ESPO Professional Development Webinar Series

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Academic Job Market: What Every Early Professional Needs to Know

Barbara Cochrane, PhD, RN, FAAN, FGSA
Noelle Fields, PhD, LCSW
Cal J. Halvorsen, PhD, MSW

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Selected ESPO Events at the GSA 2018 Annual Scientific Meeting

- **Pre-Conference Workshop**: Wednesday Nov 14 • 8:00 AM-4:30 PM
- **ESPO Lounge**: (Berkley Room, Sheraton) Thursday Nov 15 - Saturday Nov 17 • 7:00 AM-6:30 PM
- **ESPO Breakfast**: Thursday Nov 15 • 7:00 AM-8:00 AM (Sheraton)
- **ESPO and NIA Collaborative Butler-Williams Scholars Science Symposium**: Thursday Nov 15 • 8:00 AM-9:30 AM
- **ESPO Presidential Symposium and ESPO Wine & Cheese Networking Event**: Friday Nov 16 • 5:00 PM-6:30 PM (wine & cheese after symposium) (Commonwealth Room, Sheraton)
- **Informal Chats**: ESPO Lounge (Berkley Room, Sheraton)
  - Finding and Landing an Academic Job: Thursday Nov 15 • 1:30 PM-2:30 PM
- **Additional Information and Events**: [www.geron.org/2018](http://www.geron.org/2018)
Practical Tips for Applicants within the Academic Job Market

Barbara Cochrane, PhD, RN, FAAN, FGSA
University of Washington School of Nursing

barbc@uw.edu
Personal Contexts and Caveats

• Research-intensive institutions *(no post-doc)*
• Interdisciplinary
• Ongoing coordination and leadership roles
• Mentorship
  – Individual- and institutional-level
  – PhD students and early-career faculty
• Varied perspectives on “the search”
TIP: Think honestly about who you are

- Your professional focus and needs
- Practical considerations
- What you bring to the position
- Your weaknesses
  - Compensatory experiences/strengths
- What kind of person are you
TIP: Make the rounds early…

- *Chronicle of Higher Education* is key
- Review institution’s webpages
- Make personal connections
  - Schedule 1:1’s at conferences (*plan ahead!*)
  - Contact search committee chair
  - Contact others you may know there
- Contact references and provide structure
TIP: Carefully consider the *match* ...

- Research- or teaching-intensive
- Position focus
  - Content area
  - Specific experience/expectations
- Position/school emphasis (*not all is written*)
  - Science: clinical/service, community/policy, lab/data
  - Approaches: interdisciplinary, intervention, diversity/equity
- Your *fit* versus their *breadth*
TIP: Prepare drop-in *blurbs*

- Explain your research/interests in … *one sentence … 3 minutes … 5 minutes*
- Program of research, experiences, future plans, what you’re looking for (don’t forget funding)
- Teaching philosophy, familiarity with various approaches, what you have taught and can teach
- Linkages in your *journey*
TIP: Think of interviewing as a many-splendored thing

- Remember those *early* connections
- Formal phone/online interviews first?
- Ask the search committee chair/others …
  - Preferences/expectations for job talk (straight-up research, journey/experience, plans/goals)
  - Usual itinerary (meetings, social, down-time)
  - Can you request meetings
- Follow-up can take a while
Tips: Practical potpourri

• Consider your experience/strengths as facts, but not bragging rights
• Balance tooting your horn with giving credit
• Tell your story and create linkages
  – Turn the incidental/happenstance into a cohesive story
  – Avoid externalizing or laying blame about the past
• Prepare: good questions, tough-question answers
  – Convey – and assume – interest, curiosity, and enthusiasm
Every Word Counts: Preparing Your Application Materials

Noelle Fields, PhD, LCSW
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
The University of Texas at Arlington
Overview: What to Emphasize in Your Application Materials

- How you fit with the position
- Your publication record
- Research plans (*innovation, feasibility*)
- Funding (*past and future*)
- Teaching plans (*creativity, diversity, previous experiences*)
- Practice/work experience (*as applicable*)
CV

- Different from a resume
- Very education- and research-focused
- Typically, a CV will not contain an objective and will not have a narrative profile
- Typically a CV is several pages
- Well organized with clear headings
- Show your collaborations (who did you work with, publish with, etc.)
CV

• Formatting varies from field to field
• Often includes your degree information, relevant practice experience, honors/awards, scholarship, teaching, funding, service
• Get feedback!
Cover Letters

• Tailored to each university (look at the strategic plan/s)
• Highlight your independent scholarship as well as collaborations with faculty
• Who are you as a researcher (quant, qual, mixed methods, funding, goals)
• Who you are as a teacher (student evals)
• Practice experience (as applicable)
Cover Letters

• Formatting: you are writing to the search chair and committee (*double-check spelling of contact names and titles*)
  – Generally no more than 2 pages (ask mentor/s for standard length)
  – Tone is important
  – Give context to your CV, narration of your experiences

• FEEDBACK, FEEDBACK, FEEDBACK, FEEDBACK
Cover Letters

• Typical format:
  1. Introduction
  2. Dissertation
  3. Additional/Future research
  4. Teaching
  5. Service
  6. Conclusion (brief)

• Use action verbs! Use your own words! Be creative!
• Sign your letter
Research Statement

• A clear statement of the problem or problem-set being addressed
• Research methodologies and approaches
• A summary of progress to date
• A statement of the research’s impact on the field to date (why this is important)
• Processed research initiatives that could grow out of the current work being done
• How this research agenda will fit in with other agendas in the school
Research Statement

• Why are you interested in this type of research?
• Demonstrate focus
• Move beyond your dissertation
• Why is this work important/compelling?
• Potential for funding
• Innovative and/or interdisciplinary
• The potential for incorporating this research in the classroom setting
Teaching Statement

• What is your teaching philosophy?
• Teaching experience
• Teaching interests
• Teaching style
• What do you DO in the classroom?
• Address diversity
Teaching Statement

• Philosophy/Pedagogy
  – How do you promote student learning?
  – What distinguishes your approach to teaching from others?

• Incorporation of Diversity
  – How do you incorporate diverse content in your curriculum?
  – How do you recognize and support diversity among your students?
The Job Search:
A Recent Example from Social Work

Cal J. Halvorsen, PhD, MSW
Assistant Professor
Boston College School of Social Work
Here we go…

Most of my time:
1. Preparing for your applications

Some of my time:
2. The application process itself
3. Interviewing
4. Negotiating
5. Things to consider
But first…

This is stressful!

• Sometimes fun, but often unnerving
• Sometimes energizing, but often exhausting
Preparing

1. Expand and enhance your network
   • Networking
     – Is relationship building
     – Builds your social capital
     – Expands your professional opportunities
   • Trusted contacts
     – Help you learn about existing and upcoming opportunities
     – Provide recommendation letters and advice
Preparing

2. Start early
   • Depends on your field and key dates
   • Start writing documents about 5 months in advance of initial interviews
   • Write more specific statements first (e.g., research and teaching), then your cover letter
   • Adapt them for each school
Preparing

3. Workshop your writing
   - Ask peers for examples
   - Be **clear** and **concise**
   - Include **headings** and **white space**
   - Have others review your writing, including those outside of gerontology (**Avoid lingo!**)
Preparing

4. Stay organized
   • Create and update a *spreadsheet*
   • Columns might include:
     – Updates (e.g., applied, interview set, offer made)
     – Name and location
     – Your interest level (e.g., high, medium, low)
     – *Specific requirements*
     – *Key date(s) and contact(s)*
   • Save PDFs of job postings
Preparing

5. Search job boards weekly
   • The websites will depend on your field
   • Ask faculty on your school’s search committee where they post
Applying

1. Follow directions!
2. Reach out to trusted contacts at these institutions (when applicable)
3. Wait…
Interviewing

1. Breathe
2. Be your best professional self
3. Do your homework on:
   – The school
   – Those who are interviewing you
4. Tell a (brief) **story** about your current and future work
5. Show them you’ll be a **good colleague**

[Logo of The Gerontological Society of America]
Negotiation

• Get advice from your advisors, dean, and trusted peers who have done this before
• It is nerve-wracking
Keep in mind…

1. Schools
   – Will likely interview more than you
   – Have **specific priorities and needs** (you only know some of them)

2. There are more applicants than openings

3. After offers are made
   – Be honest and ask for a reasonable amount of time to consider them
   – **Celebrate!**
Questions?
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• The nations oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging
  – 5,500+ interdisciplinary members around the world touching all facets of aging

• Mission
  – Promote multi- and interdisciplinary research in aging
  – Translate and disseminate research findings
  – Promote/advocate for education/awareness on aging across disciplines
  – Foster application of research into policy development

• To view past ESPO Professional Development webinars, along with other GSA webinars, visit geron.org/webinar

• Email espo@geron.org for additional questions