all sonnets. The goal is not to abide by the formula but to master it, to make it speak for you. Letters that possess a thematic*

unity make you seem like a living personality rather than a random assortment of disconnected functions. So think of the cover letter as an expression of who you are and not a record of what you have done. Try to articulate the values and interests that motivate your scholarship, teaching and service without being too gimmicky.”

- ❖ *“Don't cynically deride anything, not poststructuralism, not Harold Bloom, not F.O. Matthiessen, not Lady Gaga studies. Challenge or critique is fine, and even humor if you're good with it, but a top candidate killed his candidacy by being dismissive of Derrida. I think men especially need to watch out for sounding anxious and needing to know everything.”*
- ❖ *“I really resented writing all the material for the job search. It was a lot of work and it rarely yielded any feedback or fruit. In retrospect, however, a lot of the material I created for the job search has turned out to be useful. I reused some of the teaching statement material for a pedagogical panel at a conference; I now need to keep updating my CV annually for my promotion clock; and it turns out that writing those cover letters was good practice for filling out promotion forms.”*

THE INTERVIEW

The academic hiring process usually has two interview steps. First, you should expect to be interviewed by a group of faculty, probably all from the department you hope to join, but possibly some from other departments as well. Usually around ten candidates will make it to this stage, which is called the committee interview or the first round interview. Such an interview could be done via conference call, via Skype, at MLA, or if done off season and with local candidates, sometimes in person at the institution. If this interview is successful, you will receive a phone call or email inviting you to be interviewed by the Dean or to visit campus. Typically two or three candidates make it to this stage. If that interview is successful, you will receive a phone call or email offering you the job. (If the first choice turns down the job, usually it will be offered to the second choice. If no one that the search committee deems suitable accepts the job, it will be designated a “failed search” and may restart in the following year.) That’s the standard pattern, but honestly, sometimes there are additional steps. There might be a phone screening interview before the committee interview, for instance, and especially at small colleges, there might be an interview with the President before you are officially offered the job.

Before the interview: Take every available opportunity to practice. The English Department at the GC offers mock committee interviews. These are extremely helpful. Sign up for one. If your supervisor offers to provide another mock interview, do it. Ask friends to practice with you. The more comfortable you get with the format of the interview, the easier it will be to produce effective and appealing responses on the day.

On the day of the interview: Dress more formally than the job demands. A suit is standard, but one contributor cautions against looking like you belong on Wall Street

instead of at a University. Eat a good breakfast; check your teeth for spinach; pack a water bottle and a few extra copies of your CV and any materials you've been asked to bring. Read the news that morning—it may come up. You might also want to prepare additional materials—for instance, prepare a basic course outline or a sample assignment sheet for one of the bread and butter courses of the department, or print copies of the abstract for an article you just had accepted to a journal or something. Materials the committee can keep will help to make you memorable.

There's a good, short essay on Inside Higher Ed about the myth that job candidates should just be themselves during job interviews:

<http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2012/01/30/essay-why-candidates-academic-jobs-cant-just-be-themselves>

- ❖ *“I think formality, showing that you value the encounter, that you bothered to get something pressed, all make the interviewers feel like they also want to be fully present and return that effort, and so the interviewers will then be more attuned to what you have to share.”*
- ❖ *“I do not like wearing suits. They always make me feel as though I am dressing as a small-town lawyer. I therefore tried to approach finding a suit for interviews with two goals: convey my own personality as much as possible and convey as much respect for the interviewers as possible.”*

Of course every interview will be different, but here are some standard questions you should expect. You should practice answering these questions aloud before the interview.

What do you like about this college/university specifically?

Please explain your dissertation project.

Why is this project important? What made you pursue it?

What's your next writing project?

Where do you see yourself as a scholar in the next five years?

You make a bold claim in your cover letter when you say [bold claim]. Would you care to expand on that?

Do you know [person who taught at your undergraduate or graduate institution?]

I see from your CV you've had [some unusual job]. What was that like? How will it make you a better teacher here?

How do you deal with plagiarism?

What do you think is the most important thing that English professors do?

Describe something you enjoy about teaching.

What do you like least about teaching? What is your worst quality?

Describe a successful assignment.

How would you handle teaching [composition; graduate and undergraduates together; commuter students; adult students; etc.]?

Do you teach with a specific theoretical lens?

What do you think of [new development] in your field?

What is the relevance of your scholarship to the wider discipline of English literature?

Have you considered [theoretician/critic]’s usefulness to your work?

Do you have any questions for us?

- ❖ *“The best advice I received while preparing for interviews was that the simple questions are often the most difficult to answer. Chances are that as a result of the time you have spent writing cover letters, abstracts and other documents, you will be able to speak fluently about your scholarship, teaching and service. But the things you take for granted will be much harder to express concisely. Why did you become a scholar and a teacher in the first place? Why do you want this job, at this university? Why do you value an education in the liberal arts? These deceptively simple questions need short, simple answers that when written out could fit on the back of a note card. The more prepared you are, the more at your ease you will be, and the more self-assured and competent you will seem. Above all, strive to be concise.”*
- ❖ *“‘Fit’ matters. SO ridiculously much, whether people admit it or not. When it gets to the top one or two candidates, there’s barely any difference in the qualifications, so people go with the one they like. The search committee who hired me told me that was the ultimate deciding factor in my placement. The way to translate this into meaningful advice is to say relax. My department rejected a candidate who was “on” the whole time during the interview, on the grounds that everything they said turned into a story, and there was a concern that they couldn’t relax and go with the flow of the conversation in class. The guy who got the job sat at the department lunch and chatted about the Olympics for half an hour. You sell yourself as a teacher/scholar, but also as a colleague.”*
- ❖ *“Just remember that everyone wants you to do well. Unlike TT campus visits, VAP visits may only involve one candidate at a time, so they are in the mood to be wowed by you. It saves them a great deal of time, money, and heartache to hire the person who is in front of them. That isn’t an invitation to slack off--the interviews can still be extremely challenging and intense--but there’s no need for paranoia. If you get a chance to meet current students, ask them about their research, and talk about the kinds of projects your best students have done. Get them excited about taking your classes. The department has sent you their brightest majors, so talk to them the way you would talk to your favorite students. Ask them what they like best about their major and their school.”*
- ❖ *“I think the toughest interview questions are the negative ones – those about plagiarism, or what you find challenging, or how you deal with under-prepared students, why you have chosen against something, or why you stopped adjuncting at a particular college. I think it helps to anticipate these, and practice answers that move back toward being positive as quickly as possible.”*

- ❖ *“If a question seems antagonistic or hostile, sometimes it helps to reframe it (out loud, even) in a positive way, and then answer the reframed question. That way, you can keep the conversation on your terms and keep yourself sounding enthusiastic rather than defensive.”*

Some feedback from interviewers:

- ❖ *“When a genuine and intelligent conversation breaks out, that's great.”*
- ❖ *“Even if it's a specific position, I am impressed with people who know about more than one thing. Candidates that interrogate the boundaries of their fields are compelling to me as well.”*
- ❖ *“I was impressed with people who did some research about the department, knew the courses, and also thought about how their work converses with their future colleagues’.”*
- ❖ *“I think in the interview setting, the distinction between asking "what is expected of me and how can I be of use here?" vs. "what can I get out of this?" becomes more exaggerated. Okay questions: What are the tenure requirements? Is there support for untenured faculty in terms of funding, leave? I think it gets off-putting when it becomes a question of a candidate's specific circumstances. "I have taught for this many years and have this much stuff done..." - the committee can't answer the question, and while it's a reasonable question, in the interview it feels more selfish than it might be.”*
- ❖ *“The interviewee has to find a balance between being innovative and respectful of what is already there. People are looking for someone who can contribute, but if it isn't broke...”*
- ❖ *“The big thing I have heard repeatedly about why people don't get past the interview is dissertation burnout. I've heard committees reject people who either sound sick of their dissertation and/or don't have any plans beyond it. They are looking for someone who they believe can get tenure, so you need to have a secondary/alternative research plan in your back pocket.”*
- ❖ *“Our department asks us to meet with as many candidates as possible and solicits input. When I've met people who have given me things to look at - whether it's business cards at lunch, or a handout in their job talk - I generally remember them. I also tend to Google them when I get back to my office, which, in the case of our creative writer search last year, gave me access to their writing, and I was a little more vocal in one candidate's favor than I might otherwise have been.”*
- ❖ *“Although this is fairly basic and commonsensical, appealing traits are friendliness, informed enthusiasm about the particular job/college/university, and an ability to answer questions directly and concisely, rather than evading.”*

Having a very clear understanding of the primary argument and payoff of one's dissertation -- something that can be conveyed succinctly and persuasively -- is key, as is a clear explanation of what one brings to a department's teaching needs. Overconfidence and timidity can both be off-putting; the goal is to be comfortable, clear, and persuasive about what one brings to the table. To prepare, I recommend rereading one's own work and reflecting on how you can best distill what is distinctive about your own approaches, arguments, and experiences, and how you can use these to contribute to a department."

- ❖ *"If an institution prizes itself on a distinctive trait (e.g., high number of international students, high number of first generation college students), you might ask about the impact of this trait on classrooms and teaching. The warmest responses I've received were to the question, "What do you like best about working here?" It allowed potentially defensive members of struggling departments (and most academic departments have their struggles, one way or another) to pause and reflect on highlights, which lifted everyone's mood."*

Remember that there are some questions committee members and deans cannot legally ask you—questions of sexuality, marital status, whether or not you have children. They may hint at these and if you'd like to do so, you can drop in the information they can't ask about outright—refer to your husband's career, or your excitement about having a yard for your dog since you live alone, or that your daughter helped select the shirt you'd wear to the interview—they want to know, and if whatever you tell them will be a deal-breaker for them, the job probably isn't a good fit. That said, you are not expected to do this, and not doing so is unlikely to "count against" you.

Phone, Skype and other "tech" interviews: You may be asked to "meet" with the interviewing committee virtually. If that is the case, prepare as you would for any other interview, but also do some additional things: familiarize yourself with the tech involved, practice with a friend the day before and have a back-up plan in case the tech fails. For Skype interviews, carefully consider the background your committee will be viewing behind you. Also you may want to pre-write an email to send to the committee members about how you look forward to meeting them in some other way just in case their internet access blinks during a Skype interview or their conference call won't go through their firewall at the last minute.

- ❖ *"The one phone interview I had, I was rattled. I couldn't tell who was speaking, I had a hard time hearing and had to ask people to repeat themselves, and worst, I couldn't read any faces to see how my answers to their questions were going over. In retrospect, I bet they could hear the increasing panic and confusion in my voice. I was not called back to interview further at that institution. Scarred from that experience, when I had a Skype interview scheduled for another job, I made it a point to practice beforehand. I had my boyfriend Skype me from work a couple days in a row, and I tried setting up the computer camera with different backgrounds until I felt like I was presenting a professional-seeming visual. I also practiced the answers to questions I expected sitting in that position, looking at*

the computer camera. That interview went much better and I made it to the next round of (thankfully) in-person interviews.”

CAMPUS VISITS

After you've impressed the search committee in your first-round interview, the next step is being invited to campus. If you're a local, this process will be less complicated, but if you're applying to jobs farther from home, then you'll be doing a little traveling. One of the most daunting things about the campus visit is that it often takes place over two days, during which you'll be scheduled for several types of sessions. Some of these will seem social or otherwise "informal" but they are all really part of the interview process. A campus visit is actually a lot like attending a conference (with the same expectation of being constantly "on" or engaged), except here, the conference theme is you.

The institution will typically cover your expenses for the trip. You will likely make your own travel arrangements, for which you will be reimbursed (although you'll be expected to find the cheapest fares available). Hotel arrangements will either be booked for you by the department, or you will be reimbursed for them as with your travel. Remember to keep all your receipts as they are usually required.

When you arrive in town, you will usually be ferried to your hotel by a member of the search committee. In fact, get used to spending time with the search committee, because they will generally be the ones responsible for picking you up from the hotel and getting you to and from campus. These moments of shared transportation are time for friendly chit-chat, but do not make the mistake of thinking that they are "off the record": everything that happens on the campus visit is part of the interview. The committee is already impressed with your materials or they wouldn't have invited you to campus in the first place; now, they are trying to imagine what it would be like to have you in the office down the hall.

A campus visit often includes some combination of the following:

Job talk: This presentation of your research can range anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour. It may be an informal extemporaneous roundtable type setting or you may be asked to speak for forty-five minutes as if you are the keynote speaker at a conference. When the visit is arranged, you will be told for how long you should plan to speak and what the format should be. Whatever the length, practice your job talk as much as possible. If you're given the opportunity to do a mock job talk in any venue, take it. Be sure to stay within the given time limit. Remember that technology is frequently unreliable and have a "plan b" available that doesn't rely on equipment working properly. Keep in mind that many different constituencies will come to your job talk. Try to be as inclusive as possible, inviting people into the conversation. Take ALL questions seriously, no matter how off the wall or even antagonistic they might seem.

Sample class/teaching demonstration: Sample classes are artificial by their very nature although some formats are more so than others. Sometimes the search committee or other volunteer faculty members will pretend to be a class; sometimes volunteer students will

pretend to be a class; and sometimes, you will be asked simply to step in during an actual class and teach it. In any event, come prepared with physical materials and as with the job talk, recall that technology may or may not function and having a back-up plan is an excellent idea. Vary your delivery: don't lecture in a sustained fashion for the whole time; show as well how you will make the class interactive. It's a good idea to teach material that you have already used in a classroom; this is not a great moment for first-time experiments. Prepare for this demonstration more thoroughly than you would for an actual class.

Second interview with the search committee: This is an opportunity for the committee to go more in depth than they were able to during the time frame of the first round. This is also a good time for you to show familiarity with the goals and curriculum of the department.

Interview with the Chair of the department: All the previously stated advice regarding interviews in the previous section applies to this one as well.

Dean's interview: The Dean's interview will be smaller and therefore may feel less formal than the committee interview. Know the institutional goals of the college (mission statement, etc.) before the meeting. Deans may ask you questions concerning the administrative side of college life. They may be interested in pursuing a new kind of initiative such as online courses or a new program within a department. They want to know how you are going to fit into this plan. They are the ones who will technically be hiring you, although the committee recommendation and the chair's recommendation will naturally carry great weight. Thus, you want to think about institution-wide goals and how you might fit into them successfully. Keep in mind that one of the bottom-line functions of an interview with the Dean is to verify a search committee's recommendation and ascertain whether you, the candidate before them, will be tenurable. Thus, future research often comes up as a topic.

Meet and greet with faculty and students: Again, this is an opportunity for you to showcase not just your scholarly accomplishments, but your ability to be a pleasant and appealing colleague.

Tour of campus/facilities. Ideally, you will have researched the campus so that you can actually request to see certain things. This makes you look well-informed and really interested in the institution.

Tour of the area: Members of the search committee may take you for a tour around the area so you can see your prospective new home. They'll want to make it appear attractive to you and it's an opportunity for you to begin to get to know the area.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner: During the campus visit, you'll be eating meals with members of the faculty. (They will pay.) Again, this is a social occasion, but don't take that to mean that you're "off duty." These meals are as important, and sometimes even more so, than formal interviews. If you're wondering about whether to order alcohol with dinner, try to follow the party line: if everyone's having a glass of wine or a beer and you want one, go ahead. Stop at one though; this isn't a good time to get drunk. If you're asked to order first, you can always say, "I'll start with soda/water/tea for now," which gives you room to change your mind later. You may be asked if you have any dietary restrictions; if you're not asked and these restrictions are medical or religious, feel free to mention them in the planning stage. However, if you are a vegan and you end up being

taken to a steak-house, we suggest that this may be the time to order a salad and a baked potato. It's definitely not the time to educate people about factory farming.

- ❖ *“The best advice I received while preparing for my campus visit was that when drafting a job talk or drawing up a sample class make sure to go with something that you're comfortable with, preferably a paper that you've given at a conference or a lesson that you've taught before. As with your interviews, the campus visit is as much a test of your personality as your erudition. So resist the temptation to be overly ambitious and teach or talk about a subject you are just beginning to study because you think your audience will find it impressive. Ignorance is always petulant and defensive, especially when challenged.”*
- ❖ *“During a campus visit, it is especially important to be honest. If you have not defended your dissertation, give the administrator who interviews you a (true) time to degree. Because the VAP market is so late in the year and the interview process is so fast, the department and the administration are trying to find someone who has a plan for making it work. You should ask questions about moving benefits and housing; it shows that you're serious about accepting an offer. Meet the academic support staff, remember their names, and thank them profusely. If you get the job, good relationships with admin and staff will be at least as important as relationships with the other faculty in your department.”*
- ❖ *“You will be asked to give some kind of research talk. At one college, I was asked to speak informally to faculty (no students) about my research for 15 minutes and then respond to 45 minutes of questions. At another, I was asked to give a 45-minute talk for faculty and students followed by 15 minutes of questions. Take their instructions seriously. In the former situation, I was insanely nervous and wrote out notes on the train, but realized when I got there that they would not be impressed by me peeking at my notebook, so I did it off the cuff. That school was more interested in hearing about smart ideas than in slick presentation. At the "talk" college, I realized they were interested in a good presentation more than my most intellectually complex material, so I chose something that addressed a book people know from a new critical angle, with a few funny parts and not too much inside baseball from my field. At both schools, the committee really had read my writing sample and were prepared with interesting, intellectually engaged questions that were fun to answer.”*

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

After your committee interview, write a thank you letter. This can be emailed. You can address it to the chair of the committee “and committee.” Mention things that you found interesting that people on the committee said and mention ideas you've had since the interview based on those things. Do the same after a Dean's interview. After a campus visit, you may wish to be more formal and send something through the mail instead of emailing it. You may also wish to send individual notes instead of a general one.

Regardless of how well the interview went, prepare what you would like to say if you are called for the next round of interviews or offered a job. It is entirely reasonable to say thank you, acknowledge that you are thrilled to hear it and say you need to get back to them because you are waiting to hear from other institutions. Find out what their timeline for a decision is. Prepare arguments justifying a higher salary too. If you are offered a job there is no reason not to suggest a higher salary. They won't rescind the job offer.

- ❖ *“You want to have good relationships on campus when you show up, so ask for what you want, but unless you really are thinking about rejecting the offer, don't screw with people unnecessarily.”*
- ❖ *“I kept a record on my spreadsheet of all the jobs I applied to and sent out follow-up emails, thank-you notes, and the like at appropriate times. Mostly I received no response, but occasionally I would exchange emails with the hiring committee. In one case a thank-you note was referenced as one of the reasons I received an additional interview. Hiring committees want to know that you are interested, and anything you can do to humanize yourself makes you stand out from the rest of the applicants.”*

EMOTIONAL IMPACT

The job market is grueling. We hope that this guide helps and commiserates, but it would be disingenuous to claim that applying to jobs will be fun. Perhaps it is for some; unfortunately, we doubt it. There are, however, ways to make your experiences on the job market more enjoyable and more fruitful than they would be otherwise. For one thing, you are creating a massive body of materials. This is a good time to keep your eye on pedagogical CFPs for conferences and journals—if you can use some of the materials you are producing, it will help you feel that the actions are worthwhile.

As Professor Carrie Hintz counsels: “The best advice I can offer regarding the job search is to simply try to be the best version of yourself you can be, and try not to second guess the job committee. Pursue your scholarly project ardently throughout your graduate career. Try to connect to a broad network of fellow scholars and teachers, and try to publish in the best journals you can. Everyone who has ever been on the faculty side of a job search will tell you that they often play out in unexpected ways—the mysteries of “fit” cannot be anticipated or planned for. Get plenty of practice talking about your work to non-academic and academic audiences alike (do three or four mock interviews, not just one). The people in the interview room or audience are hoping to meet a young colleague who will enhance life in their program, contribute productively to the world of scholarship, and inspire their students—have faith in your ability to be that colleague.”

To sum up, we suggest the following: first, cut yourself some emotional slack. You are looking for a career, a home, and a “match” all at once—it is reasonable to be freaked out about it. Secondly, subscribe to and read the emails from the Placement list on the GC listserv. Faculty, students and alumni all weigh in on issues that pertain to your search, so

this listserv has the dual benefits of providing excellent information and a support community. Thirdly, and probably most difficult-ly, know that the feedback or lack of feedback you get on your job application materials does not reflect your worth as a person.

- ❖ *“To be perfectly honest, I am still trying to comprehend the emotional impact this experience had on me. It was without doubt the busiest and most stressful time of my life, and probably the most humiliating too. I imagine I am not unique among graduate students in that I have always felt personally invested in my work as a scholar and a teacher; and so the repeated rejections, and the fact that the vast majority of my applications went unacknowledged, struck me as an affront to my personal dignity. Although introverted by nature, I have never really been anxious or insecure. But after a few months on the job market I suffered from an almost debilitating lack of confidence that infected every part of my life. I was halting and timid when teaching classes I had taught successfully for three or four years running. I was hypercritical of common student errors and predictable student ignorance. I was unable to read for pleasure because it seemed unproductive. I was unable to believe that anything I could write would find, or even warrant, an audience, and so I stopped researching and writing altogether. I felt shy and embarrassed around colleagues and even grew awkward and angry with family and friends.”*

- ❖ *“Ultimately I distanced myself from my work, which I could no longer consider as an extension of my values and my individuality, or as the primary site of personal pleasure and self-validation. This, I gather, is something like what’s signified by the word “professionalization.” And one of the most important things I learned from my experience on the job market is that the longer a graduate student puts off professionalization, as I for different reasons did, the more painful it will be when it becomes necessary. Professionalization was for me a peculiar form of maturation. Being on the job market was emotionally bruising—all applicants are each unhappy in their own way—but it also helped me achieve a certain clarity. Forced in innumerable cover letters and abstracts to explain my work to strangers who would judge it without knowing me, I eventually came to recognize its substance, significance, and its limitations. If in my new position I still lack my former confidence, if I still find myself disillusioned in some respects, I am much more self-aware and psychologically secured against professional disappointment.”*

- ❖ *“I think it helps to develop a couple stock answers for when people ask how the job search is going. I developed one answer for academics and another for non-academics (including extended family) and trotted them out on a nigh-weekly basis for the duration of my job search. My stock answer to academics involved asking them about their own work to turn the topic more positive as soon as possible.”*

- ❖ *“I don’t know anyone who has gotten the first job he or she applied for. Everyone is unsuccessful on the job market before they are successful.”*
- ❖ *“Being on the market is stressful and depressing. The intense work, the lack of feedback, and the knowledge that silence meant rejection all combined to make me question my life choices and my worth as a person. I think people in academia now realize this is what happens, but one still must behave competently, efficiently, and productively while suffering in these ways in order to eventually get out of the job market. Maybe in some ways that makes it like residency for medical doctors – if they can survive that, they can do anything associated with actually being a doctor.”*
- ❖ *“One final word about the emotional impact of the job search. During my two years on the market I often considered the possibility that I would not find a job. Now I am not so naïve to think that banishing such a thought, impossible in any case, will prevent it from coming true, or that positive thinking always engenders positive results. But while being optimistic isn’t sufficient, it certainly is necessary. If at any stage in the process you can’t imagine yourself succeeding then you won’t. In retrospect I realize that I was far too insular, that I indulged myself in fantasies of self-sufficiency and was reluctant to share my misgivings even with those closest to me, probably because I was afraid to be looked upon as a failure. I did not seek out encouragement when I needed it most. And this is my last bit of advice: keep encouraged.”*