Faculty job searches – my own experience & some advice Updated Nov 2023

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A little about me: I was an NIH-funded FIRST-IRACDA fellow at Emory, and applied in the 2019-2020 season. I only applied to positions where research would be supported, but teaching would still factor into tenure and promotion decisions. This meant that I applied mostly to PUIs (primarily undergraduate institutions) and R2s (primarily masters-granting institutions, although most did have PhD programs). I did apply to some R1s with positions in biology departments of the college (not any med schools). My stats: 57 applications submitted, 23 zoom interviews (of 28 invites), 15 campus interviews (of 20 invites), and 8 offers negotiated (6 PUI, 1 R2, and 1 R1). Because my main postdoc publication was in revision during most of this process, I applied to *any* school that supported undergrad research regardless of location or size. I started being slightly choosier about my zoom and campus interviews once I started receiving invites, but tried to visit most places that invited me to campus. I was glad that I did, because my I knew very little about what ended up being my three favorite places – and I almost didn't apply to UMass Lowell at all! So this is a reminder to cast a wide net & keep an open mind for your search.

Outline:
1. Job search logistics
2. Application materials
3. Zoom & phone interviews
4. On-campus interviews
5. Negotiating offers

Updates for those of you interested specifically in R1 positions:

- Lily Khadempour (Rutgers) collected & described resources for all aspects of faculty job searches on this website
- Kara McKinley (Harvard) wrote a detailed summary of her experience on the R1 market
- Arjun Raj (UPenn) collected his thoughts on the entire process here
- And here are two thorough twitter threads from Erica Pratt (Boston Univ) & Tera Levin (Pitt) with their advice about applying to R1 positions

Repository of example job applications materials collected by Jeffrey Ross-Ibarra (Davis)

If you're wondering whether you're ready to go on the market or not (or wondering what "ready" looks like) you can try this tool developed by UCSF

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1. Job search logistics

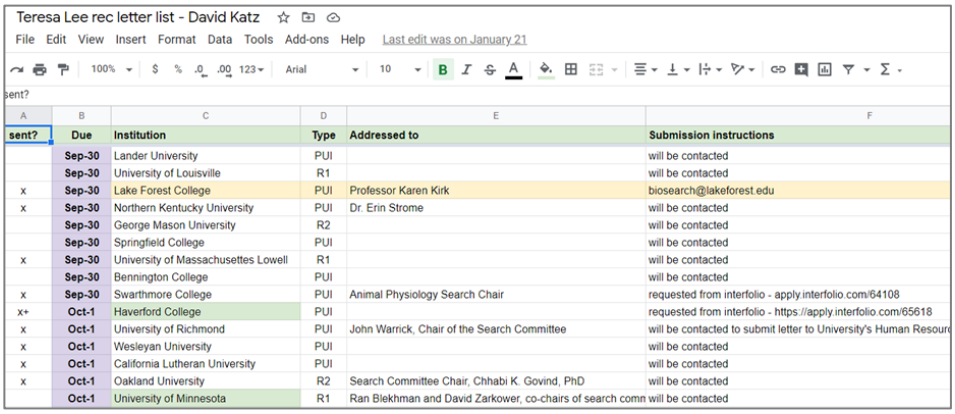
a. Finding positions
   i. Set up automated emails with online databases
      1. These allow you to establish filters for job type, location, keywords, &c
      2. It's better to cast a wide net, so use multiple searches (some with broad terms like 'biology' and others with more specific terms like 'genetics')
      3. My favorite sites: HigherEdJobs & Science Careers
         a. Also used these, but found them to be less helpful: Chronicle of Higher Ed, Inside Higher Ed, & Academic Keys
      4. In the early stages of collecting positions, you may want to check the online databases manually (Every week? two weeks?) just be sure you're not missing anything (sort by date posted to make it easier)
   ii. Check out these EXCELLENT crowd-sourced repositories: ecoevojobs.net & Future PI Slack
      1. Both are updated each year
      2. They also provide lots of info about where individual searches are in the process (people will post the dates they receive Zoom interviews or on-campus invites) and details like start-up and salary once people start negotiating
   iii. Look at community-specific message boards (ie: wormbase.org) and conference message boards
   iv. Shake your network!
      1. People can only help you if they know what you're looking for
      2. Some jobs aren't well-advertised (I found out about three positions from personal emails months before I saw them advertised online)
      3. Don't be afraid to get in touch with people you know at the places with open positions! Once I started looking through department websites, I was surprised at how many people I knew

(from grad school, via other IRACDA programs, or conferences) – any time I had a contact, I emailed them to let them know I was interested in the position and asked if they'd be willing to chat about their experiences there. And if I knew someone at the school who wasn't in the department, I asked if they'd be willing to email introduce me to someone in the department, like a junior faculty member, so I could hold an informational interview.

b. Organizing positions into a spreadsheet
    i. Copy the whole text of the announcement into spreadsheet (or at least the meaty parts) because sometimes the announcement disappears mysteriously, even if the position is still open.
        1. Addendum: after talking to a few search chairs, this happens quite a lot – most job sites charge a fee, so to save money, departments will take the posting down after a month or two. So <u>definitely copy the whole text of the ad</u> somewhere permanent.
    ii. Categories you may not think to include on your position spreadsheet: date due, letter addressed to, exact title of position (some departments have multiple searches ongoing), materials required, submission & log-in info to application website, where you found announcement (link to site)
    iii. I also included a column indicating whether I had submitted yet (to help keep everything straight) and a place to note whether I knew anyone at the school or in the department to contact

	round	done	Due	Institution	Type	Addressed to	Sub	Sub-discipline	Dept	Position Info	School/Dept Info	Materials	Submit to	Notes	Announcement	application
5	round 2	x	14-Oct	University of Delaware	R1	Drs. Fidelma E	will	multiple positions	Biological S	The successful c	The Department o	PDF documents	https://caree	Drs. Fide	website	https://car
6	round 2	x	15-Oct	University of Miami	R1		req	Cell And Molecular	Biology	Applications are	The University of M	cover letter desc	https://umia	Inquiries	website	https://um
7	round 2	x	15-Oct	University of Kentucky	R1	Dr. Vincent Ca	TBA	any area of Integrative Bio	Biology	Our current effo	The Department o	1) a cover letter	http://ukjobs	question	science careers	http://ukjo
8	round 2	x	15-Oct	University of Wisconsin - Mac	R1	Patrick Masso	will	Genetics - model organism	Genetics (G	This position is i	The Department o	click on the "" b	https://jobs.wisc.edu		chron higher ed	https://job
9	round 2	x	15-Oct	Washington University in St. L	R1		will	Molecular, Cellular, and De	Biology	We are interested in candidates wh	cover letter, curr	iculum vitae, research			science careers	apply.Interf
10	round 2	x	15-Oct	Penn State University	R1		will	eukaryotic gene regulation	Biochemis	The successful applicants will join t	cover letter (ma	https://psu.jo	Denise O		website	https://psu
11	round 2	x	15-Oct	Whittier College	PUI	Erica Fradinge	req	Genetics	Biology	Successful candi	Whittier College is	submit (in PDF f	https://apptrkr.com/1		higher ed jobs	emailed
12	round 2	x	15-Oct	Bellarmine University	PUI		via	Genetics, Cell or Molecula	Biology	Applicants should have experience	over letter, curr	Dr. Paul Kiser, Chair of			higher ed jobs	http://bell
13	round 2	x	15-Oct	Saint Francis University	PUI			developmental biology, ce	Biology	This position is i	Saint Francis Univ	Complete an ap	www.francis.edu/emp		higher ed jobs	emailed
14	round 2	x	15-Oct	Birmingham-Southern College	PUI	Dr. Scot Dunc	Dr.	cell biology, molecular bio	Biology	andidates shoul	ith enrollment at	etter of applicat	Dr. Scot Duncan, sdunc		higher ed jobs	emailed
4	round 3	x	18-Oct	Clemson University	R1	Dr. Trudy Mac	will	Human Genetics (cluster h	Center for	Competitive can	The Center for Hur	(1) cover letter;	apply.interfol	Inquiries	science careers	apply.Interf
5	round 3	x	19-Oct	University of Michigan	R1		will	biochemistry, developmer	Molecular,	uccessful candidates will be expect	A cover letter, a	https://apps-prod.mcd			science careers	https://ap
6	round 3	x	now?	New York Institute of Technol	R2		will	developmental biology, im	Biological a	develop a resea	New York Institute	assemble an application into a single pd			higher ed jobs	https://car
7	round 3	x	25-Oct	Carroll College	PUI	Genetics Sear	will	Genetics (Evo Devo)	Life and Ear	We seek a broad	arroll College, a Ca	curriculum vitae	Genetics Search Committee, Office of H		emailed	
8	round 3	x	28-Oct	UC San Diego - Cell Biology (Se	R1		req	gene expression and funct	Biological S	Candidates work	The Division of Bio	cover letter, cur	http://biology.ucsd.edu/jobs/apply-lrf-		https://apo	

c. Organizing application info for your letter writers
    i. Remember that this is a *ton* of work for them, so <u>make their lives as easy as possible</u> – ask them whether there's a system they want you to use, or if there's information they want you to include
    ii. I used a combo of Google Sheets & emails
        1. Each letter-writer had their own Google sheet
            a. Included a column for them to indicate letter was sent (for my own peace of mind)
                i. I didn't do this, but I should've checked in the application system to verify letters were received (and done so well before the dates they were due)
            b. For my PI, I also highlighted places where he had a personal connection to contact


Teresa Lee rec letter list - David Katz

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sent?	Due	Institution	Type	Addressed to	Submission instructions
	Sep-30	Lander University	PUI		will be contacted
	Sep-30	University of Louisville	R1		will be contacted
x	Sep-30	Lake Forest College	PUI	Professor Karen Kirk	biosearch@lakeforest.edu
x	Sep-30	Northern Kentucky University	PUI	Dr. Erin Strome	will be contacted
	Sep-30	George Mason University	R2		will be contacted
	Sep-30	Springfield College	PUI		will be contacted
x	Sep-30	University of Massachusettes Lowell	R1		will be contacted
	Sep-30	Bennington College	PUI		will be contacted
x	Sep-30	Swarthmore College	PUI	Animal Physiology Search Chair	requested from interfolio - apply.interfolio.com/64108
x+	Oct-1	Haverford College	PUI		requested from interfolio - https://apply.interfolio.com/65618
x	Oct-1	University of Richmond	PUI	John Warrick, Chair of the Search Committee	will be contacted to submit letter to University's Human Resour
x	Oct-1	Wesleyan University	PUI		will be contacted
x	Oct-1	California Lutheran University	PUI		will be contacted
x	Oct-1	Oakland University	R2	Search Committee Chair, Chhabi K. Govind, PhD	will be contacted
	Oct-1	University of Minnesota	R1	Ran Blekhman and David Zarkower, co-chairs of search comn	will be contacted

        2. I emailed my letter writers every 2-3 weeks to remind them of the Google Sheet, let them know about upcoming applications, & give any special instructions, like who to email directly
        3. I didn't do this, but one PI told me she likes to include the full address of the search chair *and* discuss who in the department you'd interact with – so consider providing info like that too.
    iii. Be aware that each institution has a different preference for getting their letters
        1. Some want letters by the application due date, others only ask for letters later; others use services like Interfolio; others ask for letters to be emailed directly to an individual.

d. **Ask recent hires for their materials**
    i. This is bolded because it's one of the most important things you can do to prepare! Everyone I asked was generous with sharing materials and offering advice. Reading through a handful of applications is

the best way to understand the perspective of the search committee. *And* this is a good way of notifying people that you're looking for a job, so they can keep you in mind if an opportunity arises.
    1. Try to collect examples for each type of institution you're applying to.
    2. Some of these documents may have field- or sub-discipline-specific conventions, so be sure to ask people whose work resembles yours or who work at institutions like the ones you'd want to be at

e. Be strategic about having people look over your materials
    i. As is true for *any* editing, you want to give people plenty of notice and let them know what types of comments and level of editing you'd like.
        1. I reached out to potential editors (friends and/or colleagues at each type of school) <u>as soon as I started drafting</u> my materials to see if they'd be able to read over them in a few weeks and give me comments back with a 2-3 week turnaround. New faculty will be your best readers, but they are also stressed & busy people, so giving them notice (and the opportunity to turn you down gracefully) will be greatly appreciated.
        2. If your close friends owe you favors, you can try asking for a 1-week turnaround, but save that only for the most desperate of situations.
    ii. Each set of my materials (PUI, R2, and R1) had at least two rounds of editing.
        1. First round: I asked my close friends who had recently become faculty to read my first drafts and give substantive comments on content & structure (rather than copy-editing).
            a. You may want to have people in your lab proof your drafts first, if you're prone to typos and grammatical errors
        2. Second round: I asked friendly colleagues to look over my entire packet wearing their search-committee-hats (ie: tired, distracted, and busy) and give comments back on their perceptions on me as a candidate
        3. My research plan went through the most rounds of revision: I mocked up a plan and gave a chalk-talk style lab meeting to hash it out. Then I wrote my first draft, had people in my lab read it closely; revised it into a second draft and had friends in different sub-fields read it for feasibility at their institutions (PUI and R1); revised it into a third draft and had different friends read it to give substantive comments; and finally had the fourth draft included in my entire packet for colleagues to read.

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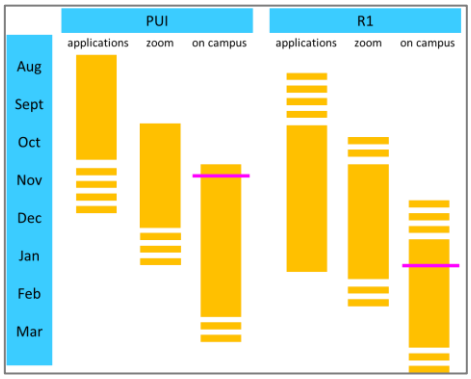
2. Application materials

a. <u>START EARLY. LIKE REALLY EARLY</u>.
    i. This is all caps, bolded, and underlined, because it's the thing I would have changed most about what I did. I thought I started early – I prepped drafts of my materials in August, sent them out for comments, and started tailoring my materials mid-September. But, with fifteen applications due Sept. 30 & another twenty due by Oct. 15, life gets a little crazy if you're waiting until the actual deadline date to submit.
        1. I ought to have started <u>submitting applications weeks before</u> their due date, which would have allowed me to get ahead of my list and perhaps finish submitting most applications before becoming busy with Zoom and campus interviews.
        2. And I definitely should have tried <u>logging into application websites earlier</u> than the day I wanted to submit, so I wasn't taken aback by hidden short-answer questions or documents they didn't list in their specific ad.
        3. My postdoc advisor was *super* supportive of my search – he understood that once things ramped up, applying to jobs was basically going to be a full-time job. I got very little science done from Sept (when I started tailoring applications) to Feb (when I signed my contract).

b. A note about timing:
    i. My teaching mentor warned me about this, but I still wasn't entirely prepared – as you can see from this diagram of my search timing, I received my first PUI offer (the pink line) in Nov. – I was still submitting applications and taking zoom interviews at PUIs, and had yet to submit half of my R2/R1 applications. So part of what made the calculation of accepting early offers so difficult was weighing the loss of missing any *potential* interviews that I might have (whether already scheduled or still completely hypothetical).



c. **Tailor your documents**
    i. This is also bolded, because I've heard from search committee members that this is critical for setting yourself apart. But it is definitely time-intensive… For each application, I spent an additional 1-2 hours (for a PUI) or 2-3 hours (for an R1) looking up information for tailoring. If you want more detail, my friend Katie has blog posts on the real cost of faculty applications (time, money, and emotional).
        1. Tailoring might be more important for PUIs & teaching-intensive positions, because they're vetting applicants more closely to ensure that they truly understand how the environment would be different than an R1 institution. Many of my friends who applied solely to R1s and med schools only tailored their cover letters.
    ii. Remember to view your materials through the perspective of the search committee
        1. Even better, have colleagues who've recently sat on searches look over your entire packet.
            a. I sent mine to two friends each at a PUI, R2, and R1, and told them to wear their most tired and distracted search committee hats while looking it over.
        2. Some applications have very specific instructions (word and page limits) – make a special note of these so you don't forget in the chaos of submitting multiple applications
    iii. Here's the approach I took for tailoring:
        1. Created 'master' versions of each document (separate ones for PUI and R1) with comments and highlights indicating the places to tailor
            a. For each institution, I saved a separate copy of each document – this allowed me to be *sure* I wasn't accidently using the wrong name or making other noob mistakes
        2. Made a notes doc where I pasted the entirety of the job ad
        3. In notes doc, pasted in the mission / values statement of the institution
        4. In notes doc, made separate sections to collect info for each of the following:
            a. Cover letter
                i. Noted the exact title of position, what kinds of students are at the school, what type of teaching they want
                ii. Also looked up what people commonly call the school (like how it's normal to call UNC-Chapel Hill 'Carolina')
            b. Research statement
                i. Looked up pertinent facilities (searched "university name confocal")
                ii. Made note of any Centers or Cores related to my work
                iii. Went through all department faculty bios, noting any related colleagues
                    1. Also looked up faculty in related departments/schools
                iv. Searched "university name elegans" and "university name chromatin" just to be sure I wasn't missing something obvious research-wise
            c. Teaching philosophy
                i. Looked up the courses in the department to see what's available that I could teach or what's missing that I could develop
                    1. Often there's a page on their website that details the suggested tracks for their major
                    2. But if necessary, you could go into the registrar's course catalog
                ii. Is research required for all students? Is there an honors thesis option? Is there an established summer research program?
            d. Statement of diversity, equity, & inclusion
                i. Looked up institutional support for certain student populations

1. Searched “university name first generation” and “university name underrepresented”
2. Tried to get a sense of how faculty were involved in these programs (Are they research PIs? Mentors? Advisors?)

ii. Searched for student orgs like SACNAS or the Black Student Union
iii. Looked up STEM-specific initiatives like LSAMP, MARC, or RISE

d. Cover letter
   i. This was my most-tailored document – you should approach it from the angle of telling them all the ways you’re <u>prepared to succeed *specifically* at their institution</u>
      1. For R1s, I tried to keep mine to a single page or just a little over
      2. For PUIs, I let mine be closer to two pages
   ii. First paragraph – the intro
      1. Include the exact position that you’re applying for (to disambiguate, in case they’re running multiple searches)
      2. Provide relevant background (usually your PhD & postdoc training)
      3. If you’re applying to PUIs, mention right away *why* you want to be at a teaching-intensive institution (remember they’re weeding out people who see PUIs as a backup option)
         a. Consider highlighting the how your background prepares you for balancing research with teaching
      4. Mention your research brand
         a. What approaches do you use to answer what question?
         b. Be sure that this is tailored for the position (ie: leading with genomics vs. leading with development)
   iii. Body of letter – about three paragraphs:
      1. for R1s, I had the following:
         a. one about my research journey – my sources of funding, who I worked with, what we discovered (including citations, which is very important for works-in-progress)
         b. one about my future research program
            i. what big questions I’ll address and what makes me best suited to address them
            ii. why these questions are important to field (and therefore fundable)
            iii. didn’t include very much detail or specifics
            iv. could also include potential interactions with the department here (or in final paragraph)
         c. one about teaching and mentoring
            i. mention my willingness to work with their specific type of students in the classroom and my lab (undergrad, MS, PhD)
            ii. experiences I can bring to support their needs (very tailored)
               1. unique teaching experiences or working with certain student populations
               2. publications or awards for teaching & mentoring
               3. mentioned that I’m prepared to teach a range or courses spanning X, Y, and Z
         d. for some R1s, if the application didn’t require a separate statement of DEI, I’d include a summary paragraph here – but I only did this if I thought it’d be appreciated by the search committee. I tried to gauge whether this would be appreciated from language in their job ad or on their departmental website.
      2. for PUIs, I had the following:
         a. one paragraph about teaching
            i. highlighted the experiences I have & populations I’ve worked with that prepare me for working with their students
            ii. provided a few concrete details, to show that I have actual experience
            iii. summarized my teaching brand (the sorts of things I do that sets me apart from other teachers)
            iv. “prepared to teach *exactly the courses you mentioned in the job ad*, and develop new courses like X or Y”

1. Because you've done your research already, you'll know that the courses you're proposing to develop are truly lacking from their curriculum

b. One paragraph about my research journey (pretty much the same as my R1 version)
c. One paragraph about my future research plan
    i. Make it very clear that your <u>plan is feasible</u> at their institution
        1. Mention if you have experience working with undergrads in the lab
    ii. Mention the ways that you'd integrate into the department
        1. What will you bring to their department that's unique/missing?
d. If the application doesn't require a separate statement of diversity, equity, & inclusion, I added a paragraph briefly summarizing my experiences (mentoring, leading workshops, working with national programs like MARC or LSAMP)

3. Last paragraph – the big finish
    a. "This specific place would be a good fit for me and my research because…"
    b. Highlight the ways you'd fit into the department
        i. Be careful not to sound too presumptuous (ie: don't mention collaborating unless you already have an ongoing relationship with someone)
        ii. "For example, I look forward to engaging with X about Y"
        iii. "My lab will benefit from interactions with labs that do X, like Y and Z"
        iv. "My trainees will benefit from Z fancy center because"
    c. I also tried to incorporate language acknowledging the college's mission (it was easier to do this for PUIs)
    d. This is also where you should mention anything meaningful to you about the institution or the location (do you have family in the area and you want them to know it? Did you graduate from a similar kind of institution?)

e. Research statement (3-4 pages)
    i. Start broad, with big questions
        1. Tailor the intro to the department – is it a genetics-only department, or is it a broad biology department that includes ecology & molecular biology?
        2. For PUIs, I mentioned working with undergrads right away, and was sure to highlight all the ways in which they could contribute (or already have contributed) throughout
    ii. Highlight how your plan will build off your prior accomplishments
        1. How has your training prepared you to succeed with the plan?
        2. Why are you uniquely positioned to answer these questions?
    iii. Mention what types of funding you'd apply for (or already have)
        1. Bonus if you can apply to different sources (like the NIH and the NSF)
    iv. Figures and diagrams are good! They break up space and add visual interest
    v. Most people organize their research statement in terms of their first grant, or first two grants
        1. Mine was organized:
            a. Intro & background
                i. Included a short outline of Grants 1 & 2 on the first page (for faculty who only glance over the first page)
            b. prior accomplishments
            c. Grant 1 (to show them I'm ready to start applying for funding immediately)
                i. Aim 1 – discussed two types of experiments
                ii. Aim 2 – discussed two types of experiments
            d. Grant 2 (to show them I have more than one good idea)
                i. Shorter than my description for Grant 1, focused more on the bigger picture of how this expands my research program
            e. Concluding paragraph
                i. Mentioned special equipment, interdisciplinary centers, or core facilities that would benefit my lab

f. Teaching philosophy (1-2 pages)
    i. There are all kinds of resources online about how to approach writing teaching statements
    ii. Think about <u>how you can set yourself apart</u> from other teachers
        1. What defines your style?
        2. What is your mission as a teacher?

iii. Remember to apply the same kind of rigor towards your teaching as you do towards your research
    1. Demonstrate your understanding of theory by citing sources
    2. How will you assess efficacy?
    3. Be judicious with jargon (including some words will indicate you're immersed in the field)
iv. Use concrete examples to illustrate each one of your main points
    1. Many people don't have teaching experiences, so they write about what they would do – if you have experience, you should definitely mention it to set yourself apart.
v. I had asked for short statements (1-2 paragraphs, less formal than a letter of rec) from teaching mentors & co-teachers – I used these to incorporate quotes that supported my statements
    1. Could also incorporate quotes from students and student evaluations

g. Statement of diversity, equity, and inclusion
    i. UCSC has a great rubric for evaluating these statements
    ii. I used this document to describe the concrete and substantial ways I had contributed to these efforts
        1. Again, many people don't have a history of substantive contributions, so mentioning past experiences is a good way to set yourself apart
        2. Be wary of placing undue significance on minor outreach. This could make it seem like you haven't made many meaningful contributions (ie: judging a few science fairs). Depending on tone, it might be better to focus on what you'd do moving forward in the future.
    iii. It's even more important in this statement to avoid spouting platitudes.
        1. use concrete examples to support your statements
            a. instead of saying "I supported diverse learning styles," I used an anecdote of how I helped a student with autism feel like he was a member of our class community
            b. rather than saying "I've worked with Hispanic students," I talked about encouraging a mentee to step up and become the president of the graduate Latinx organization
        2. And if you don't have any specific prior experiences to discuss, remember that you can still use a scholarly approach & cite references to demonstrate your theoretical grounding
    iv. Many people use this document to discuss their lived experience, which can be valuable and allow the committee to see aspects of your life that wouldn't be obvious in the other documents. But remember that, just like your research statement, the focus should be on how your lived experience will inform what you're going to do in the future – as a member of their campus community, as a teacher, as a mentor, as a PI.
        1. I've seen discussion on twitter that DEI statements just encourage the airing & performance of personal trauma for public viewing, which feels gross. My hope is that (again, just like our research statements), search committees will move towards using the DEI statement as a way to demonstrate a candidate's potential for future success in these efforts, rather than as a personal statement. So lived experiences are most valuable if you can use them as an opportunity to reflect on what you can change or how the system needs to change to best support similar populations.

h. Other things that they can ask for in the application
    i. Summary of important research accomplishments
    ii. PDFs of your top three manuscripts
    iii. Summary of your manuscripts
    iv. Statement of how you'd support their mission (most common at religious institutions)
    v. Short-answer responses hidden in the application form (not listed in their ad)
    vi. Transcripts (unofficial is mostly okay)
    vii. Student teaching evaluations (usually optional)
    viii. Optional things:
        1. A note about teaching portfolios – sadly, not a single PUI asked for a teaching portfolio. When I asked my friends on PUI searches, they emphatically did *not* want to look at teaching portfolios (citing too many documents to look through as it is). So, at least for biology searches, I wouldn't recommend taking the time to put your portfolio together (unless you're already done with all the other materials).
        2. Personal website – I didn't have time to make a website, but I've heard that it helps to have an easy-to-find web presence. So I at least made sure that my information was up to date across the platforms I already used: Google Scholar, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, ResearchGate. However, I've heard from some search committees that, for equity's sake, they're

discouraged from looking up additional information about each candidate. So you may only want to invest time in making a website if your other materials are done.

i. During the process of submitting applications, be sure to check your spam/clutter folders regularly, to be sure you aren't missing important correspondence.

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3. Zoom & phone interviews

a. First off, congratulations! Your materials have convinced the search committee that, out of dozens (and sometimes hundreds) of applicants, you might be a good fit for their institution. Many searches will only interview 10-15 candidates by Zoom/phone.

b. When preparing for your interviews, help yourself be comfortable and look good!
    i. After COVID, we're probably all experts at Zoom calls, but as reminders:
        1. Try to have bright natural light on your face
        2. Be aware of what's in your background, and what it communicates to the search committee
        3. Practice looking at the camera
            a. I found a lucky cardboard box that raised my laptop camera to just above eye level
            b. On screen, I made the window of who I'm speaking to relatively small (3"x4") and placed it right under the camera – this allowed me to maintain 'eye contact' while still seeing everyone on their end.
            c. If you want to have notes for yourself, practice having them open on your computer in a way that doesn't bring your eyes far from the camera (some search committees project you onto a large TV, and apparently, it's pretty easy to tell when someone is reading off their computer)
        4. In 2019, I had interviews via phone, Zoom, Skype, and Go2Meeting – if possible, try out the platform they're using so you're familiar with the user interface

c. For Zoom/phone interviews, my prep was similar to what I did for my application, just more intense.
    i. Spent more time taking notes on:
        1. Individual faculty – their labs, research program, research history (this can help you identify people or experiences in common), courses taught/developed
            a. Again, if you haven't already done this, use the NIH and NSF databases to look up types of funding for the institution/department – this will help you see what types of funding are realistic there. (And you'll know whether they're in the process of mission creep if they tell you they expect fancier grants than anyone has gotten in the past.)
        2. Departmental approach to research – summer programs, special initiatives, types of funding, requirements for graduate programs
        3. Departmental approach to teaching/mentoring – required courses, specific gaps in their curriculum, special initiatives

d. What to expect during the interview:
    i. We've all experienced how phone/Zoom calls with strangers can be awkward, but some of my interviews were even more uncomfortable than I expected.
        1. Some conversations were one-sided – faculty took turns asking questions, but they barely responded to anything I said, other than with a 'thank you.' And it gets dispiriting after twenty minutes of no feedback. I've heard from search committees that sometimes they do this to best preserve equity between candidates (so the intent is good, but it still feels weird).
        2. Sometimes I'd ask them a follow-up or clarifying question, just to elicit some kind of response – this helped it feel more like a back-and-forth, which made me more comfortable.
    ii. At the beginning of the call, most people will go around and introduce themselves – do your best to write down who they are (or anything that will help you look them up later).
        1. In hindsight, I should have probably taken a screenshot of the Zoom interview to document who was present.
    iii. Nearly all of interviews had standard questions to get through.
        1. some will give you the questions in advance – do your best to sound natural (instead of over-practiced) when answering these known questions.

iv. Most interviews were ~30 minutes (the shortest I've heard of is 15 min and my longest was scheduled for 30 but lasted nearly an hour) – so you'll want to be sure that <u>your answers are thorough but succinct enough</u> to allow you to get through all the questions
v. A few schools skipped phone interviews and went straight to on-campus interviews.
vi. After each interview, I emailed a brief thank you note to the search chair (and sometimes to other faculty who reached out

e. <u>Common questions asked by R1s</u>
   i. Describe the research program you'd like to have here.
      1. Summarize your research accomplishments.
      2. What will you need to support your research program?
      3. We are a broad department – how would your research fit in?
      4. What size of lab do you envision, and how would you run it?
   ii. What specifically attracts you to our institution?
      1. What will you bring to our department?
      2. What sets you apart as a candidate?
      3. This wasn't a common question, but it was the favorite question I got asked: What will be the biggest challenge you face as a faculty member?
   iii. Describe your teaching experience.
      1. What could you teach here?
      2. How will you balance research and teaching?
      3. What is your approach to mentoring students or trainees?
   iv. How will your experience allow you to support underrepresented populations?
   v. Do you have any questions for us?
      1. <u>Yes! You will always have questions for them</u>**.** These questions reflect your investment in your own success & your priorities as a junior faculty member
         a. What kind of support is there for research in your department?
            i. How are junior faculty supported?
            ii. What kinds of professional development is offered?
            iii. What types of funding support exist institutionally?
            iv. What support is there for applying for extramural funds?
         b. What is your vision for the department in the next few years?
         c. How does recruiting grad students work in your department?
         d. Can you describe the expected teaching responsibilities?
            i. What support is there for teaching?
      2. What are your grad/undergrad students like?

f. <u>Common questions asked by PUIs</u> – nearly all PUIs asked variations of these exact questions
   i. How are you a good fit for a liberal arts college like X?
      1. What excites you the most about this position?
   ii. How would you teach X course that we mentioned specifically in our ad?
      1. Describe your style of teaching.
      2. Describe your previous teaching experiences.
      3. What is the most effective teaching strategy you've used?
      4. What other courses would you be interested in developing?
   iii. How would you describe your research to a student? (In two minutes. In the hallway.)
      1. What kind of research program would you establish?
      2. How would our students be involved?
      3. What types of equipment will you need for your research program?
      4. How would you research program fit into our department?
      5. How would you fund your program?
      6. What is your plan to publish?
   iv. How will you encourage successful outcomes for underrepresented populations?
   v. Do you have any questions for us?
      1. <u>Again, yes! You will always have questions for them.</u> These questions reflect your investment in your own success & your priorities as a junior faculty member
         a. What resources are there to support teaching?

i. Could be institutional, in the department, or infrastructure
ii. What are your classrooms like?

b. What support is there for research?
i. Intramural funding for faculty? For students?
ii. Support for applying for extramural funding?

c. How does the department view pedagogy research?

d. What are your students like?
i. Surprisingly, this was one of the more informative questions I asked… Some were a little mean about their own students, and that was a red flag for me. Others were realistic about the challenges their students faced but clearly liked and supported their students. Yet others were enthusiastic about their own students but snobby about students at other 'lesser' schools.
ii. Where do they come from?
iii. What do they end up after graduating?

g. I sent a thank you email to the search chair after each phone or zoom interview.
i. this is pretty common, but there are also plenty of successful hires who didn't send thank you emails, so it probably doesn't matter much either way. And now that I've sat on a search: there were a few people email every member of the search committee after their phone interview, but the majority didn't (or only emailed the chair / their initial faculty contact to arrange the interview).

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4. On-campus interviews

a. Double congratulations! Many schools only bring 3-5 candidates to campus, and I was told that if you make it to this point, the decision is (in some ways) out of your hands. Often it'll depend on external factors, like balancing the research expertise or teaching needs in their department.
i. At some places, the search committee can only recommend their top 2-3 choices – the final decision is made by the Dean or higher administration.

b. Remember, the <u>financial costs of the interview should always be borne by the institution</u> inviting you.
i. Some places booked everything on my behalf (flight, car service, hotel)
ii. Others wanted me to book my own flight and I'd be reimbursed (either handed a check at the interview, or at some point after the interview)
iii. Some even asked me to save my receipts for things like airport parking or meals en route
iv. Some places were very prompt about reimbursements, but for others, I did have to follow up (sometimes multiple times – the holidays and end-of-semester made things chaotic for admins).

c. When you're invited to campus, feel free to <u>ask for details about the interview</u>
i. Who should you work with to coordinate trip planning? (airport parking, flight, hotel, transportation to/from airport, meals)
1. There were times I had to coordinate traveling from one interview to another – this is fine! They're usually happy to cost-share with another institution. You don't have to share where your other interview is (although they might be able to guess). Just the logistical restrictions.
a. For one interview, I had already booked a vacation abroad that I had to change – after asking the provost, they offered to pay $800 of my ticket back home (about the cost of the change fee + what my flight would have been if I were flying from home).

ii. What's involved in the interview?
1. Types of presentations?
a. Who will be your audience for each presentation?
b. What kinds of room (projector, seating, layout, whiteboards)?
i. Because my teaching demos rely heavily on active learning, it was really helpful to know the seating arrangement (and everyone I asked totally understood why I wanted to know)
c. Type of computer? Type of projection hookup?
i. No matter what they tell you, have your PPT available on a flash drive and in the cloud, just in case.
2. Meetings with whom?

iii. Most of the time, you'll get a schedule of your meetings

1. The best-organized schools had names & phone numbers of who was picking me up and taking me to each meeting
2. But some places made last-minute changes, so schedules ended up being different
    a. It's pretty unnerving not to know who's picking you from your hotel, so do your best to figure that out, at least. (Otherwise you'll be sitting in the lobby awkwardly making eye contact with every person who walks in.)

iv. <u>If they don't give you a mobile phone number to contact in an emergency, be sure to get one</u> – you'll want to be able to text someone in charge of your interview with updates about any travel mishaps, and it's reassuring to have someone to contact in case something goes wrong. They'll likely have yours on file in your application, but it doesn't hurt to remind them of your number before you travel.

d. Again, help yourself be comfortable & look good!
    i. Think about your outfits & <u>shoes</u> (especially since many interviews occur in the winter)
        1. Be prepared to bring your suitcase with you to campus – many times, I went to the airport directly from a full day of meetings, so I had to check out of the hotel in the morning.
    ii. Be self-sufficient & <u>nimble</u>
        1. In a messenger bag, I carried water, snacks, laptop, charger, notebook, flash drive with my presentation, any teaching materials I needed, backup chalk/whiteboard markers, and accessory clothes (umbrella/rain jacket or gloves/hat/scarf)
    iii. I took notes during each of my interviews (it's just the kind of person I am) – most people weren't phased by this, but at two schools, people were surprised.
        1. If I was having a sensitive or personal conversation, I tried to avoid writing in my notebook (to set the person at ease). But it was very necessary, and *exceedingly* helpful, for me to write down details like intramural funding, teaching load, curriculum details, start-up values, &c. I'd never have kept all of it straight otherwise.
e. Once again, for on-campus interviews, my prep was similar to before, just more intense.
    i. If I hadn't already looked up all faculty research programs, I did that here
        1. Skimmed recent publications of faculty – if the department was too large, I prioritized faculty that I was meeting with personally, and those who had research programs related to mine
        2. Tried to think of discussion topics or questions based on their recent research
    ii. Reviewed details about teaching & mentoring for the institution
    iii. One unusual circumstance could be group interviews - one school was running three concurrent searches for a cluster hire, so they brought nine candidates to campus, three at a time. For this interview, I was aware that we'd also be judged on our ability to interact and support our colleagues (which is one of the points of a cluster hire), so I also prepped for the other candidates by reading recent papers and coming up with questions to ask during their seminars.
f. Job talk
    i. Every school (PUI and R1) included a research seminar as part of the interview
        1. this is where you'll present your research and future plans
        2. some PUIs didn't include a teaching demo, so this is how they'll evaluate your teaching and ability to communicate with a broad audience
    ii. Ask for details about the room & who'll be in attendance
        1. Undergrads? Broad department? Faculty from other disciplines?
    iii. An outline for my 45-minute talk:
        1. 10 minutes – background and intro
        2. 25 minutes – recent research
            a. Cited myself in the corner of relevant slides
            b. At PUIs, I included a think-pair-share activity during this part
            c. Highlighted the work of trainees (undergrad or grad) with their photos
        3. 10 minutes – future research directions
            a. If you have preliminary data or are bringing your own funding, include it!
            b. Emphasize feasibility at their institution
            c. Highlight opportunities for their specific trainees (undergrad and grad)
            d. Mention what types of funding you envision
            e. Like my research statement, I structured this part in the form of two grants

iv. Prioritize simplicity and a *clear narrative* that sets up your future research directions
v. Consider whether you need to explain a technique
    1. At PUIs, I explained every single technique I used
    2. At R2s and some R1s, I even included a brief illustration of ChIP-seq (since the departments I interviewed at were very broad)
vi. As with all research presentations, it'll be important to practice – but if you have limited time, you'll probably want to prioritize practicing your chalk talk or teaching demo
vii. Take the time constraint very seriously – you'll want to leave 5-10 minutes for questions & discussion, and you *definitely* don't want to go over time.

g. Chalk talk
    i. See this *fantastic* doc of chalk talk prep tips from Leila Reider (Emory)
        1. Also, see if you can sit in on any chalk talks happening on your campus – some places may not allow it, but many do, so it's always worth asking the search committee chair (who will then usually run it by the candidate first). Some places may also have more formal programs that allow postdocs to sit in on the chalk talk.
    ii. Usually a part of interviews at R1/R2s
        1. not all places include a chalk talk, or some will include it as part of a second visit
    iii. Here is where you'll describe your future research program
        1. Be prepared to flesh out your first two grants
    iv. The format is less structured & usually pretty interruptive (like the style of an oral qual)
        1. Most schools will want you to use a white/chalk board
        2. Some schools may allow you to prepare a PPT or a few PPT slides
        3. Ask for details about the room and who'll attend (some schools dictate faculty only, others have theirs open for the whole department)
        4. Ask whether you can have a half-hour in the room beforehand, so you can write things on the board ahead of your presentation
    v. Often the chalk talk is a mystery for postdocs, but it doesn't have to be!
        1. Ask the chair of your department, or the chair of searches on your campus, whether you can attend chalk talks (with the permission of the candidate)
        2. At Emory, the Office of Postdoctoral Education has excellent chalk-talk workshops
    vi. Treat using the board like choreography
        1. How will you use the board space?
        2. What is the timing & flow of information?
        3. What diagrams or outlines are useful to have on the board the whole time?
    vii. PRACTICE as much as possible
        1. Practice by yourself, so you can get a feel for using the board and pacing your presentation
        2. Practice with others, so you can get used to being interrupted (ideally, have them play at being skeptical or even hostile)
        3. Most importantly, practice with other faculty, because they're the ones who understand the types of questions you're likely to get and common pitfalls for postdocs
        4. Similar to a qual, faculty can get bogged down in the intricacies of one aim – how will you manage time, so you can cover what you want?
        5. How will you handle hostile or rude questions?

h. Teaching demo
    i. Usually a part of interviews at PUIs
        1. but some PUIs don't include it and rely only on your job talk
        2. for equity, some schools gave every candidate the same amount of time to prepare (so I only learned the topic a week before my interview)
    ii. format:
        1. Can be staged (everyone teaches the same topic)
        2. Can include faculty (including non-departmental) & students
            a. I mostly treated faculty the same as students – some played along, others didn't.

b. At one school, faculty gathered in the back and made it clear they were there to evaluate me (so I didn't include them in the student population)
3. Can be part of a real course with real students
    a. If so, remember that the goal is to support the students' learning, so offer to share your materials with instructor
4. Ranged from 30 minutes to a full 90-minute class period

iii. Use this as a <u>showcase for your teaching style</u>
1. But be mindful about balancing active learning with maintaining control of the classroom (especially because you won't have a prior rapport with students)
2. You'll also want to balance choosing an appropriate activity for your learning objectives with choosing an activity that will make you look good as a teacher
    a. Low stakes: think-pair-share, whole class brainstorming, small group activities, worksheets
    b. High stakes: role play, involved small group activities like jigsaw, controversial topics
3. Remember that students might be cranky or unresponsive, so consider how you'll handle it

iv. <u>Ask for all the information</u> you'll need to feel prepared:
1. Be put in touch with actual instructor – I found this really helpful
2. Ask for syllabus, previous PPTs of lectures, textbook used by the class
3. What is classroom like?
    a. Whiteboards / chalkboards (are these visible if you use a PPT?)
    b. Projector hookup
    c. Desks, tables, lecture hall? Fixed seats or movable?
4. Who are students?

v. Be prepared: bring chalk, whiteboard markers, handouts, materials, backup presentation modes

vi. <u>Help the students help you</u>
1. Be mindful that you're a stranger, so design your class to help draw them out (especially if you'll be doing some higher-stakes active learning)
    a. I would try and chat with students as they're settling in, to see what they've covered, what they remember, how it was covered
2. It's okay to let them know the process – <u>they</u> are interviewing <u>you</u>

vii. Be prepared to teach a wide range of topics
1. Examples of what I taught: photosynthesis electron transport chain, cell signaling, organismal homeostasis, genomics, proteolysis & catabolism, evolutionary mechanisms
2. Ideally, you'd have time to practice your teaching demos, but the timing of my interviews didn't really allow me to practice any except my first

i. Common meetings to expect during your interview
i. Faculty (individually, small groups, large groups, entire department)
1. Some places will have additional questions to ask you formally
    a. For example, at some PUIs, they asked an entire list of questions. Ie: how I would handle students who were resistant to learning about evolution, or very specific questions about cheating or misconduct
2. Some places may ask you to outline the curriculum for a potential course or have an equipment list prepared to discuss during your interview

ii. Students (undergrad and grad, often with a meal)

iii. Staff (research specialists, class prep, admins)

iv. University support (HR, IT, teaching tech, librarians)
1. Often these are *informational only*, meaning you won't be evaluated as a candidate by these people

v. Chair

vi. Dean & Associate Deans

vii. Provost or President

j. Remember that this interview is as much about <u>recruiting you</u> as evaluating you, so think of what information you'd like to collect

i. How does it feel to be on campus?
    1. How smoothly does your interview run? How is information communicated?
    2. Who comes to your events? Are students interested in your science?
    3. How do people interact with each other?
        a. Students with students
        b. Students with faculty
        c. Faculty with faculty
        d. Faculty with admin & staff

ii. Questions for junior faculty and senior faculty
    1. What are the expectations for tenure?
        a. Example time commitments for teaching, service, research?
        b. Example of funding & manuscripts expected?
    2. What resources exist to support junior faculty?
    3. What are family leave policies like?
    4. Do start-up funds have a spending time limit?
    5. What are some challenges that students face here?
    6. Can you tell me about writing grants here?
    7. What are the department's strengths? Areas for improvement?
    8. How has the department changed in your time here?
    9. Opportunities for professional development? For teaching & for research?

iii. Questions for chair
    1. In what ways do you help junior faculty be successful?
    2. How *specifically* does the department assess faculty performance for tenure and promotion?
    3. How is teaching quality assessed? What evidence is used?
    4. How does the department encourage scholarship?
    5. How are visiting professors or adjunct faculty integrated into dept?
        a. What percentage of the department is adjunct?
    6. Is there a pre-tenure leave? Post-tenure leave?
    7. Teaching credits for having students in the lab?
    8. Other kinds of research support for students?
        a. Money (travel, semester, or summer)
        b. Summer research
        c. Dorms open during the summer
    9. Do you anticipate growth for the department in the next few years?
        a. Research-wise
        b. Student enrollment

iv. Questions for deans, provosts, & presidents
    1. What is your perception of the department?
    2. Does the school have a cap for tenure? (ie: a limit on the number of faculty who can be tenured in any given year [rare, but not unheard of])
    3. Has the size changed over time? Do you think it's at a steady state?
    4. What is the mechanism for shared governance?
    5. How would you describe the relationship between faculty & trustees?
    6. What is your strategic plan for the next ten years?
        a. New recruitment initiatives for students?
        b. Retention efforts for students?
        c. Any exciting strategic initiatives?

v. Be prepared for how you want to respond to illegal questions (about your family, spouse/partner, plans for children) – just because they're illegal doesn't mean you won't be asked, so think about how you want to handle it.
    1. I was lucky because in each of my interviews, everyone acted in good faith and I didn't have any uncomfortable experiences or weird questions. But you'll be able to find many examples of these situations online, so they clearly do happen.

k. Before leaving, try to find out where they are in their search process
    i. Most places were fine with telling me that I was the first of three candidates, or that I was their very last candidate and the committee planned to meet in a week to discuss.
    ii. When can you expect to hear back from them?
        1. This will be important when considering multiple offers
    iii. And remember, if you accept another offer, you're obligated to turn down subsequent interviews.
        1. Institutions are used to this, so don't feel bad about letting them know, even if travel arrangements have already been made and paid for.
        2. You should still be reimbursed for what you paid upfront, even for canceled interviews

l. After my in-person visit, I sent thank you emails to the search chair, the person/admin who organized my travel, and people who I connected strongly with during my visit (like those who helped me with my teaching demo, those who were very candid about their experience at the institution, or people who'd be good collaborators).
    i. Now that I'm faculty, I've received thank you emails from people I'd met with during their interviews… so clearly some people are sending thank you emails to every single person they spoke with. (Which never even occurred to me to do.) Again, I don't think it matters very much either way.

m. Don't be surprised if it takes a very long time to hear back from them. Or if you don't ever hear back at all.
    i. Many places understand that negotiations are tricky & they could fail to recruit their first choice. So if you'd be acceptable to hire, they'd prefer to keep you as an alternative option rather than risk hurting your feelings by rejecting you too soon.
    ii. But this was one of the things that most caught me off guard during my search: I *never* heard back from 5 places that I had interviewed at. (And I even had a scientific or personal connection with some of the people in those departments!) I'd expected that, after their chosen hire had signed their contract, they'd contact the people they'd brought out to interview and let us know. But I suppose everyone's too busy, or they don't like giving bad news.

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5. Negotiating offers

a. CONGRATULATIONS YOU DID IT!
    i. Surprisingly, I did *not* feel happy when I started receiving offers – I felt stressed & overwhelmed, and then confused about why I didn't feel happy, and *then* guilty for not feeling happy. It was not what I expected at all. But in talking to my friends, it seems a lot of people feel this way, even for offers at places they're excited about. So don't be concerned if you feel bad. And if you feel good, that's an even better sign!
    ii. I mentioned this above, but PUIs interview a month or two earlier than R1s, so I received my first offers while I was still submitting applications & getting interviews – if your search includes multiple types of institutions, you might want to spend time weighing whether you're willing to turn down an offer-in-hand for a chance at a different place. This was *really* hard for me to think about (I didn't want to jinx myself by assuming I'd get any offers), so I was caught unprepared.
    iii. Most PUIs wanted an answer within a week (Small Pond Science explains the reasoning in this blog post). The longest I was able to stretch that out to was 3 weeks after the initial contact from the Dean. R2s were able to give a little more time, in part because the negotiations may be more complex re: funding & space. For R1s, it's not uncommon for negotiations to take months, and to involve additional recruitment visits as you hammer out infrastructure & equipment needs.

b. You should **always negotiate your offer**.
    i. If negotiating makes you uncomfortable, it helps to adopt the right mindset:
        1. You're asking for things that are necessary for your success (and of course, the institution wants you to be successful)
        2. Remember the perspective of the department chair or the dean
            a. They want to help you out, but they also have other constraints
            b. They have to maintain equity among their own faculty
            c. Money can come from different places, so can they be creative?

3. Small Pond Science has a great post about negotiating at a PUI – tl:dr: understand the needs & constraints of your institution, and frame your asks in terms of how that will let you meet those needs better

ii. At Emory, the Office of Postdoctoral Education has great negotiation workshops

iii. There's also plenty of advice online – and remember, past years of ecoevojobs.net & Future PI Slack have a ton of concrete info about people's negotiated timing, salary, start-up, &c.

c. The process:

i. You'll be contacted by phone (or sometimes an email to set up a call)

1. At PUIs, I negotiated with Deans
    a. Sometimes, the department chair mediated, but it was the Dean who had final negotiation power
2. At larger colleges, universities, and state schools, I negotiated with the Chair (who sometimes needed permission from the Dean or Provost for certain terms)

ii. At some institutions, Deans will tell the department they've made a choice and extended an offer (so you may receive congratulatory emails from faculty) but at other places, the department is kept in the dark, and may not realize an offer's been extended.

iii. Once negotiation has started, feel free to reach out (to chair, to faculty) to ask questions about the process or for sample salaries & start-ups

iv. Timeline

1. First call (dean or chair)
    a. I tried to delay this first call as long as possible to buy more time…
    b. Used this call to **get a sense of what they're able to negotiate** on
        i. Find out when they need an answer by (and asked for more time)
            1. PUIs usually only give you 1-4 weeks
            2. R1/R2s will give you a few weeks to months
        ii. Let them know if I had other offers (didn't tell them who)
    c. After call, the dean/chair would email me a written summery of convo or a draft of the offer letter
        i. But if they hadn't, I'd have sent an email to them, to summarize in writing
    d. Sometimes would have a separate follow-up call from chair to hash out details about teaching, departmental space & equipment, and start-up
2. Second call with dean
    a. Send over another draft of offer
    b. Repeat as needed
3. Accept / decline / neither
    a. If you're not willing to accept, but you'd like to keep the option open, you can try: "I cannot accept this offer at this time because XXX – I understand if you need to withdraw it and move onto another candidate." I did this for a position, and the school told me that I was their best candidate, so they left the offer open for two more months (during which time they interviewed additional people until they found another acceptable candidate).

d. Some schools wanted also me to come up with an equipment list during negotiations (used to justify start-up)

i. UMass Lowell asked for an equipment list after I interviewed, but before they extended an offer

e. To prepare for the negotiation, prioritize your asks and frame them in terms of your own success

i. What's most important? Spousal hire? Salary? Expensive & necessary piece of equipment?

ii. They can't give you everything, but they can give you *some* things

1. ie: If they can't go higher on salary, can they give you summer salary for a few years?
2. A department chair told me that you can likely expect them to give way on 2-3 things
3. Be aware that some places absolutely can't do certain things,
    a. But quite a few places had clearly never been asked about certain things, and after checking, were able to offer them to me.

iii. It was important to me to have as much included in the written offer as possible (for protection)

1. To justify having specific statements in writing in your offer: "I know this may be standard at your institution, but I've heard some *crazy* stories…"

f. **THINGS YOU CAN NEGOTIATE ON:**

i. Knowing what's possible is more than half the battle! Having a list of these categories in front of me while talking to the dean made me feel so much more comfortable with the process; some places clearly didn't expect me to be so well-prepared for that first phone call.

1. Be sure to prioritize your asks, which will allow you to focus on the most important aspects first
    a. For example, if they've been generous with salary & start-up, you won't need to continue asking for every single little thing on your list
    b. But if they aren't able to budge much for salary and start-up, THEN you can see what they *are* able to give you – Extra summer salary? Guaranteed salary for trainees via TA/RA-ships?
    c. The longer your list of possibilities is, the more you can help them help *you*
        i. View this as a way of being creative about coming up with an attractive recruitment offer, even if they can't do much with salary & start-up
        ii. frame each ask in terms of how it will help you be a more effective teacher/scholar, or the benefit you'll be able to provide to the dept/students

ii. When do they need an answer by?

1. Ask for longer (it's helpful to have some kind of justification, like travel, waiting to hear back from somewhere else, or if your partner has their own search happening)

iii. Salary

1. Do your homework to prepare a range & justification
    a. Check salaries on Chronicle of Higher Ed, Inside Higher Ed, state employee websites
        i. These report aggregate data for institutions, so be aware of how much your discipline makes compared to others (because professors in engineering have very different salaries than those in comparative literature)
        ii. Your justification doesn't have to be elaborate – mine was something like 15 years of experience with my research system, 5 years of postdoctoral training, innovative teaching experiences, pedagogical training, experience mentor PhD and undergrad students.
    b. In 2019, salary for assistant professors of biology ranged from $45k (small rural college) to over $110k+ (R1 and med schools)
    c. Look up how much the most recent person promoted up to Associate Prof makes (since you're unlikely to get more)
    d. Be aware of cost-of-living for the region
    e. Be aware of whether your salary is 9-mo or 12-mo, and whether it's hard money (completely funded by the institution) or partial soft money (funded by extramural grants that you'll bring in – see salary recovery point below)

2. If they can't give you a higher salary (to preserve equity), can they offer a one-time bonus?
    a. These could take the form of summer salary (for 9-month positions) or "research funds." Because they don't factor into your annual salary, bonuses can help the department avoid future problems with salary equity.

3. Med schools (and some other research-intensive places) will also have salary recovery, where faculty must cover a certain percentage of their own salary via extramural funding. The amount can vary HUGELY, even between departments at the same institution. 50-80% seems standard for many R1s.
    a. Many places don't require junior faculty to start salary recovery immediately (and when it starts could be negotiable)
    b. Some departments prefer PIs to cover more if they can (like up to 95%), or have algorithms that increase your salary as you increase the percentage you cover

c. Try to find out what happens if you don't meet the institution's stated requirement – at some places, nothing happens, at others, your salary is immediately reduced.

iv. Start-up
    1. Again, prepare to justify what you're asking for, by having an overview of needed equipment, reagents, and supplies. Be sure that you don't accept less than what you need – you don't want to hamper your research success because you lack access to essential equipment.
        a. Budget in the anticipated personnel that you'll need to accomplish your goals (grad student? Postdoc? Research tech? computational biologist? Staff scientist?)
        b. Hopefully, most places will also want you to succeed. So you should be very clear on what you *need* (which they'll try to get you, even if it means finagling) versus what you *want*.
    2. When does it need to be spent by?
        a. Many schools limited spending to one year, or the first three, but some are able to give you more time
        b. The best option would be allowing you to keep any remaining start-up after tenure
    3. What can it be spent on?
        a. Some places wouldn't let me use start-up for student salary
    4. In 2019, for molecular-type biology labs, start-ups I had heard about were in the range of:
        a. PUI – $30k to $100k (and one was even $200k! but that's extreme)
        b. R2 – $35k to $500k
        c. R1 – $600k to a million+
        d. Remember to check out the latest iteration of start-up info collected on ecoevojobs.net & Future PI Slack – it can be really helpful to see what people are receiving in your same sub-discipline, institutional type, or geographic area during the exact same job market
    5. Extra things – could be separate from start-up or could be included within start-up
        a. Summer salary for you (if the position is 9 months)
        b. Funding to support students over the summer
        c. Money for professional development or travel
        d. Guaranteed funding for grad students (TA-ships or RA-ships)
        e. Equipment or space build-out
            i. For expensive things, can offer to pay part of cost from your start-up if department or institution pays part
            ii. Department could buy equipment that benefits you (and might even live in your lab) but belongs to everyone in the department

v. Moving
    1. Sometimes this is a set amount, or based on mileage. But it often comes from provost's discretionary fund, so they can give you more if you ask.
    2. Could be an additional $1000-$8000

vi. Second visit?
    1. Most places (even PUIs) could fly me & my partner out for a few nights
    2. Can happen before or after accepting an offer
    3. At many R1s, a second visit is standard, and they'll try very hard to woo you
    4. Some places (mostly R1s) will even set-up separate house-buying visits that can happen after you sign your offer

vii. Teaching
    1. Clarify standard teaching load (I tried to get this written into the offer letter, if possible)
    2. Course-release your first year or semester? (ie: you don't have to teach)
    3. Pre-tenure leave?
    4. Limited number of new-course-preps

viii. Space (office & lab)
    1. Tried to get actual room written into letter (or sq ft, or at least "one of these rooms:")

2. If they're modifying space for an animal facility, definitely have that written in (and a completed-by date)
3. Where will money for lab renovations come from? (try to negotiate not having it come from your start-up)
4. Computer? Usually standard, but doesn't hurt to check
5. Office needs & equipment – Windows? Windows that open? Ergonomic furniture?

ix. When will you start?
1. Smaller schools often (but not always) need you to start in the fall due to teaching demands.
2. Larger schools can often wait a semester or even a full year (especially if you have a good reason).
3. One reason to delay – some schools only start their tenure clock in September. So if you interview in Jan 2020 for a position that would normally start Sept 2020, but negotiate to start Jan 2021, your tenure clock wouldn't start until Sept 2021 (giving you an *extra 9 months* of productivity towards tenure). Ask current faculty how this works at their school.

x. This Twitter thread collects SO MANY other possibilities, and a sense of how possible these are at various types of institutions:
1. Spots in campus-affiliated day-care (or a spot on the special, shorter waiting list, if that exists)
2. Parking near your building (really helpful if you have to pick up children in the middle of the day and return)
3. Campus starting green card application immediately
4. Being paid part of your paycheck early to cover the transition between positions
5. Percentage of grant indirect money that YOU'LL receive (as opposed to the college or department receiving)

g. You should let them know if you have other offers – this gives you leverage.
i. You don't have to tell them who it is or what they've offered
ii. If you want, you can also let other schools know that you've received an offer and check in on where they are in their search
1. It definitely feels a little weird to do this, but it doesn't really hurt anything other than your own ego. And if they aren't going to extend an offer to you, you'd rather know sooner instead of later so you can make the most informed decision.
2. Small Pond Science has a helpful post on how to consider juggling multiple offers.
iii. Nothing is official until you sign your offer letter.
1. Once they've extended you a formal offer (ie: a contract), they're not allowed to extend an offer to someone else – so getting an offer in writing is important.
2. Even after a verbal acceptance, some schools can take days or weeks to process the contract & send it to you to sign. You do *not* have a job until you sign your contract (I've heard stories about funding being pulled from TT positions by the administration after a verbal acceptance).
3. After you've signed your letter, you ought to let the other searches know that you're removing yourself from their candidate pool.
4. But… you can also find many examples of people signing an offer and reneging at a later date. This is a hard decision, and it may burn bridges, but I've never heard of a school actually suing a candidate for doing so. Much of the advice you'll hear online is that you should do what's necessary for your own success, even if that means backing out on what feels like a done deal.

Take care of yourself during this process, because it is a *wild* ride. BEST OF LUCK! YOU GOT THIS!