Negotiating a Faculty Appointment

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Negotiating a Faculty Offer

- Salary is generally calculated by academic year, but length varies by institution.
- Can I teach in the summer? Do I have to teach in the summer?
- What is the potential to grow my salary? Merit-based raises or union contractual?
- Initial offer: salary, start-up, reduced load, space allocation, reduced teaching load, research equipment/lab set-up, reduced or no advising or committee obligations at first.
- Do your homework — Chronicle publishes salary information for publics and privates
- SU — “Committee Z Report” can be used to compare salaries among peer institutions.
- Use the “I’ve done some investigating, and the average is X, so I would hope my salary would be in that range...” approach.
- Salary is almost always negotiable at research institutions, but may be less so at smaller colleges or community colleges. Assume it is until you find out otherwise.
- Teaching load, range varies by type of institution but is typically 2:2 load up to a 4:4 load; can be re-negotiated and can have clauses for buy-outs related to grants or other administrative duties.
- Ask department chair — what classes? What size are the classes? How many sections of each class? Will I have TA support for these courses and how many?
- Can I be guaranteed 1-2 months of summer salary to work on grant proposals, publishing projects, course/curriculum development?
- GA support — can try to get a Dean-supported GA initially to help start your research agenda.
- Space allocations - might need more than just 1 office. Need storage for curriculum materials.
- Start-up Package — generally a computer is included in a start-up package, but check to be sure and ask about PC vs. Mac environment on the campus and IT support available for each; ask about travel $ to schools/field sites/data collection locations etc; video equipment needed; software needs?; survey/data analysis costs?; research equipment and lab materials for STEM faculty or access to shared research facilities and equipment.
- Faculty travel support — negotiate for 2 conferences paid for per year ($2-3K for first year).
- Advising — ask for a one year/semester delay as you need time to get acquainted with program.
- Committee work: 1 committee as a new faculty, but try to avoid award committees.
- “I want to be the best faculty member for your institution and I need to get a good foothold at the university before I take on too much.” — a good way to politely refuse service assignments.
- Teaching tools; if you need particular equipment, ask for it. (e.g. “clickers” for large lecture classes or specialized software like inspiration).
- Software packages — need for teaching or research.
• Relocation package: figure out how much it will cost to move and ask for it. Try to fly out twice to go real-estate shopping.
• Spousal/partner hiring considerations: services to help them find jobs?
• Consulting – what are rules? At SU, 1 day/week, but other places it is negotiable. What are you offering me in terms of opportunities to do consulting?
• Dual/courtesy appointments- what are the pros and cons for you personally and professionally
• Credit for time at another university if productive a previous school.
• Tenure clock: what is the policy here about stopping the tenure clock? What are the options for doing this?

A few random thoughts about the interview process itself that may be helpful as well.

Interviewing Notes

• Committee size and make-up varies from place to place as does the length of time for the interview process (ranges from 1-3 days)
• Lots of “repeat performances”- group interviews, individual meetings with Deans and faculty, grad students, local school leaders in some cases, etc.
• Likely you’ll give a research presentation
• Probably give a teaching presentation as well
• Focus your comments based on the type of institution- e.g. research university- talk about scholarship and your planned line of research, teaching college, talk about your interest in instruction
• Answer the question completely, but don’t be excessive as they may have a set of questions to get through and they get annoyed if you over-talk
• Do your research on the institution and have prepared questions to ask them about the job and the college- e.g. What type of mentoring might I expect to receive as a junior faculty? What can you tell me about campus support services for assisting me with my teaching/scholarship, etc.?
• Watch out for the good cop/bad cop situations
• Don’t plan on eating much- too busy answering questions.
• Think about your rationale for teaching and be prepared to speak definitively about your views on teaching
• They like to see that your scholarship agenda will evolve and be grant fundable so do some research on NSF and IES etc grant programs that might be good funding options for your future research- Deans like $
• Talk about your interest in living in the region and mention what it has to offer you- requires more research on your part
• Review the specific job description and be sure to tailor your remarks to the job itself as they often use a rubric of sorts with those things on it to evaluate your interview performance- in other words, make it easy for them to fill out your rubric with good stuff
• Don’t talk salary etc until AFTER they make you an offer. Ask general questions about the job such as typical load, advising load, special initiatives within the dept or college.
etc. they also like to hear you ask about where they see the department heading in the future as you would be interested in being a part of that development.

- If you have to teach a lesson, find out as much background info as you can about students, course, prior experiences, resources etc. so you can do a good job of selecting an appropriate lesson.
- Use the “weakness is really strength” technique to answer that question.