

## Preparing for an Academic Position in the U.S.

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If you are interested in finding an academic position in the U.S., start planning about it and communicate with your advisor as soon as you enter the graduate school. The three most important things you can work on during your graduate school are: research records, social skills, and a strong determination.

### Research records include:

- 🍌 Journal publications

#### Things to start with:

Communicate your research goals with your advisors; Do more than what your advisor asks you to do; Volunteer your time to assist your advisor's projects; Attend research group meetings.

- 🍌 Conference papers/presentations

This is a good opportunity for public talk, networking, and professional development;

#### Things to start with:

Identify important national conferences in your field; Get involved in research projects.

- 🍌 Dissertation grant

This is an important first step for future grant writing. The dissertation grant will help you gain national-level recognition.

#### Things to start with:

Unique and important topic and approach for your dissertation research; Attend grant writing workshops on campus and at national conferences.

### Social skills include:

- 🍌 Communication skills

#### Things to start with

Understand the differences in the communication styles between your country and the U.S.; “INTERACT” rather than “listen and answer questions”; Speak out in your classes and get used to the interactive communication.

🍌 Collegiality & Sociableness

Things to start with

Demonstrate your collegiality in your research work; Attend social events in your department; Be friendly and helpful to your colleagues and faculty members; Know the difference between being helpful and being used.

**Determination, efforts, persistence**

You need to be determined to achieve your goal of getting an academic job, and frequently communicate your goal with your advisor. The process of finding an academic position could be very challenging. Don't be discouraged by your failure; instead, consider this as an opportunity for improvement. Your efforts will pay off as your success.

*Final messages*

Don't think you are disadvantaged because you are international. No one is born to be ready for an academic position.

Start early! Identify your weaknesses and work on them.

*This presentation was given in ISCS Alumni Panel by Dr. Motoko Aikba , 11/17/2005.*

## **Academic job search and interviews:**

A personal experience of landing the job that I wanted

Yong Z. Volz  
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### **Academic job search**

#### Serving as a Faculty Search Committee Member....

##### Things that I learned:

- Competition is strong
- Affirmative action does not necessarily grant me an advantage
- A good cover letter is as important as the CV
- An interview is a time for you to lose not to win
- Prepare for your presentation
- Confidence, confidence, and confidence!!

#### Identifying Job Openings

- Chronicle of Higher Education <http://chronicle.com>
- Being a member of professional organizations. Some job openings will be announced through newsletters, mails, and email lists.
- From professors and friends

#### Job “Search” and “Research”

- Identifying my own research areas
- Identifying openings that matched my research
- Finding more information about those programs

### **Interviews**

#### Telephone Interview

- Unannounced one- the interviewer calls you without a prior notification.
- Announced ones- the interviewer contacts you to set up an appointment for the phone interview.

### **Preparing for Campus Interview**

#### Lecture

##### Things you need to know:

- Topic
- Class size
- Classroom

#### Research presentation

##### Things you need to know:

- Audience
- Room

#### ✚ Others

- Dress for the interview
- Laptop, CD, USB, hard copies
- Names and backgrounds of the committee members
- List of questions
- Happy mood

#### ✚ Structure of the Interviews

A day before

- Dinner (If you and your hosts are available)

On the interview day

- Meetings
- Lunch
- Lecture
- Research presentation
- Meetings again
- Dinner again

*The presentation was given in ISCS Alumni Panel by Dr. Yong Volz, 11/17/2005.*

## **First Year on the Academic Job**

Dr. James Lee  
Assistant Professor  
Biological Engineering

Knowing the structure and duties about your first year on the job will be very helpful in your preparation of finding a job. There are some things, such as teaching, advising, committee service, and research; you will be doing after you get an academic position in the U.S.

### **❖ Teaching**

- You will be asked to develop a graduate and/or an undergraduate course
- Teaching evaluations are very important

### **❖ Advising**

- Graduate students- You will focus mainly on how to do research
- Undergraduate students- You will need to be patient with this group

### **❖ Committee services that you may be involved in**

- Departmental level, such as faculty search committee
- College level, such as undergraduate laboratory committee
- Campus level, such as a reviewer of the campus internal grant
- National level, such as a grant reviewer for the state university

### **❖ Research**

- You need a good publication rate
- You need to be applying for grants to get funding
- Publication + funding → good credential
- Distinguish your research focus from your ex-mentor or ex-advisor
- Multi-disciplinary collaboration will help you professionally

*The presentation was given in ISCS Alumni Panel by Dr. James Lee , 11/17/2005.*