

THE B & B PRIMER ON FIRST JOB HAGGLING  
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## **I. General Comments**

We have listed below as many items as we could think of that you should consider when interviewing for a faculty position. You may not be in a position to worry about all of them, or to worry about them in the best of ways, if you are hard up for a job or they are very choosy. We present the rosy picture for the very wanted candidate; you decide how strong you are so you won't ask for too much and overstate your case. If in doubt, ask your peers here how they think you stand. We can provide examples of several candidates who were eliminated from consideration for positions because they either demanded too much initially, or were too inflexible in their demands, or both. In fact, it's probable that many of us owe our positions to such unconscious assistance by other candidates. At the end is a checklist to sneak into your job lecture notes.

## **II. Your Image**

By image, we don't mean to dwell on appearance, although it seems a fact that laboratory-oriented biologists are much more picky about how one looks than are field-oriented biologists and you should present yourself accordingly depending upon the department in which you are interviewing. If you are applying as an ecologist, for example, to a department of zoology or biology which is peopled by a broad range of faculty research interests, remember that the final vote determining the successful candidate will probably be solicited from everybody. Therefore, be prepared to discuss the broad implications of your research, and your teaching capabilities outside of the narrow confines of your research. Be especially well prepared to talk about your long-term research plans as possibly influenced by the environment in the area in which you are applying. Also be able to consider possible cooperative research efforts with faculty already on board. Finally, be able to answer the question "What do you really want to teach?" You would be surprised at the number of newly-minted Ph.D.'s who have been so immersed in their research that they haven't thought about future teaching responsibilities.

If you are coming across more than two time zones for an interview, or more than a few hundred miles north or south, you need to prepare. Jet lag can lead to a poor interview. Your seminar may go well, but you'll fade fast at times when you need to be alert, convivial, and collegial. If you have friends in the same time zone, visit them for a day or two before the interview. Keep track of the weather at your destination; it's grim to be dressed for weather that is 20°F warmer or cooler than you expect.

## **III. Interviews With Faculty and Administrators**

If you are interviewing in a large department, you may meet the faculty and/or administrators in groups. In smaller departments or schools, you may meet with them individually. In either case, try to consider yourself involved in a highly sophisticated, challenging and entertaining game. You, as the interviewee, are interested in selling yourself, but you are also interested in finding out whether or not you want to be bought by this particular buyer. The interviewer also has a double agenda: to find out whether or not you have the potential of becoming a valued colleague, and to

do a credible p.r. job for the institution and department. Come armed. When you are invited for the interview, request a list of the faculty in the department and their research interests, and copies of the undergraduate and graduate catalogs of the school. Then study! During the interviews, you will know ahead of time who does what and can slant your comments and responses to questions to the audience. They will be impressed at your preparation and interest. If you find yourself in an awkward spot, such as talking with a microvascular physiologist when you don't know a damn thing about microvascular physiology, turn the tables. Ask the physiologist about his or her research and about how he or she feels about departmental and university support for his or her research. They will be flattered that you are interested and more than willing to talk about themselves. You'll probably only have a half-hour or so with each member of the faculty (in a two day interview schedule), and in most cases you can blow that by getting the faculty member to talk about himself or herself. Listen carefully! Does the faculty member seem happy in the departmental environment? Does he or she belittle colleagues? If so, do the belittled ones belong to any particular group or sub-discipline? If you're talking to a dean, take the same tack. Try to gauge how the administration rates the department in which you are interviewing.

#### **IV. Seminar Presentations**

Many a job has been lost because of a sloppy seminar presentation. Plan your seminar carefully. Practice it before some of your peers and maybe your major professor. Make certain that your illustrative material is high quality. There is no excuse for slides too faded to see, slides so full of figures that no one can immediately judge the significance of what they see, slides consisting of huge tables with tiny numbers and legends, etc. The tables you used in your dissertation may be fine for publication, but they may be a disaster if used in a seminar. If you plan to use a slide more than once, have copies inserted into the series, don't flip back and forth through slides you don't want to repeat. Work up good summary slides, and slides which state your major points. These will help you rely less on notes and make it easier to follow what you're trying to get across. Don't leave a slide on for a long period of time while you give introductory material for the next one. You can avoid this by inserting some black slides at critical points. Watch the time! You can overdo a good thing and bore your audience, which likely will include faculty far removed from your research area. They will probably be using the seminar to judge both your research expertise and your teaching abilities. Don't be afraid to use a microphone if you need one and it is available. Don't get upset by questions out of the darkness in the midst of a critical part of your presentation. Above all, don't let on that someone asked a really stupid question! Try to strike a balance between an informal "between me and you" presentation and a stiff, super formal performance, even if you are super formal or informal and can't help it! Be wary of attempts at humor unless you are a real comedian and can bring it off without looking like a fool! You'll never know whether they're laughing at you or with you, and at worst they might not laugh at all! State clearly at the beginning the purpose of your research (null hypotheses, etc.) and summarize thoroughly but briefly. In other words, follow the old advise to tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them. Work up a good conclusion so you don't have to just stop abruptly with "Any questions?" Don't show a beautiful sunset as your last slide even if you have a really good one to show. Just emphasize the key points and summarize with a good slide. Remember, your seminar presentation may be the only contact with some faculty you will get, and they may all have votes.

Finally, if the position for which you are interviewing calls for a population geneticist, for God's sake give your seminar on population genetics! We have seen candidates drop out of contention on the basis of inappropriate seminar topics.

## V. Salary

- A. *Experience*.-- You might get an interview at a small teaching institution without post doctoral experience, but even that is less likely these days. You will be much more marketable with such experience, and you may not get an interview until you have had two post docs of at least a year each (some position announcements indicate a requirement for at least three years of post doctoral experience). A one year post doc is kind of useless anyway, because one year is insufficient time to move, conduct a research project, and publish your dissertation. Your post doctoral experience should not simply be more of the same project that constituted your doctoral research. The idea is to add breadth. Most places will equate teaching experience at another institution with post doctoral experience, but you will often be much more marketable having had a formal research post doc than if you spend time at a second rate institution where you are so bogged down with teaching that you barely have time to get your dissertation in shape for publication. In fact, most people who have been interviewed at major research universities over the past five years have had at least one source of major funding which they acquired through their own efforts: e.g., post doctoral fellowships from NSF, NIH, NATO, or NSERC, or a real grant from NSF or NIH.
- B. *Region*.-- Absolute salary levels should be tempered by regional cost of living considerations. Just because one place offers you more money does not mean that you will do better there financially. Once they deduct university deductions (insurance, etc.) and you pay for housing and buy food, you may have less money in the end at the higher salary place. Get a newspaper while there and check cost of buying houses or renting (and see IVC, below). Check the markets to see how much food costs. \$28,000 a year might be great in Des Moines, but it won't go far in New York City. In fact, salaries are usually higher in more expensive locations (except the Boston area where Harvard is rumored to keep salaries of junior faculty low because they figure they can attract good people anyway because of the "intellectual atmosphere" - which you can't eat; lesser universities in the area follow the leader in this). Thus, compare salary and cost of living. Check the AAUP publication on current salary scales.
- C. *Haggling*.-- Salaries for first teaching jobs with post doctoral experience range from the mid-20K range to the mid 30K range at non-professional universities, but there is a wide variance. This is a nine-month salary, but it is usually paid out over 12 months so you don't have to "save up" to survive the summer. If you have a grant, you can pay yourself 2/9 of your nine-month salary for the summer. If you are lucky enough to have several offers, you can haggle for more money. Usually you can't haggle unless you have this kind of leverage, but don't assume that the first offer you receive from an institution is their best offer. Find out what your friends are making in comparable positions and factor in their experience and the cost of living in their areas. Your future department chair or dean may already know this, but they'll start with an offer at the low end. Some universities have fixed pay scales for a given amount of experience and no haggling is allowed. At some California schools, you can haggle and get a salary above the average for your experience, but then you are passed up on subsequent promotions until your experience and salary are again commensurate with guidelines. You still get more money this way.

In expensive locations, you should find out if the university has a mortgage assistance program. A few percentage points on a mortgage may be worth thousands of dollars a year. Housing is, in fact, a major factor in cost of living differentials across the country. You could buy two or three nice houses in Tennessee for what one might cost in parts of the northeast or California. Moving expenses are also negotiable. You should at least be able to get reimbursed for the cost of moving your professional effects. Some places are not allowed to pay for your moving expenses (except, possibly, professional effects), but they may be willing to start your salary a month early to compensate. You'll have to pay taxes on the money this way, but you may come out ahead nevertheless.

## VI. Research Support

- A. *First year equipment and supplies costs.*-- Most universities will want you to continue your research and will help you to get your lab set up for the first year or so. This usually comes as a package of \$\$ which you can decide how to divide up among equipment, field costs and travel, books, expendable supplies, and even summer salary or salary for a technician. Because this is a one shot deal, you may be able to haggle this up to a good figure. Be realistic about your needs. For example, if you use a dissecting scope for hours at a time, ask for a Wild, rather than a Bausch & Lomb; there is no sense in sacrificing your eyes for science. A good school with a strong research orientation will offer a good candidate a reasonable amount of set up money, usually for the first year, but sometimes spread over two or more years. Amounts vary wildly, but it has been our experience that \$50K-\$100K is not unreasonable for a field-oriented biologist.

In our society, even in academia, a substantial degree of status is tied up in money. One reason that molecular biologists have high status is because they have very expensive toys. Don't sell your profession short by requesting a level of set up funds which will leave you with second-rate equipment that will break down in your first field season. If you need a heavy-duty computer, ask for it. If it will cost \$70K to allow you to get started at the new school, ask for it. Be flexible, however, because the school may be strapped. Prioritize your wish list and include prices to the nearest \$100. Bring copies to your interview. If you are actually asked for a list, inquire as to whether you will be held to purchasing only those things on the list. Priorities change, and some places will hold you to what you originally asked for, or will supply set up funds for equipment only. Find out! If you are bringing a NSF or NIH grant, or had your own NSF or NIH grant at your previous institution, you can transfer any equipment you purchased with grant funds to the new institution. Your old school won't necessarily like it, but it can be done. Check with the granting agency.

- B. *Summer salary.*-- Unless you are in the enviable position of being considered for a 12-month appointment, you will be paid for nine months of work, but the checks will be spread out over 12 months, as we noted above. You are free to do whatever you wish with the three months for which you are not paid, but you are unlikely to get tenure if you spend it backpacking through Europe. Most faculty object to serving on university committees which meet during the summer because they are not paid for the effort. They expect to spend their time doing research, and you should too. As an aside here, beware of faculty who object to doing research or working with graduate students during the summer unless they are paid by the school.

These individuals have probably lost the drive to do research at all and may have essentially retired in place.

It is fair to ask for summer salary for your first summer at a new school as part of your set-up package. If this cannot be worked out, some places have a university-wide competition for summer research salaries, and these often favor applications from newer faculty. As a last resort, you may be able to teach a course or two during the summer for extra bread.

- C. *Journals and books.*-- Usually there is no special provision for you. It typically is your prerogative to spend your research money on books if you want. It may not be wise though. Ask about the library. At the University of Tennessee, the library sets aside acquisition funds to allow new faculty to specify books they would like to have available.
- D. *Lab facilities.*-- Make known the space you think you will need from the start. Don't ever assume you can get more space later. Next to money, space is most dear to active faculty, and competition (intradepartmental, interdepartmental, etc.) is keen and sometimes bloody .. senior faculty usually win. In terms of space, we mean enough for your office, enough for your lab if you need one, enough for any graduate students you will take on. Don't underestimate! Be aggressive here; it will save you many agonies later on since most universities are short on space and getting shorter. Be sure that the total amount of space and its location is spelled out in detail in the final offer letter sent you by the chairman. Insist on it. Also, do you need access to communal facilities such as cold rooms, sound-proof rooms, chemical storage, greenhouses, etc.? Will you be expected to share these with other faculty? If so, who pays for them? Get it in writing if you are suspicious. Communal use of facilities works great in some universities and never works in others. It is risky to make your research contingent upon use of another faculty member's facilities. He or she may need to use it all of the time and will have priority. Finally, if possible, try to get your space in one unit near to the similar units of other faculty most alike in interests. It is surprising how much a floor's separation, or two nearby buildings, reduce the informal interactions that make academic life worthwhile. Try to get next to your nearest colleagues. It's fine in principle to mix faculty to prevent "splits" in a department, but usually this really only causes a breakdown in close interactions of faculty who have similar research interests but are separated. Would you want to live two doors down from your spouse?
- E. *Remodelling.*-- Usually, remodelling costs for your lab and/or office do not come out of your set up funds. These costs should be separate. Find out whether or not they intend to charge your remodelling costs against your research bundle. If renovations are necessary, push to get a firm date for both start and completion, but be diplomatic. The buildings and grounds, or physical plant, offices at most universities are as inefficient as New York City, and just as unionized. Their personnel don't consider themselves a "service" branch of the university, and you have a lot of "tail wagging the dog" situations. If you push them too hard, they'll just dig in and delay. If they don't get you then, they'll get you later. Typical completion times, even with the excessive personnel which will be assigned to the job are, in our experience, months to as much as two years after you arrive and start hassling them to get started. Be clever and get them to do either your office or lab first, whichever will maximally allow you to unpack and get started. When it comes to dealing with construction scheduling and construction crews, you are being overly optimistic to expect the worst. If you are absolutely unable to conduct your research without renovations, try to negotiate around potential delays: consider

requesting a year without teaching once the lab has been completed (but make the request at the outset), or consider delaying your arrival until you can step right into functional space.

- F. *Secretarial help.*-- All universities provide secretarial help for coursework. A problem may arise in getting typists for manuscripts on research proposals, etc. Usually, a faculty member shares a secretary with 2-3 other faculty members. Beware of ratios greater than this. If you find the faculty:secretary ratio is bad, request enough extra money in your package to pay for an outside typist to get your stuff ready for publication. They should agree since your publications are good for both you and them.

As part of your set up package, give serious consideration to getting a computer and wordprocessing software that is compatible with those used by the secretaries. Then you can give them the discs containing rough drafts and not do the tedious stuff yourself. Most departments prioritize secretarial time as follows: (1) teaching, (2) grant proposals, and (3) other. Within these priorities, work is done in order of its arrival. If you wait until the last minute, you may have to do the work yourself. You may want to do the work yourself. If so, make a good laser printer part of your set-up request. You should also check into availability of an ethernet and an email account.

Many junior faculty make the major error of offending secretaries. Secretaries are generally underpaid and overworked; in universities, they are often overqualified. From your first contact with secretaries (often when you are making flight reservations for your interview), you should be gracious and patient. Do not expect them to break rules for you (and it is your responsibility to ask what the rules are). Treat them like the valued members of the department that they are.

- G. *Graduate students.*-- Find out who pays for graduate student living money. You will be expected to take on graduate students and, often in ecology and behavior, you get too many applicants too early. You won't have a grant for at least two years as a rule (a year to write it, a year to see it passed and paperwork completed), unless you bring one with you. Are you willing to share your set up equipment and research money with graduate students? If you are a field person, you should find out whether all grad students have to work on TA's or whether all grad students have nice fat research stipends. Most places have both. You cannot train field people if they have to spend most of their time teaching introductory biology. This should be considered in going there in the first place. Many universities have training grants to pay for at least part of many grad student's careers. Find out if your students would be eligible. Basically, everyone is expected to teach grad students; most people get a lot of joy out of it. But you are also expected to dig up the money (on your grant) to pay for at least part of it.
- H. *Time on campus.*-- This is primarily a problem for field people. Many universities applaud your research, but dig at you behind your back if you are not around all the time. One of us, when applying at Yale, asked the chairman, C. Markert, if the faculty would mind if the summers were spent away from the university in the field. He replied that it was such a privilege to be at Yale, nobody of any value would want to be away even in the summers and would be judged accordingly. So be wary. Find out explicitly how much time you are expected to be on campus, in your office. If you are not teaching during a quarter or semester, will it be held against you (later on tenure decisions) or is it illegal by university policy to be off campus?

- I. *Grant costs.*-- Eventually you will want to pull in a grant, and you will be expected to do so. Find out what the indirect costs rates are. If, for example, the overhead rate is 70%, for every dollar you pay in salary on a grant, you pay 70 cents to the university for processing and toilet paper. That means if you put a \$20,000 a year post-doc or technician on the grant for a two year period, you add nearly another \$20,000 a year for indirect costs to the university and fringe benefits (usually 23%-25% of salary). That means the \$20,000 a year (salary) post-doc costs in excess of \$80,000 for two years. Find out whether or not the place you are interviewing distinguishes off-campus and on-campus rates. At the University of Tennessee, overhead on salaries is 74% of salaries for on-campus work, 43% for off-campus research, probably because you don't use their toilet paper. These are 1990 figures for UT. Some universities are so oriented to big time grantees that they make it prohibitively expensive for junior people. Find out!
- J. *Insurance.*-- If you buy a lot of field equipment, be sure to add in money for insurance if the university does not insure it. A university which buys you \$10K of equipment on their own money and then doesn't insure it is asinine. Cornell is asinine. UTK is "self-insured". This is half-asinine; you'd have to lose a truck to exceed the deductible. That equipment is all you have to get your research going. The university is unlikely to have money to replace it if lost or stolen, and by then, you have no bargaining power. It's a one shot deal; get it insured.

## VII. Teaching Duties

Most university jobs specify a mix of teaching and research, although the occasional tenure-track research position is advertised. Most colleges, on the other hand, emphasize teaching. The better-quality colleges (e.g., Earlham, Grinnell) encourage summer research and undergraduate involvement in research, and provide money to reinforce their commitment. Finding out what your teaching responsibilities will be is important, but department chairs and deans can be especially slippery on this point. Here are a few things to consider, ask about, and watch out for.

- A. *How much?*-- This is tricky. Most state universities are supposed to meet legislature specified levels of teaching. Because legislatures do not weigh lab and non-lab courses differently, nor think about research time, most deans and chairs adjust teaching loads so that someone teaching science lab courses teaches fewer courses than someone in the humanities. But they don't explain this to the legislators and, hence, have to be sneaky. Most chairs will suggest what courses or course areas you will be most helpful in, but will be uneasy about putting in writing how many courses. On the other hand, some chairs take advantage of junior people for whom the duties are not specified and pressure them into heavy teaching loads or bumper service courses such as introductory biology or comparative anatomy. It is reasonable to be expected to teach, over an academic year, one good sized undergraduate course, one lab course for graduate students and upper level undergraduates, and one seminar. Some people do less in a year, some do more. This is about average. If you can get that in writing, terrific. If your chair hedges, find out from trusted colleagues in the department whether teaching loads are fair, what loads are, is there a bumper service course untenanted, etc.
- B. *What courses?*-- Find out, before you interview, what courses are being given. Think about what you could give that would complement the program. While there, find out if anybody teaching a course you would like to teach is leaving. Sometimes, you will find that a popular

area currently not covered is coveted by current members of the department who intend to teach it. Maybe they will. Do not depend on college and university catalogs for lists of courses offered. Most list many courses that haven't been taught in years. Teaching fun or popular courses is often a source of great tension in the department. Find out whether they are eager to let you do your thing, or whether you will be forced into some unpopular slot. Sometimes there is one course in your area and they want you to teach a continuation or second part (e.g., there is a behavior lecture but, as yet, no lab). Find out if you will have the freedom to develop it yourself, or whether some more senior faculty member is calling all the shots.

- C. *How long?*-- Sometimes, one is hired to teach a course that has outside funding (say Ford Foundation or Carnegie Foundation money). Getting hired on soft academic money is risky. At the end of the funding, which often is not renewed, the department must find some source of salary for you, or let you go. Often, the only way to keep you is to let you continue your behavior course, but also ask you to take over the labs in Biology 101 (or whatever)... not very nice! Find out if your job is on hard money and if there are strings attached such as expiring grants.
- D. *When?*-- You should be given at least one quarter or semester on campus to prepare a course. In the Department of Zoology at the University of Tennessee, new faculty usually get a year without teaching to get their research going and develop courses. Don't be sucked into arriving on campus with a course you spent last summer preparing. Your post-doc institution will be mad at you, your summer research will suffer, your course won't properly be attuned to the new student body, and you will be busy as hell. Demand a breather to get settled in.
- E. *Facilities and support.*-- If you are being hired to teach specific courses, find out what kind of teaching budgets you can have. Look into existing equipment and supply pools. You can usually tell a lot by visiting an introductory biology course and looking at the quality of the slides, microscopes, etc. if the course is administered through your potential department. Just ask to visit such a biology lab in session and give it a once-over for overall quality. If you are teaching a new course, what kinds of funds can you expect to buy equipment and set up labs or teaching projects? Does the department have much teaching money? Are many of the faculty reduced to using their research equipment in teaching basic courses?
- F. *Student-faculty ratios.*-- Check to see how large courses are: at the beginning undergraduate level, and the upper undergraduate level, and at the graduate student level. The relative ratios at each level will tell you a lot about teaching loads. Are you allowed to limit enrollment? Are stated pre-requisites adhered to? Are honors courses or sections really limited to honors students, or are they expanded by addition of unqualified students? What is university policy and department tradition in all of this?
- G. *Teaching assistants.*-- Are there good TA's available? Will you have to do it all yourself? What is the ratio of TA's to the average class size? Who chooses what TA teaches in your course? Usually, these are not things you can do much about, but they are worth finding out about if you have a choice of schools. Are the TA's paid out of your course budget?

## **VIII. Other Considerations**



- A. *Graduate students* (and see VIIB, below).-- It is very important that you meet with graduate students when you interview, and that you talk with them without faculty being around. You may not be able to keep their names or research projects straight, but you should make a genuine effort to find out what their concerns about the department are, and what they expect from the person filling this position. They will want to quiz you, and many schools now include student evaluation of candidates in their search procedures. Even if the students don't get to vote on the appointment, they can be a powerful lobbying group. Also, find out from them about the department. They know all of the dirt and gossip, just like you did. Take it with a grain of skepticism, but listen. Grad students are the best sources about all of the problems in a department. Be suspicious of a department that doesn't routinely schedule an interview session for job applicants with the graduate students. You also need to find out about the quality of the students and how much they are paid. A school that underpays its students may be unable to attract the ones you want.
- B. *Mood and hierarchies*.-- Are you being hired after a big battle over another faculty member? Is the department worried about its Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity image (a plus if you are a minority candidate)? Is there a split in the department along lab vs. field research? In some cases, such splits can lead to disaster (in the late 1980's, Northwestern University dissolved its organismal biology group, which included dismissing untenured faculty). Many departments are stratified according to subdiscipline, generally with the molecular biologists near the top and the organismal biologists near the bottom. Find out what your predetermined social status is likely to be. This status can have a lot to do with your access to in-house research funds and other such desiderata. Is there a strict age or weight dominance hierarchy that makes relations between members of the department strained? Go to a party and watch them a while as they watch you and interact with one another. See if the chair laughs and takes jokes on himself from other members of the faculty. Do junior people speak out about departmental and university issues in the presence of older members? You can tell a lot about the mood of the department if you can step out of yourself for a few minutes at a party and watch them. Be critical. You will have to work in this atmosphere for some time. If the faculty treat one another with respect and listen to each other regardless of status, it's a good sign; if they defer and grovel before the overlords, you may well be unhappy there.
- C. *Unnamed duties*.-- Some people, after joining a department with the idea that teaching loads are reasonable, find out that other unlisted duties actually take more time than teaching. One of us, after two years, was loaded with two new courses, one lab course, five graduate students who were signed up with him as major advisor, 12 other graduate students with him as a minor committee member, 17 undergraduate advisees that came in 3-4 times a year to plan their lives, 3-5 faculty committees (introductory biology curriculum programs, honors biology evaluation program, faculty committee on use of wild lands owned by the university, graduate student admissions committee, etc.), faculty meetings at least once every two weeks, departmental meetings every 3-4 weeks, three minority students requiring tutoring, etc. All at once! Egads, there is no hope. We urge you to find out honestly how much crap besides teaching you will have to do. Is there an undergraduate student advising office, so you won't have to do it? Is there a faculty senate so that you can have a voice if you want, but need not if you don't want? Does the administration pay any attention at all to the faculty or, like Boston University, does it treat the university like big business or industry and the faculty like laborers? Is the department committee crazy? You will be shocked at what you find when you begin asking your hosts about this kind of work. Keep in mind (in the front of your mind) that committee

and other bum jobs are not counted heavily or at all when it comes to tenure decisions. Don't be led astray, especially by lazy senior faculty members. Ask someone fairly new.

- D. *Faculty benefits.*-- Your first check and you feel richer than you ever have! Until you look at the final amount you get. You see, the university hits you for the usual FICA social security, withholding, state and local taxes, but also for medical insurance, life insurance, pension funds, etc. You will find that they cut out a lot more than you expected. There is little you can do about it except find out how good the programs are and whether or not they are mandatory. Most are mandatory, but they differ a lot in quality. Many universities belong to TIAA-CREF, which is a retirement program in which both you and your employer contribute to your retirement money and when you move to another university, it is transferable and continuing so long as the new place belongs to TIAA-CREF too. Most state universities have state retirement plans and the money you (and they) put in is not transferable. Key words in retirement programs are "trusted," which means the trustees or state legislature cannot dig into your retirement funds, and "vested," which means you can take it with you. It should be noted that while not always transferable, many state university programs give better deals in the end than TIAA-CREF. Check into it in detail. Ask whether or not there is an orientation on this kind of stuff for new faculty each fall, and whether or not there is a faculty manual which details it all. If there is a manual, ask to see it while you're there. The whole thing is a bore, but worth it. Also, on life insurance, who pays? Is it term insurance or comprehensive? Is it mandatory? On medical insurance, does the program cover maternity? It usually covers so little of the things you are likely to need, like maternity, that you may do better getting your own coverage if permissible. Does it cover dental work? Is there major medical coverage? Again, who pays and what per cent? If you are a field worker, does the insurance cover you overseas?

As for other types of benefits, most progressive institutions (the University of Tennessee aside) provide some sort of automatic sabbatical leave program for faculty. Does the school at which you are interviewing have such a plan and, if so, at what interval are leaves available? If you are married, does the school have a tuition reduction or waiver program for faculty spouses and/or dependents? If so, what is the rate? Finally, although it might seem trivial, where will you park and what will it cost you? Can you park there on Saturday even if there is a football game scheduled?

- E. *Promotion schedules.*-- Find out when and how you will be reviewed for promotions. It used to be the case that you were hired with the expectation of two successive three year contracts after an initial trial year, after which you were considered for tenure. Usually the second three year contract was renewed without a faculty review except in cases of very bad faculty. Now, most places are reviewing every two years until the six year review when you are reviewed for tenure. Because of reduced enrollments, reduced funds, etc. tenure is usually not granted until the maximum time allowable by AAUP guidelines has passed (up or out after seven years, with the decision made in the sixth year). However, prior service at another institution as a post-doc or faculty member may be counted toward the seven years. Find out exactly where you stand on this, and get it in writing! Some universities throw people out at the two or four year mark if they think they haven't got a 100% chance of getting tenure. Check this out too. Also find out what your chances for tenure are. Is the department top-heavy with tenure appointments and few retirements in sight? What is university policy? If they will only promote Nobel Prize winners, you might do better to make your mark elsewhere. Some universities such as

Rockefeller and Harvard actually expect and encourage a high rate of turnover of junior staff with the expectation that a promotion to tenured slot is rare and unusual. Tenured faculty may be only senior people brought in after they have become famous, etc. Usually this is made clear when you apply. Finally, find out how tenure is decided. Will your research and teaching be rated equally? Will you be expected to teach a lot, but only your research will in the final result be used to decide your tenure status? Who decides? Is there a peer review by your department, followed by a review by an impartial ad hoc committee? Are outside opinions solicited? Does the central administration take departmental recommendations as they are, or overturn many of them? What's the department's success rate in tenure cases? Is there recourse to dispute decisions? Ask the students if there is a reputation for fairness in such decisions.

F. *Aids in negotiations.*-- It helps if you have a friend at the interviewing institution who you can ask the more touchy questions and who can serve as a go between in negotiations. If there are formal arrangements between you and the chair, a friend can be the vehicle without the chair having to put it in writing. He or she also serves as witness where writing is discouraged, and can also be called for the sense of the winds if you don't hear for a long time, or need a little haste. Don't overdo the calling bit, however, because friendship only goes so far and searches are tense for the searchers as well as the searchees.

## **IX. Two-Career Couples and Family Concerns**

Most of the academics looking for jobs in the 1990's will be parts of two-career couples. An appreciable fraction of you will have a spouse who is also an academic, maybe even in the same discipline. Schools and departments vary in their willingness to adapt to this aspect of the modern world. Options range from two people having independent full-time appointments, to sharing a job, to one being appointed and the spouse being awarded a library card. Shared appointments vary in some ways as well because most schools require some minimum appointment before benefits kick in. If that minimum is 70%, and two of you are sharing an appointment 50:50, neither of you will qualify for benefits such as health insurance. When you begin looking for a job, you should contact as many couples as possible and find out how their schools arranged things for them. Being able to provide diverse case-histories to a school which is uneasy about a dual appointment can be helpful. It is far better to be straight-forward about the professional implications of your relationship from the moment of application. If you wait until you are at a job interview or have a verbal offer of a position before you announce "By the way, there is someone else ...," you may suffer an instant involuntary metamorphosis from a desired commodity to a less-than-desirable candidate. Current realities are that couples looking for a single position have a tough row to hoe, but it can't hurt to ask (but be subtle about it).

What is the school's policy regarding leave subsequent to the birth or adoption of a child? Will you have to plan the birth around spring break, or will you be treated like a person taking part in a valuable social enterprise.

If you have children, or expect to, you might want to ask about the following. Does the university or college sponsor or support day care? If so, what is its cost and quality, and how long is the waiting list? How good are the local public schools? If they aren't rated very highly, are there good private schools, where are they, and do they provide transportation? If it looks like you will want to enter your kids in a private school, your salary might start to look a lot less impressive

than it did at the outset. Think again about the questions about spouse/dependent fee reductions and waivers mentioned above (Section VIIID).

## **X. Verbal Agreements**

Sometimes a chair cannot write down the outcome of your negotiations. In this case, you could send him or her a letter in which you summarize the points which make up the mutual understanding and ask that the chair respond if any appear to be incorrect. It's better than nothing. Details may be most vague concerning your teaching duties. Try to get as much as possible in writing. Then, if the chair moves up to dean, or is ridden out on a rail, or the legislature cuts the budget, you have on paper an agreement as to what and how much you will teach. Verbal agreements can get lost in trying times. Protect yourself, but be careful. If its in writing, you are committed to it too!

## **CHECK LIST**

### **I. Salary**

1. How much? Hard money or soft money?
2. What is the local cost of living?
3. Is the salary high or low? Check AAUP book.
4. Does the school have a mortgage assistance program?

### **II. Research Support**

1. How much money for equipment, supplies and travel as "set up" money?
2. Is there additional departmental research support available annually?
3. Will they pay your summer salary first year?
4. How much space will they give you: Office, lab space, grad students?
5. Where is the space?
6. How long to remodel your lab and who pays?
7. How many faculty per secretary? Can they pay for an outside typist if necessary?
8. Are ethernet hookups available? email accounts? Who pays?
9. Who pays for graduate students? Is there a training grant?
10. Are there "in house" grants available to new faculty? How big?
11. Will anyone be offended if you are off campus in summers? During quarters or semesters you don't teach?
12. What are the indirect costs for grants administration? Is there an off-campus rate?
13. Do they insure the equipment they buy for you?

### **III. Teaching Duties**

1. How many courses will you be expected to teach?
2. What courses will you be expected to teach?
3. Can you have freedom to develop your own courses?
4. Can you have a quarter or semester free to prepare your first course?
5. Does the department have enough money to adequately supply and equip the course?

6. What size classes will you be expected to teach?
7. What is the availability of TA's for your courses?

#### IV. General Considerations

1. Ask the graduate students how everybody gets along. Are there pronounced hierarchies?  
Laboratory vs. field splits?
2. Does the administration treat the faculty fairly?
3. What is the expected load of:
  - a. Undergraduate advisees
  - b. Minor committee membership for graduate students
  - c. Faculty committees
  - d. Minority tutoring
  - e. Other crap
4. What is the policy on sabbatical leaves? Do they have them? Are they automatic? At what time intervals?
5. Are the retirement, life insurance, and health insurance plans any good? Are they mandatory? Are they transferable to other schools?
6. What is the schedule and mechanism of faculty review?
7. How much of the department is already tenured? Is there a quota?
8. Who decides tenure and how?
9. Will they pay moving expenses?
10. Where would you park and how much will it cost?
11. Are there any good delis in the neighborhood? Are the bagels authentic?
12. Do you feel comfortable in the setting and with the people you met?

#### V. Family Considerations

1. What is the schools policy on leave subsequent to the birth or adoption of a child?
2. Does the school provide day care and, if so, at what rate, how good is it, and how long is the waiting list?
3. How good are the local schools?
4. If the local schools are considered substandard, are there good private schools available? If so, where are they, what do they cost, and do they provide transportation?