



The on-campus interview serves multiple purposes. Of course, it gives members of the faculty and others an opportunity to interact with a finalist in multiple settings and “get to know” him or her as a potential colleague. But it is also an opportunity for the candidate to “get to know” the faculty and the University, gathering information about both position- and non-position-related aspects of life in Syracuse. Most importantly, it is the first opportunity for candidates to encounter “local information” about the position, the University, and the local community; information that can help them manage their expectations and so, lead to better long-term retention (Louis, 1980).

Consider how the department presents itself and the University, whether or not the structure of the visit enables candidates to present themselves well, and whether or not the candidate will be able to gather all the information he or she needs to make a good decision. Some key considerations promoted within the ADVANCE community include:

Present the department in a favorable, but honest, light:

- Distribute information about potentially relevant policies (dual career, maternity leave, modified duties, etc.) to all job candidates regardless of gender.
- Consider how the department will represent itself as a place in which underrepresented faculty can thrive. Some things that may make the department more attractive to individuals who might be in the minority among current faculty are (present those which apply):
 - clear and public policies and procedures for evaluation and promotion;
 - mentoring resources for junior faculty in general and female faculty in particular;
 - information about practices in evaluation and annual reporting that value mentoring of women and minority faculty and students; or
 - an explicit plan to promote equity within the department.
- Avoid leaving candidates alone with faculty who may be hostile to hiring women and minorities. If a candidate is confronted with racist or sexist remarks, take positive and assertive steps to defuse the situation. Be sure there is a practice in place in the department for dealing with the expression of racist or sexist attitudes, and that the candidate is made aware of it, if the situation arises.
- Make sure all University representatives know their role in the interview, particularly those who have never participated in an on-campus interview (e.g. students). Identify the goals of an on-campus interview and how best to achieve them (see final comment, below). Above all, everyone should properly pronounce the candidate’s name.
- Introduce women and minority members of the department to all candidates, not just women and minorities. Moreover, if women and minority faculty members are expected to play an especially active role in recruiting new faculty, be sure to recognize this additional service burden as part of their overall service load.

From our own interviews with both hired and ‘lost’ candidates (e.g. those who turned down offers to join the faculty), we also found that the following make a positive impression on potential candidates:

Ensure that candidates have an opportunity to shine:

- Make sure candidates know the details of their schedule well in advance (at minimum, a week before they arrive). They will use the information provided to prepare for the visit, and need time to prepare adequately. Consider including a block or two of “down time” that can be otherwise scheduled by the candidate.
- Give the candidate a chance to interact with the department’s faculty in multiple venues. Formal talks alone may not reveal every candidate’s strengths. Consider including Q + A sessions, “chalk talks,” and other less formal interactions.
- Provide candidates with an opportunity to chime in on their own schedule. This also provides an opportunity to offer accommodations that might be helpful to a candidate during a campus visit.

Help the candidate gather all the information she or he needs to make a good decision:

- Allow candidates ample opportunity to observe faculty members as they interact with each other. A candidate is joining a group with its own dynamic.
- Consider providing all candidates with a complete list of things it would be possible for them to discuss in the course of negotiations. These might include assistance with partner / spouse position, course release time, lab space, research assistant(s), clerical/administrative support, and typical start-up financial support (for equipment, moving expenses, summer salary, etc.). Consider appointing an advocate or mentor to help candidates throughout the negotiation process and help him or her to secure the best possible package.
- If a candidate has a spouse or partner who will need placement help, try to help arrange interviews or other opportunities for the spouse or partner as early in the hiring process as possible. Be familiar with University resources to support these efforts.
- Engage SU-ADVANCE where helpful to serve as an “inside source” for needed, but potentially difficult-to-ask-about resources, such as those related to family, dual career considerations, or similar concerns.

Above all, focus on the candidate’s ability to perform the essential functions of the job and avoid making assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Using a set of common questions with all candidates will allow comparative judgment and ensure that crucial information related to the position is obtained. Provide all involved in the interview process a common feedback form on which they can report their impressions of the candidate (see attached).

Louis, M. R., (1980). Surprise and Sense Making: What newcomers experience in entering unfamiliar organizational settings. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 25(2), pp. 226 - 251