

- Do not answer a hypothetical question. A response might be, “I will not speculate on that, but I can tell you...”
- The best way to protect yourself against saying something you will later regret is to stay close to your key messages.
- Not satisfied with your answer? If the interview is taped, ask if you can reanswer; if live, say, “Let me clarify.”
- Be gracious in the face of hostility. The aggressor will look bad and you will not.



Video

When an interview is being taped for video, consider the following:

- If possible, choose a venue that supports your message. Pay attention to what will actually appear in the frame. A lab is more interesting than an office, but if it looks like the kitchen after a party, then a plain background might be more effective.
- Dress appropriately.
- Choose solid, pleasing colors (not black or white). Fine patterns distort due to the resolution limits of the digital picture.
- Avoid distracting jewelry, especially earrings.
- Have a lapel or collar on which to clip a microphone.
- Look at the interviewer, not at the camera.
- Sit up straight. If you are behind a desk, tilt forward about five degrees with your hands folded on the desk.
- Place your hands comfortably on the furniture or your lap. Use gestures to emphasize points, but not unnecessarily. Do not fiddle with your hands or with any object.
- Do not swivel or rock in the chair.

Credibility and Clarity

When people are not accustomed to hearing a woman speak as an expert in certain situations, they have a tendency to evaluate her differently than a male speaker (gender schemas again). The listeners' assumptions may include:

- Role—she is the public relations person, not the scientist;
- Credibility—the expert is usually a man;
- Importance—if it were serious, they would interview the boss; and
- Message—she wants to talk about schools or families.

If you wish to be a convincing spokesperson (credible) and to deliver a clear message, then you should avoid sending signals that reinforce these assumptions. You can also actively counter these schemas. Hence, in addition to the basic media tips, women should consider the following points:

- Make sure that the person introducing you includes your correct title and responsibility (not “a spokeswoman”). If the introduction misses an important element, put it in yourself in the first sentence.
- Say something in the first answer to establish your credibility; for example, “In the two years we have been working on this. . . .”
- Know your stuff. If you do not know it, do not go there. (The next tip is related to this one.)
- Women sometimes get into trouble in interviews because they just want to be helpful and they are anxious to please. Hence, they give too much information or stray from their message. To achieve your purpose, you may have to go against your instincts, be more hard-nosed, and be less helpful in answering questions.
- Watch for the verbal features that make you sound tentative and unsure of yourself. We use them instinctively to soften our assertiveness. Actually they cloud the message and reinforce the assumption of weak credibility. These features include:

- Qualifiers, such as “sort of like” and “you might want to”;
 - Disclaimers, such as “I am not sure about this, but. . .”;
 - Tag endings, such as “isn’t it?” and “you know?”; and
 - Raising your voice at the end of a sentence as if it were a question.
-
- Cute or childish expressions lessen authority. You do not have to use technical language and jargon, but avoid “the little thingy.”
 - Laughing and chuckling (normal response to nervousness) may detract from the seriousness of your message.
 - A high-pitched voice (another result of nerves) is less authoritative. Taking a deep breath will actually lower your voice. You can also do it consciously—it is not difficult if you practice beforehand.
 - For video, check your appearance before the camera is on, and then **DO NOT ADJUST YOUR HAIR OR CLOTHING** until the camera is off. Nothing takes the viewer from the lab to the beauty parlor faster than a little gesture with your hair or your clothes.



If you have never sent any of these signals, congratulations. You have probably noticed others who have. Think about the effect of subtle information on the message received by the audience and plan your next interview accordingly.

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Tenure Strategies for New University Faculty



Tenure is a long-standing academic tradition. Originally, tenure was conceived to protect faculty members' right to their jobs from powerful people who might object to the professors' teachings or research results. The tenure tradition survives because it works in the academic marketplace. Professors get employment protection and considerable freedom in setting their own job description, while universities get the people who deliver the research and teaching, and a system for evaluating them, at a cost below what the business and industrial markets would demand.

Tenure is granted to a faculty member who has performed well in some combination of research, teaching, and administrative work. The faculty member must supply the evidence, usually within a fixed time of appointment. The decision is usually made by a dean upon recommendation of a committee of faculty members (the promotion and tenure, or P&T, committee). A new faculty position in a university or other academic institution is usually considered conditional until

This section draws on the presentations by the members of the Panel on Academic Careers at the *New Frontiers, New Traditions* National Conference, St. John's, NL, Canada, July 2000, <<http://www.cs.ubc.ca/~condon/ccwest/>> (Mar. 16, 2007).



tenure is awarded, and promotion beyond a certain level is not possible without tenure. In addition, many research grants and other benefits are available only to faculty who have tenure or are on the tenure track. Hence, if you are planning an academic career, you want tenure.

Getting tenure is a challenge (the next one after getting the Ph.D. and getting the job), but a manageable one. An academic career is a progression; each step builds on the previous one. To ensure success in your tenure quest, you should develop your strategy early, even before accepting a faculty position, and then adjust the plan as you learn and progress. Thus, in this chapter, we consider career plan, the tenure process, getting the right job, research success, teaching success, and finally assembling the successful tenure dossier.

Career Plan

Find out what constitutes a normal career path in your field. A “post doc,” that is, a post-doctoral fellowship, is useful for establishing a research record and gaining credibility. The pay is less, but so are the administrative and teaching responsibilities. In disciplines where the job market is hot, universities will scoop up an almost-complete Ph.D. and be glad they did not lose her to industry. In engineering, industrial experience is considered an asset; in pure science, it may be considered a lower-quality research environment. International experience is usually a benefit on the résumé and experience in more than one institution is essential. While contractual or limited-term positions provide teaching experience and an opportunity to become known in a department, they come with no commitment that a permanent position will become available.

In your career plan, take the “normal” career path into consideration, but do not be limited by it. Hiring departments are looking for evidence of research potential and they know how to assess that in the “normal” career path. If your path is nonstandard but your objective is the academy, then choose opportunities that help you to gather the evidence: R&D (research and development) projects, review papers, and technical reports.



Consider the type of academic career that is right for you. If you are interested in teaching, interaction with students, and a supportive environment, then do not be convinced otherwise by colleagues who rate a big, highly competitive institution as “better.” Local tenure criteria reflect the interests and character of the institution.

The work–life balance issues discussed in chapter 8 are prominent here, because the tenure challenge comes along about the time when many women want to have a life outside work. If the institution requires a tenure decision within a fixed timeframe, then there may not be time to do everything. Many universities allow extra time along the tenure track for those who are also on the “mommy track,” and in some institutions the extension is now the automatic default. Similarly, major granting councils have policies that allow extra time in a research program, or time off from fellowships, for parental responsibilities. The policies are helpful, but if you intend to invoke them you should get assurance that your colleagues on the P&T committee understand them.

Tenure Process

A tenure-track position is one in which the incumbent may apply for tenure, and for which the department has salary funds on a continuing basis. Holders of term positions may not apply for tenure. Typically, a new faculty member applies for tenure after five years of experience, with a window of five to seven years, and possibly an allowance for maternity leave. She may receive up to three years’ credit for experience in a previous appointment. Some institutions permit a second application if the first is unsuccessful. If tenure is denied, then the faculty member and the institution usually part company.

While the American tenure process and the Canadian system may differ in some aspects, individual institutions also vary widely in their policies and practices. Some universities in the U.S., for example, hire at the assistant or adjunct professor level with the expectations that none will get tenure. In fact, there has been a large increase in the number of nontenured and part-time faculty and a steep decrease in the



proportion of tenured and tenure-eligible faculty in the United States since 1975 (U.S. Dept. of Education 2003). A generalized North American process is described below.

The application for tenure consists of a dossier prepared by the applicant, together with letters of reference or external reviews. The material is reviewed by a sequence of collegial bodies, each making a recommendation to the next level. The review bodies may include:

- Departmental P&T/tenure review committee (vote);
- Department head (recommendation);
- Faculty P&T committee (vote);
- Dean (recommendation);
- University (e.g., senate) committee (vote); and
- Provost, vice president, or president (decision).

Getting a Job, Part I: Get in the Door

Most of the information in chapter 5 is also relevant here. Here we list special aspects of the academic job market.

First, find out where to apply, and be sure to check the following resources:

- Ask your supervisor (if she has not done it already) to ask her networks who is hiring;
- University faculty, department, or human resource Web pages;
- Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/jobs/>);
- Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) (www.aucc.ca);
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) (www.caut.ca);
- *Science*, the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (<http://aaas.sciencecareers.org/js.php>);

- *Nature* (<http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/index.html>);
- Research (not trade) journals in areas of expertise;
- Professional associations such as American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE; <http://careers.asce.org/search.cfm>) and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME; <http://www.asme.org/jobs/>);
- Professional societies for women, such as American Association for Women in Mathematics (www.awm-math.org/) and Association for Women in Science (AWIS) (www.awis.org);
- Listserves, such as Women in Engineering ProActive Network (WEPAN) (www.wepan.org);
- Community organization Web sites, such as Society of Women Engineers (SWE) (www.swe.org); Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT) (www.ccwestt.org);
- Find out about and take advantage of special programs to increase the numbers of women faculty. In Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) University Faculty Awards (www.nserc.ca) is the pre-eminent national program; getting one of these is a real career boost. The National Science Foundation Career Awards (www.nsf.gov) support the early career development activities of new tenure-track teacher-scholars with special encouragement of women and underrepresented minorities. Also check out the NSF ADVANCE initiatives, designed to increase the participation and advancement of women science and engineering faculty, in place at a number of institutions. Some universities have their own awards.



It is extremely important to market yourself while looking for a job.

- In the academic world, the best marketing tool is publications. You do not have to solve everything before you write one. At each stage in your graduate research, ask yourself if what you have done is worth documenting for others in your field. Your



supervisor will be supportive, especially if her name is on the paper too. If you are part of a larger project, keep track of who is writing papers and ask if you can make a contribution that will get your name on the list of authors.

- Getting current information is an essential marketing activity. Find out about research, teaching, and special programs at every institution of possible interest to your search.
- Make opportunities to meet people in your field, such as guest lecturers at your institution. Be prepared to give the thirty-second clip about your research and why it is important, tailored to your contact's interests.
- Market yourself for a specific job and be prepared to talk knowledgeably about what you have to offer your contact's institution.
- Go to conferences whenever possible. Give a paper or a poster. Study the list of participants (usually provided to all registrants) and learn who is there from institutions of interest. Give them the thirty-second clip and ask about opportunities.
- Have a current, attractive application (not just the résumé) and a seminar ready to deliver at short notice.

There is usually a fairly set timetable for applications.

- For postdoctoral fellowships (in Canada), application is usually in the fall.
- Some faculties hire all year around.
- Some faculties expect a late summer or September start. In the latter case, the timetable is:
 - Fall: advertise;
 - January: application deadline;
 - February to April: interviews; and
 - March to June: offers.