

Campus interviews: What Should Be on the Schedule

Meetings with department members: The candidate will want to know the personalities and ideas of his/her potential future colleagues. He/she will want to discover how happy the people in the department are, how they feel about their work, and what it might be like to work with them and interact with them. Allow each member of the department and hiring committee individual time with the candidate.

Meeting with the Dean: Usually this is a requirement. The Dean can give lots of the gory details about benefits, etc. At small schools, meetings with the President and/or Academic Vice-President can be useful for the candidate and may also be mandatory.

Extra-departmental people the new hire will be working with: The more information a candidate can find out about the environment, the better. These contacts can give the candidate clues to how easy it will be for a spouse or significant other to get hired, how the department views and treats staff, etc.

Meeting(s) with students: Someone I know once said that he always hated his students the first week of class, because he didn't know them and he was forced to spend so much time with them. We do spend a lot of time with our students. Many of us like certain kinds of students more than others. It's important for a candidate to get to know the kind of students at your institution. It's also important for a candidate to get a feeling for the campus atmosphere and the attitudes of the students on campus.

Meeting(s) with faculty from other disciplines: This allows the candidate to find out what attitudes are pervasive on campus. He/she can ask about how the department is viewed by other faculty. It's also a good time for candidates to find out about committee work. Meeting other faculty can give a candidate an idea of what to expect of future neighbors and friends.

Schedule an opportunity to see the candidate interact with students.

Schedule a campus tour. This can be a good opportunity for the candidate to interact with students, if you can get some students to give the tour. It can also be a relaxed way for one of the department members to meet with the candidate. However, be sure to be sensitive to the weather--a rainy campus tour can be miserable.

If possible, give the candidate time to check out the campus and the region (this can be an extra day with nothing scheduled). Otherwise, a tour of the surrounding region will help the candidate determine community fit.

Give the candidates a chance to ask for anything that's not included in the schedule that they are interested in. For example, perhaps one is a serious biker and would like to see the bike trails in town as part of the local tour.