



Academic Career Mentoring Series

“Applying and Interviewing for an Academic Position”

Nora Ayanian, Ph.D.

Gabilan Assistant Professor of
Computer Science

November 1, 2013

About myself



- 2005 B.S. Mechanical Engineering
Drexel University
- 2008 M.S. Mechanical Engineering
2011 Ph.D. Mechanical Engineering
University of Pennsylvania
- 2011-2013 Postdoctoral Associate in CSAIL *MIT*
- 2013: WiSE Gabilan Assistant Professor
Computer Science

Key steps to take



- Early:
 - Attend conferences, meet faculty
 - Publish!
- Later:
 - Organize conference workshops
 - Make sure people know you are on the market
 - **START EARLY!**
 - Follow up! Tell them you have applied
 - Make sure you have interview appropriate clothing
 - Do not let others discourage you

Finding places to apply



- At which institutions would you want to work?
 - Go directly to their websites
- Industry magazines (IEEE Spectrum, etc.)
- Web: AcademicKeys.com,
AcademicJobsOnline.org
- Be open minded about the department

Standing out (at interview)



- Thoughtful comments in one-on-ones
- Practice your talk (but don't make it robotic)
- Ability to go with the flow—relax!
- Ask questions—you are also interviewing them
- Be confident, but not arrogant

Interview Homework



- Learn about everyone you will meet
- If in doubt, ask them (thoughtfully) about their work
- Find out if they have facilities that your research requires and ask if you would have access to it/if you can see it
- Think carefully about collaborations within department, school, and outside of school (have names prepared!)
- If you know someone at the school but in a different department, talk to them

Interview Takeaways



- Them:
 - Would I want to work with this person?
 - Is this person's work top quality?
- You:
 - Do I want to work with these people?
 - Is research quality increasing or decreasing?
 - **How are junior faculty coping with the tenure process?**

General Advice



- Take all opportunities to apply (you can defer)
- Get grant-writing experience
- Practice practice practice your talk
 - Practice taking tangential questions offline
- You will get better at one-on-ones with each interview
- Treat the students nicely—for MANY reasons
- *ALWAYS BE GRACIOUS!*