How to get a job at a small liberal arts college... and what its like to work there.
Research Universities

- Expect strong, ongoing research program.
- Require good teaching. Between 2-6 courses a year.
Elite Liberal Arts Colleges

- Expect strong, ongoing research program.
- Require good teaching. Between 2-6 courses a year.

Sounds the same but there are differences.
Liberal Arts Colleges

- Teaching comes first.
  - Classes are usually small.
  - May expect nontraditional teaching. (Group work, project based, learner centered...)
  - Office hours can be crucial. “Open door” policy.
  - The students have different expectations of you. (And so does the Institution.)
Teaching happens outside the classroom.

“Faculty are expected to contribute to the student learning beyond regular courses.”

- Research with students.
- Special Studies.
- Programs for students from under-represented groups.
Contribute to the department and college

- Help with curriculum decisions.
- Department organization: library, lectures, etc.
- Advising.
- College Committees.
Research at a Liberal Arts College

- Still expected.
- Quantity inversely proportional to amount of teaching required.
- What “counts” can vary. (Research with undergraduate students for example.)
Examples

Smith College (and Amherst, Swarthmore, Harvey Mudd Pomona....)

- 2-2 teaching load.
- Excellent and creative teachers
- Committed to educating undergraduates.
- Excellent research. Most faculty are considered significant scholars.
Examples

The other end.

- 4-4 teaching load.
- Dedicated teachers
- Most teaching at the service level (calc and below).
- Some continued scholarly activity.
Who we (elite small colleges) hire for what.

- For tenure track positions we usually hire people who have had a postdoc.

- For non-tenure track positions we are most concerned with teaching, but we still prefer strong research. Many people have had a first job with us and then go on to tenure track jobs at other liberal arts colleges.
The Cover Letter

This is KEY for many liberal arts colleges.

- Let them know you understand what the position entails and you are very interested in such a position.

In contrast, some research department search committees don’t really read the cover letter. (But better safe then sorry.)
The Teaching Statement

“Teaching is a rewarding part of being a professor.”
not so useful.

Instead...

• Explain why you like to teach.
• Explain some of your philosophy. (Its okay to still be figuring it out.)
• Be unique – but not too quirky.
• Be concrete.
• You can NOT please everyone. — That’s life.
Research Statement

- Still need to discuss your key research.
- Make the first paragraph or 2 interesting and accessible to any mathematician.
- Include plans for the future - especially those that show your independence.
The written application

Key is to show:

• You know what kind of position this is.
• It's what you want.
• You have some experience to show evidence of your interest.
• And you’re great at both research and teaching.
Remember Employers know how to use the web too.

Facebook twitter personal webpages...
Letters of recommendation
Letters of recommendation

- At least one about teaching (should not be same as research reference).
- People who know you well.
- People who can be specific (have visited your classes).
- People who understand the American system.
The mini-interview

- Research the institution and the department.
- Be prepared to summarize all facets of your application.
- Try to relax!
On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely is it that this question is using binary?

\( \text{What's a 4?} \)
On campus

- You’ll meet many faculty. Singly and in small groups.
- You’ll meet an administrator. This is an opportunity to hear how the department is viewed at the college.
- You’ll meet students. This is an important part of the interview!

Be your professional self.
On campus talk

- You may give more than one!
- The research talk
- The teaching talk
The research talk

Motivating the Problem

\[(14.1) \text{ Find the interval of convergence for } \sum_{n=2}^{\infty} \frac{n(n-1)n!}{n^n} x^{n-2}.\]

\[\text{Hey! 14.1! You go girl!}\]

\[\text{MOTIVATING THE PROBLEM.}\]

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The research talk

- Motivate the problem.
- Give a context for your work.
- Remind them of definitions.
- But don’t be condescending.
- Your audience will catch on fast.
- Be sure to be clear about what’s your new work.

Some places won’t want this at all...
The teaching talk

- Several types possible.
- Give a math club talk.
- OR give any undergraduate class.
- OR give a specific undergraduate class.
Don’t forget that you are interviewing them too.
The job offer

A Little Support

\[ f(x) = 0 \quad \forall x \in X \]

"Can I get a little support here?"

No!

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The job offer

- You can sometimes get more: salary, startup funds, moving allowance. longer contract etc.
- This is the best time to ask for things, but don’t be too greedy. Find out who you’re negotiating with.
- If its tenure track, it can be worth goes back to visit.
Thanks to Cartoonists:

- www.twistedpencil.com
- www.brownsharpie.courtneygibbons.org
- www.xkcd.com
- www.phdcomics.com

Good luck!!