# 2020 NATIONAL POSTDOC APPRECIATION WEEK

WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

### **Applying for a Faculty Position**

Speakers share valuable tips from their vast experiences as department Chairs and mentors of postdocs and students

- Dr. Mike Lehman, Director Brain Health Research Institute, Kent State University
  - Served as Chair hiring faculty in several medical school-universities in neurobiology, cell biology, cancer biology and anatomy
- Dr. Maria Zaragoza, Chair of Psychological sciences
  Kent State University
  - Chair hiring faculty in a teaching- and researchfocused university

### OFFICE OF POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

- https://www.kent.edu/cas/office-postdoctoral-studies
- Contact us any time at <u>icoolen@kent.edu</u> to review your
  - CV or resume
  - research statement
  - teaching portfolio
  - Research talk
  - chalk talk



### Applying for a faculty position

Michael Lehman, Ph.D.

Director, BHRI

Professor, Dept. Biological Sciences



### **SEARCHING FOR FACULTY POSITIONS**







### THE FACULTY SEARCH PROCESS

- A search committee is comprised
- Determine features of the "ideal" candidate
- Ad is posted: Science Careers, ResearchGate, LinkedIn
- Planned vs. opportunistic recruiting
- Cull applicants to a "short list"
- Inviting the candidates







#### CVS FOR FACULTY POSITIONS

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- CVs should be constructed appropriately for the type of position being applied for, research-intensive, teaching or both
- For both:
  - Education
  - Past and current positions
  - Teaching/research experience
  - Honors, awards, current and/or past grant support
  - Publications (papers, chapters, abstracts)
  - References
- For research positions: statement of current interests and plans (e.g., specific aims for first grant submission)
- For educator positions: teaching dossier, teaching philosophy



#### **COVER LETTERS FOR FACULTY POSITIONS**



- Introduce yourself and your relevant history
- Be concise and to the point, not more than 2 pages
- Address required and preferred qualifications for the position, as described in the advertisement
- Be professional, but also don't be afraid to emphasize your strengths as a candidate
- Check spelling and grammar
- Make sure you are applying for correct job!



# YOU'RE INVITED TO INTERVIEW! WHAT TO DO BEFOREHAND



- Do your homework:
  - Learn about the department/university
  - Reread the job description
  - Familiarize yourself with the research/background of each person you will meet with
- Go over your CV and any other materials you've sent
- Think about your abilities, strengths and experience
  - be prepared to give a "5 minute elevator talk" about your research



### THE INTERVIEW!

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- Usually a two-day visit
- Individual meetings with members of search committee and other faculty
- Meetings with extra-departmental faculty and administrators
- Tour of department/facilities
- Research seminar
- "Chalk talk"
- Lunch meeting with students and trainees
- Breakfast/dinner with faculty
- Exit interview with Chair



### WHAT TO EXPECT

### The department wants to find out:

- What you can bring to them
- Why you want to work with them
- What you will be like as a potential colleague



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#### You want to find out:

- What the specific responsibilities of the job are
- What resources you'll have in order to do your job
- How and when your performance is evaluated



### **HOW TO BEHAVE ON THE INTERVIEW (DO'S)**

- Dress as a professional (and visit your dry cleaner)
- Try to establish a rapport with each person you meet
- Prepare at least one or two questions for each person
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand a question do not guess
- Be honest and genuine!







### HOW TO BEHAVE ON THE INTERVIEW (DON'TS)



- Avoid being negative or saying negative things about your current job, supervisor, etc.
- Don't bring up salary
- Don't be annoyed if an interviewer is interrupted by a colleague or a phone call
- Respond to any illegal/inappropriate questions without getting angry





### PREPARING FOR THE JOB TALK

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- Practice, practice, practice!
- Keep research seminar focused on your own work, not that of others
- For chalk talk, be prepared to think on your feet and informally discuss your research and grant plans
- In Q&A:
  - Stay calm and focused
  - Respond as best you can to unclear questions
  - Respond to criticism with a positive attitude



### WHAT TO DO AFTERWARD

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- If interested in the position, express your enthusiasm at exit interview and ask what the next steps will be
- Write a thank you email
- Jot down notes on your impressions, positive and negative
- Pay attention to your gut reactions
  - Does it seem like a place you'd like to work?
  - Do people seem to enjoy their work and their colleagues?
  - Is the Chair someone you feel will provide the long-term support necessary for your success?



#### FINAL THOUGHTS AND TIPS

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- Prepare CV and cover letter far ahead of time
  - Update regularly
  - Have others read
  - Tailor CV and cover letter to best highlight the skills required for the position
- Apply to and interview for many positions, not just the "perfect" one
- Always follow up after applying and interviewing
- Learn from each experience





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Thanks you

Feel free to contact me: lehman@kent.edu





### Where to apply?

- WHAT type of job? What balance of research, teaching and practice is best fit?
   Discuss with faculty who know you best
- WHERE? Keep an open mind don't let geographic/lifestyle preferences rule out otherwise excellent jobs
- YOUR FIT w/ JOB DESCRIPTION
  - For positions you're excited about cover letter should make clear how your interests and goals are a good fit. Share with letter writers

# CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIRABLE CANDIDATES

Independent

Self-starter

Self-organized

### THE APPLICATION

- CV: Show to others for feedback; show work in progress
- Cover letter (no more than 2 pages)
- Research Statement Open with clear statement of your problem; should include future directions (5-year?)
- Teaching Statement Philosophy, experience and interests + evals (if positive)
- References: Need to have letters that document both your graduate career and your postdoctoral career (mix of letters from both expected)
  - Stay in touch with dissertation advisor and keep them posted on postdoctoral progress;
     help references write best letter possible

### YOU'VE MADE THE LONG-SHORT LIST!!

# THE INTERVIEW BEGINS WITH THE PHONE CALL

- Do your homework:
  - Learn about the department/university
  - Familiarize yourself with the research/background of each person you will speak
  - Reread the job description
    - Think about how your abilities, strengths and experience fit with the job
    - What new strengths/skills do you bring? (research, curriculum, service)
- Go over your CV and any other materials you've sent
  - be prepared to give a "5 minute elevator talk" about your research
  - Be prepared to talk about where you're going next (direction, grant proposal, etc)

## THE INTERVIEW

BE PREPARED!



### **IMPORTANT**

- Take a deep breath and congratulate yourself. Academic positions are highly competitive and getting invited to interview is a major accomplishment.
- Most candidates I've interviewed for faculty positions are highly accomplished and wonderful people who would make a great addition to the faculty.
- The person we choose is typically the one who is the best fit.

### BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Find out who you will be meeting with and who makes hiring decision (Search committee? Area? Entire department? Students?)
- What kind of talk do they want you to give? (research talk or class lecture?)
- You may or may not get a schedule well ahead of time

### PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Do your homework:
  - Learn about the department/university
  - Reread the job description
  - Familiarize yourself with the research/background of each person you will meet with
  - Come with questions!
- Go over your CV and any other materials you've sent
- Think about your abilities, strengths and experience
  - be prepared to give a "5 minute elevator talk" about your research

### THE INTERVIEW

- Usually a two-day visit
- Individual meetings with members of search committee and other faculty
- Meetings with extra-departmental faculty and administrators
- Tour of department/facilities
- Research seminar job talk
- Lunch meeting with students and trainees
- Breakfast/dinner with faculty
- Exit interview with Chair know what you will need to do your work

### WHAT TO EXPECT

### The department wants to find out:

- What you can bring to them
- Why you want to work with them/ your interest in the position
- What you will be like as a potential colleague

#### You want to find out:

- What the specific responsibilities of the job are research expectations, teaching load/specific courses; mix of grad/undergrad; # of supervisees; service expectations
- What resources you'll have in order to do your job start up, space, release time
- How and when your performance is evaluated promotion & tenure policy

# THE TALK THAT (POSSIBLY) GETS OR LOSES THE JOB

- Know who the audience will be. Faculty in your area or the whole department? Graduate students? Undergraduate students?
  - Provide context and avoid jargon/overly technical material
- Get it done early and PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
- GET FEEDBACK from more than one person/group
- Tell a story with completed work and be sure to end with future directions/plan

FINAL
THOUGHTS ON
THE
INTERVIEW

BE YOURSELF!!



### **QUESTIONS?**

Feel free to contact me:

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Maria S. Zaragoza, PhD.

Professor and Chair



**GOOD LUCK!**