Title: MAA Project NExT Panel Discussion -- Introduction to the Hiring Process: Preparation, Execution, and Follow-up

Time: Sunday January 6, 2:15 to 3:30 PM
Location: Project NExT Room, Room 8, Upper Level

(DS) Welcome to the MAA Project NExT Panel Discussion -- Introduction to the Hiring Process: Preparation (**P**), Execution (**E**), and Follow-up (**FU**).

(smb) First, we have Introductions -- here are your panelists:

(smb) Carolyn Yackel: was a postdoc at Indiana University, a public institution with 28,500 undergraduates and is now tenure-track at Mercer University, a private institution with 7,000 students. While she hasn't been on any search committees, she's been on the job market in three different years, including last year when she had eight on-campus interviews.

(smb) Dennis Luciano is Chair of Math / CS at Western New England College, a private institution with about 5,000 students. He has chaired all searches in the department since 1980, which includes searches for seven new faculty in the last decade. His most recent search experience was last year, when he hired peach dot Jennifer Beineke.

(DS) Mark Nielsen is at University of Idaho, a public institution with 10,000 students. He's been part of six searches, for some of which he chaired area subcommittees. He is part of a search this year.

(DS) Michael Boardman is Chair of his department at Pacific University, a private institution with 1100 undergraduates. He's been part of 18 searches, of which he chaired 10 and of which seven were for tenure track math or math ed positions. His most recent search experience was last year.

(DS) Tamara Veenstra is at University of Redlands, but for the purposes of this panel was at the University of Northern Iowa, a public institution with 13,000 students. She was on one search committee in 98-99 and co-chaired another the following year. Last year, she was on the job market.

(smb) and your moderators:
(smb) Dusty Sabo (DS) is at Southern Oregon University, a public institution with 5500 students. He has chaired all of the three searches he's been part of. His most recent search experience was last year.

(DS) sarah-marie belcastro (smb) is on leave at Bowdoin College from the University of Northern Iowa, where she was on a committee with Tamara Veenstra and co-chaired another with her the following year.

(smb) **Moderators**: Just so you, the audience are aware of this, the panelists each responded to a lengthy questionnaire during the summer of 2001. Their responses formed the basis for a loose script which we're all following for the purposes of this panel.

(DS) **(P) Point of Discussion #1** Prior to actually doing a search, decisions have to be made about what / who is being searched for. Many of our panelists pointed out that if a search is very specific, there may be too few qualified candidates, and that if a search is very broad, there may be too many applications to wade through. What are your other comments on making these decisions?

Tamara Veenstra: There are lots of reasons for narrow versus broad searches. Probably how good / bad the job market is remains one of the most influential factors in making this decision. In addition, there are several reasons for specifying qualities (specific or general) that you're looking for in a candidate.

1) to find someone that will fit in the department and to encourage suitable candidates to apply

2) to fill a hole in the department, created either by a retirement or by a recognized need

The two searches I was a part of were both framed somewhat narrowly. In one case, we were looking for someone with a background in history of math. This focus proved too narrow, and we had trouble filling this position. That year, there were two positions, one was filled and we decided to leave the other open for the following year. We were worried that the narrow focus of the search caused otherwise strong candidates to not apply.

Michael Boardman: Our main goal has always been to hire excellent teachers who will continue their scholarly work. This past year we decided to conduct a tightly framed search, looking for mathematicians in one of three areas. The search was much more difficult in that many of our top candidates received multiple offers.

Mark Nielsen: Our department has had negative experiences with "open" searches where no particular research discipline was specified. (The number of applicants becomes unmanageable, and because we didn't say what we were looking for, none of the applicants seemed to be what we were looking for.) As a result, we have been fairly specific for most of our recent searches, at least as far as the research area. We have used this to reshape the direction of our department by building working groups in two specific research areas. A department our size can't be good at everything, so we have made the decision to concentrate on a couple of areas. This has generally been a successful policy, one of the groups we have built in particular is doing exceptionally well and is advancing the department's prestige around campus. This year we as a department have pre-selected the general area, and left the choice of specific area to a smaller committee.

There is also a drawback to tightly framed searches, though. Because you are then looking at a much smaller pool, and because the research area is set up as the principal criterion, you sometimes do not get some of the other qualities you may want to emphasize. (Examples: teaching experience, ability to teach a broad range of the undergraduate curriculum, ability to contribute to the advising workload, or ability to undertake some administrative duties, etc.)

Dennis Luciano: In our math searches we have never indicated a preference for a field of specialization. We expect our candidates to be able to teach, and have an interest in, almost all of our mathematical offerings. We are most interested in finding a good fit with the current members of the department, both professionally and socially! A search should seek out candidates who will bring more national and regional exposure to the department and the college, and who will contribute to the unity and wellness of the department.

(smb) **(P) Point of Discussion #2** All of our panelists have said that the most important thing is to be honest in the advertisement, but they all have different supporting reasons.

Tamara Veenstra: Ideally, the ad should help a candidate determine if they are a good fit for the job. It should not be so specific that only a few people apply. It takes time to construct a good ad - start early! The committee should not set unreasonable expectations for a candidate or try to hire strong candidates but ones that would not be a good fit for the institution. A good combination is a short EIMS ad with a longer ad on the departmental website.

Carolyn Yackel: On the applicant end, the real problem is with searches that are either advertised as tightly framed, but actually aren't or the opposite (advertised as loosely framed, but really aren't). The first causes conscientious applicants to overlook potential fits, the second causes applicants to waste time sending applications to places that don't want them.
Write what you are really looking for. If you sort of wish the person could teach without falling over, but actually want a strong researcher, don't say you need an excellent teacher, just say you want a researcher. If you would like it if the person could do a bit of research, but really want them to teach well, make that clear. In that case, don't say that they must have potential for excellent future research, simply say that a continued research program will be expected. If future research is not really expected, then don't say that it is.

Mark Nielsen: The best way to get candidates you will like is to be explicit in describing the required qualifications and desirable characteristics.

Dennis Luciano: Advertisements should have sufficient information about the college/university and the department. Minimal requirements should be clearly stated, as well as what a complete candidate file should comprise of.

(DS) **(P) Point of Discussion #3** Any advice for search committees in writing ads?

Tamara Veenstra: First, know that the process will take longer than you think! For my institution, satisfying affirmative action was an important part of writing the ad. When I co-chaired a search committee it was really helpful to have a conversation with the director of affirmative action, BEFORE writing the ad. We also had numerous conversations with the department and search committee about what we should be looking for in a candidate. We then wrote several drafts of a position statement until we believed we had communicated that effectively.

The primary factor to influence our deadlines was how we wanted to use the joint meetings. One time the deadline was after the joint meetings, because of the belief that the joint meetings could be used to recruit candidates. The other search committee I was on set the deadline ***before*** the joint meetings. I preferred the second method, as I think it is still an employer's market (even though it is improving).

I think EIMS (the AMS webpage) is where most people look for jobs and it would probably be sufficient to advertise there. However, if the candidates you're interested in are outside mainstream mathematics, for example, statistics or history of math, then you might want to ask about other places to post jobs. Even though I think EIMS is probably sufficient, I believe we posted our position also in MAA's Focus and the AWM newsletter. Other options are the Chronicle and various minority groups (I think we got a list from our affirmative action office.)

Carolyn Yackel: From the applicant end, very early deadlines are often not helpful. (Here, "early" means "before Nov 20th or so.") This means that application materials may be sent before they are ready. Furthermore, it means that either the committee sits on the materials for a long time, or that offers come way too early relative to the rest of one's inquiries.

Advertising on EIMS is essential, since that is where most applicants get their information. It is also good to advertise in the AWM newsletter, if women are sincerely encouraged to apply.

It is particularly helpful when the job ad contains URL's for web sites about the department or school. However, it is particularly unhelpful when these URL's go directly to a page that repeats the job ad. When putting job ad information on your web page, don't be limited by the number of words that you used for your EIMS ad. Sure, it's easier, but it's also a waste of time for every applicant who looks at the page hoping to gain more information.

Michael Boardman: We always advertise on the AMS website only. We stress in our ads that we are looking for individuals who are excellent teachers and will continue their scholarly pursuits. This has been very effective in generating a quality applicant pool. We have found, however, that advertising with the AMS website also generates a significant number of applications that are not appropriate for our institution. Our institution demands that we advertise in the Chronicle of Higher Ed. However, we view this as publicity for the institution rather than an ad that generates qualified applications.

While early deadlines may be inconvenient for candidates, from the hiring perspective early deadlines are good---we can then get offers out first! (Here, "early" means "before January 1st.")

Dennis Luciano: We always have tightly framed searches: advertise on the AMS web site from August-November, have application deadline by December 1, review all candidate files prior to December 15 and obtain a short-list of about 35, contact those 35 candidates with the good news and the expectation of interviewing them at the national joint meetings in January, bring at least three candidates to campus in late January / early February, and have closure prior to March 1st. The AMS web site is by far the best place to advertise the position, and may be the only site needed. We also try to describe our geographic location in our ads. The committee and the advertisement should encourage applications from minority and female candidates. The ad should definitely include information on (1) the position, (2) the department (number of faculty, number of student majors, etc), (3) benefits (health insurance, TIAA-CREF, sabbatical policy, release time, etc.), (4) the college / university, and (5) the region (proximity to major cities, recreation areas, etc.).

-- short break for audience questions --

(Q1): Who writes the ad?

Mark Nielsen: Our chair writes the ad, and submits it for review by the deparment.

Michael Boardman: It's the same in my department.

Tamara Veenstra: Our search committee chair writes the ad, and redrafts it with feedback from the committee.

(Q2): Why not advertise on MAA Online instead of the AMS site?

sarah-marie belcastro: The AMS site is universal. Applicants do check both, however.

Michael Boardman: Everyone looks at the AMS site. It's not a preference for organizations, but for the places applicants look.

(smb) **(E) Point of Discussion #4** Any advice on how the committee should function? How often should a search committee meet? How many committee members should read each application? Specifically, how does your department narrow the search when dealing with a large number of applicants? How many progressively shorter lists should a committee produce, and when? How might the committee produce these lists? What should the committee **not do**?

Michael Boardman: Our search committees are chaired by the department chair. The rest of the committee is made up of one or two other members of the department in the area being hired (math or cs), the chair of the natural sciences division (who is a faculty member as well), two students, the dean of the college, and one faculty member from a different department (often a different division). Our committees usually operate on consensus rather than votes.

Our search committees meet in September to discuss the strategy for the current search. As chair, I prepare information for the committee including a proposed ad, a proposed timeline, and historical information on our recent searches. Our application deadline is usually between November 20 and December 1. The first cut on applications is done by the chair and the department members. Typically, out of 300 or so applications, between 20 and 50 are identified to be considered further. These files are then discussed by the committee department members. Our goal is to have 15 applications for consideration by the entire committee. These applications are reviewed by each committee member prior to a meeting held usually by December 10. The committee then selects those applicants to be contacted for phone interviews and/or interviews at the National Joint Meetings. Following these short interviews, the committee, on the advice of the Joint Meeting interviewers (typically two people), prioritizes the pool and begins inviting candidates for on-campus interviews.

Mark Nielsen: Our department likes to have everyone involved in the final decision. However, we leave the initial screening to subcommittees (usually composed of faculty interested in the area of the candidates). These subcommittees forward short lists to the entire department who then join in the process. Even then, though, we keep separate roles for the subcommittee and entire search committee (department). The subcommittee members rate the candidates on their research and compatibility with research interests, while the rest of the department rates the candidates on teaching ability.

Our goal is to reduce the list to 10 or 12 applicants, then phone interview 6 - 8 applicants, with campus interviews for 2 - 3 applicants.

Tamara Veenstra: our committee had a meeting early in the fall semester to get the ad out. (deadlines are early for notices and focus, etc). then we didn't meet very much until the end of the fall semester, and met a lot during the spring semester. We had 6 people on a committee, and 2 people read each file. (so that everyone read 1/3 of the files.) In contrast to some other schools, our chair is NOT on the committee. We made a first cut around the end of fall semester primarily by eliminating all the people who were not appropriate for the position. This left us with a largish pool (50-60) and we tried to meet with as many of these candidates as we could at the joint meetings. We had another meeting after the joint meetings to narrow the pool down again. At this point we conducted phone interviews for any candidates still in our pool that were not at the joint meetings. Then we narrowed down to list of people to bring on campus with a ranked list of backups.

Dennis Luciano: Members of the committee should not have favorite candidates or pre-conceived convictions prior to reading the candidate files. The search committee should have balance: male-female, young-old, conservative-liberal, etc. It should also have a faculty member from outside of the department. The committee members should meet initially to discuss how they will rank the candidates. After all the candidate files have been read by all members, the committee should have long discussions about their individual rankings of all the candidates (we use a scale of 1-5). Sometimes the ranking changes based on the comments of committee members. These discussions should continue until there is agreement of a select group of candidates (10-40). Every member of the committee should be heard on a candidate of high choice, independent of the ratings of the other committee members. Committee members should be sure that they have read all information received on each candidate.

We contact all the candidates (often 35 - 40) and set up Joint Meetings interviews with them. For candidates we're very impressed by, we set up additional times to talk during the meetings. By the end of the meetings, we usually know who will be invited to campus. We look for closure early---we want to get the candidates on campus by the middle of February.

Dusty Sabo: If you're at a public institution especially, you can't guarantee the search will go through, or that it will go through in a timely fashion. Sometimes bugetary concerns of the administration delay postings of adverstisements, even until after the Joint Meetings!

We split the applicant pool into three groups (equaling the number of committee members). We initially screen (skim) the applications looking for those that will be eliminated those who do not meet the search criterion (red dots) and those that are good candidates (teaching / research) but are not from the desired area of specialization (yellow dots). The remaining candidates are green dots and all their applications are read and evaluated on a pre-determined scoring criteria. From these results the candidates are ranked and then the committee present the best 10-15 to the department to narrow the list to 6-10 for phone interviews. That's about three to four rounds. Don't forget affirmative action at each phase of the search, especially when you are from a public institution.

(smb) **Moderators**: We originally asked the panelists about funding questions---Who pays for advertisements? For fare to the Joint Meetings (if you go)? For on-campus interviews? Where do you find out the budgets? Do you need to? However, everyone pretty much said that costs are taken care of by Deans or higher administrators. Often these offices pay for going to the Joint Meetings and have a flexible budget for campus interviews. So, that's the place to start in asking these questions at your institution.

(DS) **(E) Point of Discussion #5** Should representatives go to the Meetings? If so, how should they meet with candidates?

Carolyn Yackel: Because so many schools send representatives to the meetings, it seems important to do this to compete for candidates. Informal meetings, or the meetings that last half an hour are best, though cuts down on the number of people one can interview. However, 15 minute meetings reveal little about stressed and harried candidates or their stressed and harried hiring counterparts. If meeting informally, it is best to find a quiet place to meet. Meeting where it is likely that friends and acquaintances will walk by and try to start a conversation simply creates a difficult situation for everyone. It should particularly be avoided in the event that a candidate does not want to make public the fact that he/she is applying for jobs. Since there is no way for the hiring committee to know this without a uncomfortable conversation, it should be avoided altogether. A few other tips: avoid hotel rooms. Wear name tags. If you have a lot of information to convey, make a handout--which is what I've done for you.

(see handout)

Michael Boardman: Attending the joint meetings allows hiring committee representatives to meet many candidates face-to-face. We have used formal meetings and the interview center as ways to meet with as many as 15 candidates. Typically, we have two mathematics department members meet for 45 minutes to one hour with each candidate. The purpose of the meeting is to allow the candidates to get to know us a bit and for us to get to know the candidates. We ask questions such as "Why did you get your Ph.D.?" and "Tell us what you think of Liberal Arts education."

Tamara Veenstra: First, I'll note that longer interviews, 30 - 45 minutes, are much better than shorter, 10 - 15 minute interviews. I have found interviews at the joint meetings to be very helpful from both sides of the table (as interviewer and interviewee). Some people / schools are very different in person than they are on paper. We ask questions about why they want to be at our school. We ask questions about teaching. Lots of people talk about reform teaching in their application, but when you ask them about a typical class, it turns out they mean that they let students ask questions at the beginning of class before the lecture. We also ask questions about how they're research is going -- i.e., is there a strong indication that they are actually going to finish the PhD. We also try to ask candidates specific questions related to their file. I think this can send a strong message about the school. Several candidates we interviewed commented that they were impressed that they people interviewing them were clearly familiar with their file. And I remember interviewing with a school where the questions i was asked were almost all things in my file and when i would mention things in my file and it was like they had never heard it before. I was not impressed with the school.

Dennis Luciano: We also try to have as many members of the department at said meeting as possible (no fewer than four). We have always used a table at the Employment Register through the computerized match service. (In the future I intend to use the informal Interview Center so that we schedule only the interviews that we desire.) We usually have the chair and the most recent department hire do the table interviews. We also have the other members of the department do follow-up interviews with those candidates who impress us at the interview table. The Employment Register interview table primarily allows us to screen each candidate (usually in our select group), and it allows the candidate to screen us, since we offer considerable information about ourselves. Our follow-up interviews will typically identify our top ten candidates. Within one week of the joint meetings we will have identified a rank order of this top ten.

The very last question that we ask each candidate is: Now that we know you are on your way to becoming an excellent teacher as well as an accomplished researcher, tell us something about yourself outside of academe and mathematics. Most candidates are surprised by this question, but also elated to respond to it. They seem to appreciate our efforts to get to know them as unique individuals. Further, it is important for the continued well being of the department to have a complete understanding of your top candidates as human beings. After all, you may have an office next to theirs for the next 20 years!

sarah-marie belcastro: Note that some schools don't go to the meetings; it seems to be those in the northwest.

(DS) **(E) Point of Discussion #6** What process should the committee go through in order to decide who to bring to campus? Should there be phone interviews at some intermediate point? What questions have you used for phone interviews?

Carolyn Yackel: Phone interviews can be both good and bad. If some of your faculty have accents that may be hard to understand, this problem can be greatly exacerbated over the phone. It is also important that your committee be "together" when calling. Often committees get together at the last second to call. Each member is in his/her own office. One member may have a copy of the CV in view, while others do not. It's best if members have decided in advance who will ask what and when the interview will be over. Otherwise, there are lots of long, awkward silences that make the committee seem disorganized. These can also make the candidate feel as though the interview is not going well, which can be self-fulfilling. If you are mainly calling to indicate interest and to answer questions of the candidate, e-mail the candidate in advance to let them know this will happen. It's very hard to think of a list of coherent questions on the spot when you've just been interrupted from thinking about something completely different.

Michael Boardman: We use phone interviews as well as the interviews at the joint meetings to help determine who to bring to campus. The phone interviews are usually conducted before the joint meetings. We typically ask very open-ended questions of candidates during these interviews: "What are your goals for your career?", "Tell me about a typical class period.", etc.

We also use the phone interview as an opportunity to clarify the parameters of our position (teaching load, approximate salary range, scholarly activity expectations). Finally, we talk about the region (so often overlooked as an important factor in one's life!)

Mark Nielsen: We don't use the Joint Meetings; we use phone interviews instead. (Often we are behind the schedule of the Meetings, because of problems in getting the Dean's approval.) Phone interviews do help in making good choices for who to interview on campus. We ask questions to determine research compatibility with existing faculty. We also ask why they would want to come to our school. This is an important consideration for us because we're a somewhat small state school in an isolated area of the country.

Tamara Veenstra: There are lots of different reasons for doing phone interviews. I will discuss three different types that I have participated in. On our search committee, we did phone interviews with candidates that were in some top pool but did not attend the joint meetings. We conducted these similarly to the interviews at the meetings -- two people interviewed a candidate via a conference call. For consistency, it's good to have one person who also did the interviews at the joint meetings.

We did a second round of phone interviews when we had a top ten list to confirm that the candidates were still interested and to answer any questions they had about our school. These were not really interviews for us, but were more to encourage candidates to be interested in us, and to give them a chance to let us know if they really weren't interested.

One of the schools I interviewed with conducted phone interviews with top candidates to decide who to bring to campus. (i imagine this was a small pool of candidates.) The whole search committee participated via speaker phone. As an interviewee the con of this was that it was often hard to hear clearly because of the speaker phone. On the other hand, the big pro was that this was where they asked all the hard questions and hence the campus interview was much more relaxed.

I think all the phone interviews should be scheduled in advance and the candidate should be informed of which type of phone interview it is. It's really nerve-racking to keep waiting for them to ask you questions only to discover at the end that they only called to see if you had any questions.

Dennis Luciano: We sort of avoid phone interviews. Calls are made to the top three with the sole purpose of making sure that their interest in us is just as high as our interest in them. I speak very candidly with these individuals. We see each of them as a good fit with us, and we need to know they believe that we are a good fit for them! I also tell each of them what our time table is like, and that an offer could be made within a week, or so, after their visit to campus. If that occurs, they would have a week to decide. If a candidate believes that they would need more time, say for other interviews, etc., that may cause the candidate to be not invited to campus. Our philosophy is that if we are really a good fit for the candidate, there is no need for the candidate to look for a better fit. Basically, we search for individuals that really want to be a part of our department both professionally and socially.

(smb) **<u>(E) Point of Discussion #7</u>** Any advice on campus interviewing? How does a committee arrange to bring candidates to campus? What purposes does the campus interview fulfill? What items should be on the candidate's schedule? How can committees best judge a candidate's teaching skills? Research skills? Service skills? How should the candidate be fed and housed? What should the committee **not do**?

<u>Carolyn Yackel:</u> If you have the candidate pay for the plane tickets, be sure to let them know just what they'll need to get reimbursed, and reimburse them in a timely fashion. In particular, be sure to make it clear what documentation you'll need from them if they buy their tickets on the web.

The campus interview should give the candidate a lot of information. It is good to have him/her meet with the people in the department, the dean, any people he/she might be working with (for example from a math lab, from the education department, etc.), students, and at least one meeting with faculty from another discipline. There's another handout elaborating on this.

As for meals, these are good times to get all of these meetings in. Have the candidate go to either breakfast or lunch with students (No faculty! The candidate needs to get the real scoop.)

To assess teaching skills: It can be good to have the candidate teach a class. Try to choose something that person would have taught before, e.g. calculus I or II. Be sure to tell them what book is used for the course and what section(s) to cover. You should also tell them what usually happens in the class. If you want to see them use group work, it's not best to put them into a classroom that is usually lecture style.

Mock classes are bad! Perhaps mock classes aren't so bad for people who only lecture, but if you are interested in a candidate who interacts with and responds to a class, mock lectures are horrible. You will never be able to get an audience that will respond like real students. The audience will not ask the right questions. The faculty can mess these up, too, by asking questions that are way too hard, requesting examples of strange cases, etc. Mock classes do not show what a candidate is like teaching a real class, nor do they show what a candidate is like when giving a regular talk.

An interesting talk for undergraduates is another option. This can be good in that you can see if the candidate can talk at all coherently about higher level math. On the other hand, it can be difficult, because often it is hard to predict which undergraduates will come. But that information is vital for good preparation by the candidate. If all the students will be first year students, the candidate may pick a different topic than otherwise. In one sense, this can be a good option, since faculty often have firm beliefs about exactly how a certain topic should be taught. Those standards can be impossible for any candidate meet. On the other hand, it can be telling to see how the candidate deals with real students in a real class who are really trying to learn, and who may really, really not feel like being there.

Michael Boardman: Hopefully, you'll be entering a long-term close professional relationship with new faculty. The way we go about this is strange, especially if you compare it to how we screen other types of relationships in our lives. You should therefore do as much as you can to get to know the candidate.

We have several goals for the campus interview
1) Allow each member of the department and hiring committee individual time with the candidate. This allows the candidate to see who we are and allows us to find out who they are.
2) See the candidate interact with students (noon-time talk).
3) Allow students and the candidate to interact (lunch with students).
4) Give the candidate time to check out our campus and the region (usually an extra day with nothing scheduled).

To judge teaching skills is very difficult. We have tried allowing candidates to give a talk of their choice (geared to students). We have also tried assigning a topic or a range of topics. In either case, you get a feel for how the candidate interacts with students. But we never can really tell how teaching will go until teaching is well underway.

As far as research skills, we don't have a large department and it is likely that little overlap exists in research areas. We rely on recommendation letters and reference calls for this.

We usually offer to make all arrangements for the candidates (flight, hotel, rental car) with the candidate getting final information before final booking. We also allow candidates to make these arrangements themselves if they wish. We don't ask candidates to pay for travel and be reimbursed later. Many early career faculty and graduate students don't have the money to do this. (I remember in graduate school having a $500.00 limit on my visa card!) It is important not to put up a candidate in substandard housing. The university covers all transportation, food, and housing costs (door-to-door) for the interview.

Mark Nielsen: I have often wished that our school would have candidates make two presentations, one on their research aimed at faculty, and another on some more general topic aimed at undergraduates. Watching just the standard "research talk" has not helped me make good judgements on teaching ability and compatibility with the teaching mission of our university.

Tamara Veenstra: You want to give the candidate an accurate picure of what life will be like at your institution. Of course, you want to try to convince them to accept an offer if you make it. But you don't want them to leave after a year because their interview was nothing like actually being a member of the department.

--presentation(s) -- our search committee had candidates give 2 presentations (one research talk, the other was to teach a calculus class), many of the schools i interviewed at just had one undergraduate level talk It's important to very clearly outline what level/type of presentation you are expecting. Should the research talk be accessible to all the faculty for the whole time, or should it start out general and by the end be accessible primarily only to people in the area. What level of students are going to come to the talk? Should it be an interactive talk? It's easy for the candidate to get the wrong impression if it's not clearly and explicitly described.

Candidates should get the schedules in advance so they know what to expect. Also, give them a chance to ask for anything that's not included in the schedule that they are interested in. Perhaps they are serious bikers and would like to see the bike trails in town as part of the local tour.

Dennis Luciano: Campus interviews are typically two-day affairs. The candidate arrives on day one to meet the search committee over dinner off-campus. The candidate is housed on campus in our guest house. The next day the candidate meets with the President, Academic Vice President, Dean of A&S, all department members (don't hide any), and the search committee. The candidate also gives a presentation to students and faculty, has a tour of the campus, and has the opportunity to meet other members of the college community. Breakfast will be off-campus, lunch on-campus, and dinner off. We also try to give a candidate a tour of the city and surrounding suburbs during the visit. During the visit it is best for the committee to be honest and candid at all times. It is most difficult to identify research potential during the visit, so we typically depend on the prior record and on the letters of reference (when in doubt we would make calls). Teaching potential is hopefully identified during the formal presentation and by the selection of the topic presented.

We try to really sell the candidate on us during the interview process. By the time we've selected candidates for campus interviews, we're pretty sure we'd be happy with any of them.

Dusty Sabo: There are certain questions that are not appropriate for committee members to ask in the interview. These are available from most campus affirmative action offices, and we have a copy in your packets.

sarah-marie belcastro: I'd like to re-emphasize that while people might be able to identify a candidate's lecture skills from a presentation, it's going to be difficult to assess other kinds of teaching skills. If you ask a candidate only to give a presentation, you're sending the message that the only type of teaching you expect is lecturing. If by "presentation" you really mean "candidate gets to do whatever s/he wants with students for 50 minutes," make that very clear.

(DS) **(E) Point of Discussion #8** After the interviews, how should the committee proceed? What kinds of plans and contingency plans should the committee be making? Generally the offers and negotiations are done by department chairs and/or deans...

Michael Boardman: Our top candidate is almost always selected by consensus. Sometimes, we need a majority vote. We make backup plans as far as who will receive an offer if the first offer fails.

Dennis Luciano: After the interviews on campus are completed the students attending the presentations are polled through a questionnaire; the President, AVP, and Dean are informally polled. With this information in hand, the entire department and search committee meets to rank order the candidates. Offers are then made based on the rank order. We have been lucky in the past of achieving a very high consensus from all involved. If it does not appear that offers will be accepted, other top ten candidates need to be contacted immediately. Actually if you happen to lose out on your top three, it may be too late to attract a highly ranked candidate, given the present market. Timing is of utmost importance!

-- short break for audience questions was skipped because of time constraints--

(smb) **(FU) Point of Discussion #9** After the search is completed, in some sense the committee's work isn't over. What are the ways that a department can support a new hire?

Carolyn Yackel: At IU, I got a one course reduction the second semester of my first year. At Mercer, I didn't get a course reduction.
Helpful things to do:
1. Answer questions.
2. Don't tell them everything at once, but do tell them most things soon after they arrive. For example, don't forget to tell them about xeroxing, xeroxing at the library, where the library is, getting an ID card, where the supplies are, what the supplies are and what one is expected to supply for oneself, keys, etc.

3. Have various people e-mail the new person over the summer. They can ask questions or tell what to expect. It is a tense time knowing that you've committed yourself to something, but you aren't quite sure what. Having an on-going dialogue with those at the other end helps one to feel better about the whole thing.

Mentors need to be able to answer all the millions of questions that everyone either does or should have when new. Especially important are questions about classes and policies dealing with students. (drop/add, switching sections, advising students, cheating, late exams, etc.)

Michael Boardman: We do not offer course release to new teachers. However, we do have a mentoring system in place (mentors come from another department and are not allowed to participate in any evaluation of the candidate).

Mark Nielsen: Our goal is that we want the person to get tenure. We have a policy of keeping course loads to four courses per year for young faculty (this may go up to five per year after tenure, depending on the research output). We do not have a good mentoring system, though we're a small department and generally try to all help out the newer faculty. Like most universities, we need to be better at communicating the expectations for tenure to our new hires. The tendency is for tenure to be somewhat of a moving target. It's a difficult political process to get any firm set of criteria from administrators -- fuzzy criteria make their lives easier, but put the new hire in a very precarious position.

Dennis Luciano: Once the hire is made the chair needs to stay in continual contact with the new hire, since he/she will have many, many questions, and the chair should have lots of pertinent information to pass along. Give the new person a nice course schedule, not the leftovers from everyone else! It would be wise to assign a faculty mentor for the new hire, say the most recent hire. And most important apply for a PROJECT NExT fellowship!

-- time for audience questions! --

Comment: As a recent graduate student, I'd like to point out that the teaching load should be given precisely in the ad. "Credit hours" and "units" are confusing.

Ed. note: Ideally, loads should be specified both in terms of contact hours and number of courses (as well, perhaps, as number of preparations). Courses usually range from 2 - 5 contact hours and number of courses per term usually ranges from 2 - 4.

(Q1): One school advertises not to submit letters of reference until the candidate is asked to do so. What do you think of this policy?

Dusty Sabo: That's a terrible idea. The ad should request letters, because first, the letters are often the most important part of the portfolio, and not having the letters on hand when needed delays the process. It's often difficult enough to get the letters sent, let alone sent at a different time.

Mark Nielsen: Yes, the letters are very important.

Dennis Luciano: A request for letters should definitely be in the ad.

(Q3): How should a commitee evaluate student input in the hiring process?

Michael Boardman: So far, our students have always agreed with the faculty assessment (hopefully this is their honest opinion, and not just them telling us what they think we want to hear).

Dusty Sabo: Students are especially interested in new hires if they might be taking courses with them.

(Q4): Regarding initial salary---how much play is there in the figure?

sarah-marie belcastro: This depends on the school. There might be plenty of flexibility, or there might be almost none. It may depend on the present salaries and levels of experience of current department members, for example.

??: ASK about this during the interview. Usually the Dean is the meanie on this issue. The department should advocate for you.

Michael Boardman: Sometimes Deans don't have the correct information on salaries, and the department should guide them! For example, you might provide your dean with the AMS Survey data in order to achieve an appropriate salary range for your open position.

Dusty Sabo: Sometimes start-up funds are available, and can be tapped to add to the initial salary.

(Q5): How knowledgeable are your deans about your discipline?

Answers varied a lot, depending on the background of the dean.