

Receiving and Negotiating an Academic Job Offer



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Disclaimer

- Be wary of cookie cutter approaches to complex tasks such as negotiating a job offer.
- Every situation is different.

General Tips

- Be honest and straightforward in your discussions.
- Remember your two objectives (and in this order):
 1. Presenting yourself in a manner to get a job offer, and
 2. Exploring/negotiating details of job and offer to maximize your position.

What we like to buy when shopping for junior faculty!

- Outstanding potential for teaching and research.
- Candidates that will leverage their surroundings in our institution (e.g., colleagues, other UIC colleges, Chicago, Argonne).
- Some general qualities include: desire to work with students, strong communication and people skills, passionate, aggressive, organized, independent, team player

Hiring Psychology: Temper your communications

- Candidates are more attractive when they have other offers and/or interviews.
- Candidates are more attractive when they have a strong desire to join your company/institution.

Negotiations 101

- Whenever possible, always get your negotiating partner to be the first to put something on the table first (She establishes a floor, rather than you establishing a ceiling).

Parameters of a faculty offer

- Rank
- Tenure status
- Moving expenses
- Salary
- Teaching load
- Startup package
- Space

Rank and Tenure Status

- Rank
 - Assistant Professor for new faculty
- Tenure status
 - Gain a general understanding of tenure requirements, though this will not be a point of negotiation.
 - Tenure clock (i.e., timeline for tenure decision) may be a point of negotiation.

Moving Expenses

- Least significant component of offer, but remember Negotiations 101.
- In my opinion, \$5K and above is reasonable.
- Goal is not to lose money from move expenses.
- If the move becomes much more expensive than anticipated, you can ask for more but don't count on getting it.

Salary

- Starting salary is very important!
- Factors that will influence your salary offer:
 - Norms of field (check surveys)
 - Aim for top quartile in your rank/field
 - Departmental salary structure (what other faculty are making in your rank)
 - If you have another competing offer
- Don't be afraid to ask for more if you feel the offer is inadequate. Typically we expect candidates to ask for more after receiving initial offer.

Teaching Load

- Number of courses per year.
- Number of new preps per year.
- Type of courses (e.g., at least one graduate course so you can find PhD students).
- Ideally guaranteed through tenure process.
- Norms dependent on fields.

Startup Funds

- Duration (e.g., spendable for the first 2-3 years)
- Amount
 - Summer salary (e.g., 2 months per year for the first two summers)
 - Graduate student support (RAs, TAs, fellowships)
 - Travel (very important to meet people)
 - Equipment (field dependent) - justify your request when negotiating

Space

- Most challenging aspect to negotiate, because it is the most challenging resource that is managed in the university.
- Goal: Obtain adequate space for your activities for the time period through your tenure decision.
- Consider positives in sharing space when there are other appropriate colleagues.
- Discuss any needed renovations (e.g., fume hood, power, etc.)

Negotiations 202

- Do not try to resolve all parameters/differences simultaneously.
- Iterative approach with one parameter on the table at a time will likely maximize your results. (E.g., first deal with salary, then startup funds for equipment, then graduate student support, etc.)

Negotiations 303

- Please assume you will not be able to do any renegotiation once you have arrived at the university. In some cases getting even minor additional resources may be difficult or impossible.

Negotiations 404

- Get all the details in writing so there are no misunderstandings. If it isn't in writing, assume it is only a "soft" best-efforts commitment.
- It is not at all rude to request everything to be in writing.
 - Minor points may be email messages (e.g., We will cover the extra \$1,000 you need to move your books.)