

# Interviewing for a Faculty Position

Robert C. Reardon, Ph.D.  
& Janet G. Lenz, Ph.D.

*Below are some general and more specific questions and issues that persons may want to consider as they interview for college and university faculty positions.*

## General

---

- How are faculty members' responsibilities divided among the different areas of teaching, research, and service? Are these valued differently outside the department? Outside the college?
- Are the expectations for teaching, research, and service different for faculty at different ranks?
- What are the indicators of successful performance in these areas? How are they gauged or measured? For example, how much weight is given to peer-reviewed journal articles versus presentations at professional meetings?

## Instruction

---

- What courses will you be expected to teach? How many new preparations for courses will you need to make in the first year or two? Are junior faculty members protected from creating new curriculum? (how is this weighted in the reward structure?)
- Is there a minimum class size in the department? What are you expected to do if a class doesn't make? Are you given some other assignment?
- Is there support available for instruction? What is the availability of internal consultation regarding instruction?
- What courses are taught in the summer? How is assignment for these courses handled? Can you offer a special course? How is that handled e.g., through regular departmental offerings or continuing education curriculum?
- How much emphasis is there on distance education or web-based course delivery?
- Is overload available for extra teaching assignments? How is pay handled for this?
- What are the expectations regarding office hours? Is writing and research time protected?



## Research

---

- What support is available for research activities? What is the nature of that support, e.g., help with data analysis; availability of subjects, budget preparation and management, computer support?
- Is the higher priority for submission of grant proposals or referred publications?
- Look for consensus that the other faculty members are interested in helping new faculty members "take root."

## Office Support

---

- What is the nature of computer support in the office or for working from remote locations?
  - What is the availability of student assistants and graduate assistants to support faculty? How are graduate assistants assigned?
  - What is the level of funding available to purchase office supplies and equipment?
  - What type of clerical support is available?
-

## Departmental Administration

- How is day-to-day business of the department handled? How are decisions made?
- What is the availability of discretionary money — how is it distributed?
- What is the governance structure of the unit? Are there departmental committees? What types? How do they function — can they make decisions or do they simply make recommendations?
- Are there course releases for administrative duties, e.g. program coordination?

### • **Professional Development**

- What kinds of faculty development resources and programs exist? What is the recent history of faculty participation?
- Are there special programs for new faculty, e.g., summer research grants?
- What is the availability of travel money for presentations and attending professional meetings?

## Promotion & Tenure

- What is the department's recent history in this area? What kind of "evidence" is required to support one's case? What criteria are used for promotion & tenure? What have past faculty folders looked like for those faculty who have been successful in this process, e.g., how many articles? Where published? Data-based or not? Book chapters versus articles?
- Is the criteria for promotion different from the criteria for tenure?
- Is there a third-year review for new faculty?
- Is there an annual review to see if you're on target with respect to progress towards promotion & tenure? Who does this? How is it conducted?
- Where is the main hurdle (if any) for promotion & tenure — at the department level? college level? Do criteria vary by level, i.e., at certain levels, are some criteria valued more than others? Where do people tend to get "hung up" in the process?

## Salary/Benefits

- What are the procedures for the annual salary review? Who does the annual salary review? What are the characteristics of a most favorable review?
- What has the annual percentage salary increase been in past years? How many faculty get the average? How many above or below the average?
- What is the nature and financial value of the benefits program? How flexible is it? Does it meet your needs?

## Miscellaneous

- Regarding the specific position you're interviewing for, what are the procedures for filling this position? Timelines? Persons involved? If an offer is extended, what roles will the search committee chair, department head, dean, provost, or other administrator play?
- What is the level of involvement of faculty in activities outside the department and elsewhere in the institution?
- Where are the faculty in terms of their career progression — is there a range — some senior faculty, some mid-career, some new; availability of experienced faculty to mentor newer faculty?
- Do faculty members socialize outside the department?
- Is there a faculty union? What areas are governed by faculty contract? Is there a bargaining agreement and how does that affect the assignment of faculty duties?
- How is this department/college viewed by other segments of the institution, e.g., is it on the "short end of the stick" when it comes to receiving resources?
- Are there rules about how much outside employment and consulting is allowed?
- What is the number of women and/or minority faculty members? What is the availability of support groups and/or mentoring for women and

