

# Preparing to Interview for an Academic Position

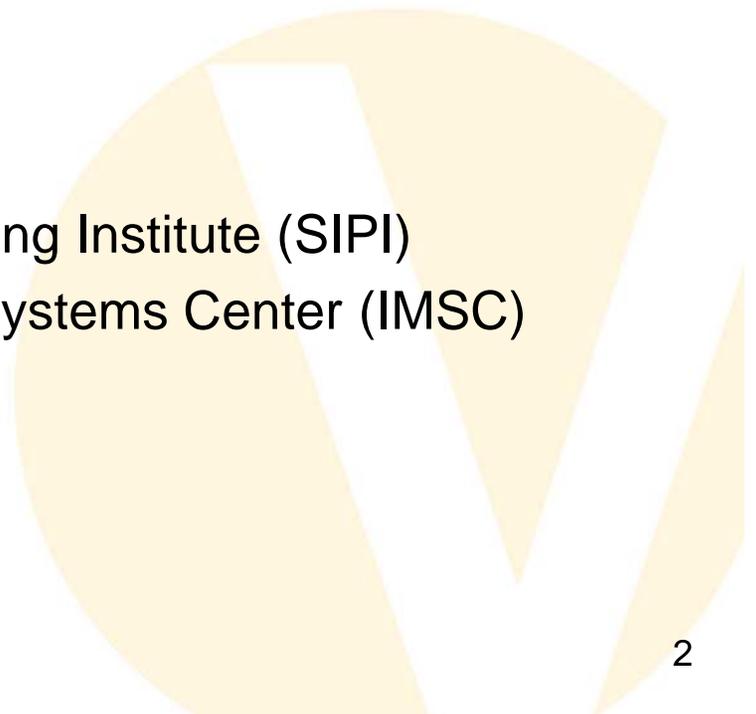
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- S.B. in Electrical Engineering, MIT, 1966
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- Various short-term jobs: NIST, NASA, Comsat
  
- At USC since 1971
- Administrative jobs
  - Director, Signal and Image Processing Institute (SIPI)
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- What are the most important elements of interview preparation?
- What research about the institution should you do before the interview and how, including whom you should contact and what questions you should ask?
- Explore school's web sites thoroughly—academic programs, research programs, faculty
- Talk to students and faculty that you may know at the school where you are interviewing
- Think about how you match the culture and style of the school
- Prepare as though it is an exam - anticipate the questions you will be asked and be ready to answer them. Make up the exam questions yourself - what would you ask?
- Contact your host (department chair, group leader, faculty) and discuss the interview schedule and procedure in advance

- How should you practice for your interview?
- Rehearse your answers to these questions:
  - What is the future of your research area in 3-5 years?
  - What are prospective research funding sources?
  - What courses would you like to teach?
  - What courses are you qualified to teach?
  - What new courses would you develop?
  - What lab facilities, space, and equipment are needed to get started?
- Have your friends role-play the interviewer
- Rehearse your research seminar
  - give the big background picture
  - your own contributions and future work
  - relate it to the institution

- What should you definitely do and definitely not do during your interview?
- Do:
- Show that you are positive, engaged, prepared, and a good listener
- Ask a few questions yourself: you are interviewing them as well as vice-versa, for example:
  - What mentoring support is available?
  - What help in applying for research grants is available?
- Don't
- Criticize the school about any perceived shortcomings
- Appear arrogant or egotistical

- What should you do post-interview and when/how, including whom you should contact at the interviewing institution and what should be conveyed to them?
- Contact the department chair and/or your faculty host(s) shortly after the interview and tell them how much you enjoyed the visit
- Follow up on any questions that were raised
- Ask them their timetable for making a decision, if this was not previously discussed

