Applying for Academic Positions

Questions to ask

Google and find out as much as possible about university and dept
Read about faculty members and publication record
Meet with faculty similar to you
Find out all your responsibilities: research, teaching, Univ service, public service, training,
Who is your real boss?
Are you able to consult and keep money from it?
Who will you be working with mostly?
Who has similar interests among faculty?
Interview faculty at same point as you in their career
When does job starts –flexible?
Find out about climate, entertainment, schools, etc about town from websites, city ratings,
Who decides on hiring – role of search committee vs chair vs dean
What is your expected allocation among teaching, research and clinical service
What track will you be on? If tenure track, how is tenure decided?
Will you have access to students to hire as RAs
Major challenges to dept?
Recent personnel changes in faculty? Why did recent departures left?
Are you taking someone’s place – if so, why

Interview

Have canned responses to:
Why you want the job
What are you looking for in the job
Your major strengths and weaknesses
Tell me about yourself
What are your academic goals
How do you want to allocate your time between research, teaching and clinical work?
Do you mostly want to teach or do research?
Ask to speak to faculty with job similar to your job
Ask to speak to others at similar point in career

Preparation

Get itinerary – and find out about people meeting via school website, pub med search. Read most recent articles of every person you will meet
Entire trip is an interview- even comments at dinner
Be interested in the person talking to
Dress well at all times –even if casual
Always act as if you want job
Say thank you many times
Smile a lot, be upbeat
Prepare for dull interview – have a set of stock questions to ask faculty to fill time
Never say “I have already exhausted my questions”
Even after you have asked all you questions, ask them again to see if get different answers from different people
Let faculty start conversation – better to let them ask their questions before you ask questions
Ask junior faculty about problems in dept
Enthusiasm in the interview very important
Eye contact, short answers
Okay to pause to collect thoughts before answering
Prepare for down time – go see something on campus, library, do work, etc.
Cell phone off please
Do not asks about salary, research funds, etc till after you get job offer
Have canned response about spouse moving
Will you have a designated mentor in dept
Ask about strengths and weaknesses of dept
Afterword write each individual specific thank you

Seminar

Find out audience
Practice on some who knows nothing about the area
Start with significance of area of research
Assume audience knows little
Avoid jargon
Avoid humor – too risky
Leave time for questions- and answer these very, very briefly
If question good one, say so -but not for those that are not good ones
If someone in dept doing similar research, acknowledge that early on
If you have a grant be sure and mention it
All the interview stylistics apply