

SSRPCB-5: How Not to Fail Your Faculty Job Search: Job Market Facts and Strategies I Never Learned in My PhD Program

Thursday, January 21, 2027, 10:15 am – 12:15 pm

Presenters:

Yoosun Park, PhD and Tamara Cadet, PhD (University of Pennsylvania)

Description:

That mentorship in doctoral education is uneven is a truism. In leading and participating on multiple faculty search committees across multiple institutions, we have come to realize that the job search process is one of the places where this is evident. Faculty candidates go on the job market with radically different levels of preparation, and unsurprisingly, BIPOC candidates and first-generation PhD students are often the least prepared. In our school, we have instituted a process where we meet with each of the candidates invited to do a job talk prior to their campus talk so that they come into process with a clearer understanding of our expectations. We have found that making the process and our expectations less mysterious through the provision of concrete information and tips for what to do and what not to do, creates not only a less anxious and happier candidate but better job talks that provide us with a clearer data for assessing candidates.

In this interactive workshop, we will provide an expanded and far more comprehensive version of what we have instituted at our school which includes a thorough review of the search process and its mechanisms as well as tips to begin the process of preparation well before graduation. Our primary audience will be doctoral students at all stages: For students in the early years of a PhD program we will provide strategies on how to think about the academic job market and to begin building a competitive CV for the job they aspire to; for those in the latter years of their education, we will provide guidance on strategies for applying and interviewing for the jobs they seek. Early career faculty looking for other job opportunities and PhD program directors and advisors seeking to provide guidance to their students may also find the content useful.

Agenda:

Introductions (15 minutes):

- Presenter introductions
- Brief survey of audience (fears, hopes, and dreams)

PowerPoint presentation (60 minutes), with questions from the audience, will include information on:

1. Understanding the job market (including differences among academic settings)
2. Building a competitive CV
3. Understanding the search as a process: timelines, mechanisms, etc.
4. Reading and interpreting job calls
5. Constructing an application packet to speak to specific job calls
6. Preparing for the preliminary interview
7. Preparing for all aspects of the campus visit, including what should be in a research presentation, and how to best prepare for individual meetings.
8. Preparing for what happens after the job talk

Q & A (45 minutes)