Interviewing Tips
This talk..

- Premise: you have applied and currently waiting to schedule interviews
- Important issues (not part of the slides).
  - Preparing your package
  - Your web page
  - Your talk (some bullets in these slides)
  - Does the department have an up to date page with recent phd’s searching for a job?
  - Touch base with your contacts during conferences informing them that you are graduating etc..
- Assuming you have done all of the above…
Roadmap

- Scheduling
- Before the interview
- How does it look like
- Your talk
- Meeting specifics
- Lunch/Dinner
- After you go away
- Things to keep in mind…
You are invited for an Interview!!!!!

- Congratulations!
- Now what???
- Well…above all relax :)


Scheduling

- Interviewing is a tiring process.
- Try to schedule 2 and at most 3 interviews per week.
- Know your targets and priorities
  - Nice to have talk dry run in an interview before you go for an interview to your desired institution.
  - Go to a place that you are really interested after you have had time to revise your talk (if required).
Before the Interview

- Usually you receive a schedule a couple of days before (if you do not, that is a bad sign..).
- It lists your schedule for the day (or one and a half day).
- Usually runs from 8 to 5 or 6 with breakfast, lunch and dinner.. And of course your talk usually around 10am or 11am.
- In between you have half an hour meeting with faculty members and commonly 10min breaks.
- Some meetings (e.g., chair, dean) might be an hour long.
- So you have a rather busy day…
How should I dress?

- Usually people show up in interviews very formally dressed.
Your talk

- As you can imagine this is very important.
- Know your audience and make your presentation appealing to the mix of people present:
  - People in your community, outside your community, students.
- Practice, practice, practice!
- Very broad outline:
  - General intro ~ 15-20 min
  - Technical problem(s) in depth
  - Demo (if applicable)
  - Wrap up and future work.
  - If you have done work in various areas, make sure to point it out on a slide or so.
- Leave time for questions.
- Be polite!!!!
- Always nice to have back up slides.
- Try to anticipate questions.
- Make sure to revise your talk, if needed, after an interview!!!
Meeting Specifics

- One on one meeting:
  - Background research.
  - Have ready the 1-5-10 min overview of your work.
  - Keep the conversation alive and active!
  - Sample questions:
    - Students, funding (grants - sources, support for grant applications), labs, lab space, IT support and funding model, courses.
    - Industry relationships
    - Research work
    - Try to point connections to your work (if you see any -- be careful not to over do it)
  - Questions for yourself:
    - Do you see a potential collaborator?
  - Be polite and respectful.
Meeting specifics

- Chair/Dean
  - Nature of conversation probably a bit different.
  - Questions to ask:
    - Funding in the department, vision for the department (growth, special programs, synergies with other departments, industry relationships), tenure process (if it comes up :-)), support and IT support, management, mentorship, space allocation for students in the department
  - My view:
    - Does not make sense to ask questions about salary at this point
    - Does not make sense to ask about startup packages at this point
    - No point to get into tenure questions at this point
    - All in good time ;)

- …
Meeting specifics

- Meeting with students
  - Find out about their work
  - Get a sense if they are happy.
  - Try to obtain as much information as you can from them, they can be very informative :)
  - Be ready to answer questions (both from students and faculty) like
    - Your advising style (better start thinking about this :-))
    - New grad courses you will introduce
    - Undergrad courses you like to teach or you can teach
    - Plans for your team
    - Near, medium and long term research goals (e.g., how are you planning to change the world)
    - Space needs, fund needs (maybe)
    - ....
Lunch/Dinner

- Be formal and go with the flow of the conversation
- Think of some stories to say and drive the conversation if required
- You might meet some people you haven’t met during the day -- chat to find out about them, but remember other people are also present
- Dinner might be a good venue to find out information about the area, schools, houses etc.
- Relax, but keep in mind that the interview is not over!
- Use common sense..
After the interview

- Thank your host and also a good idea to send a thank you email.
Things to keep in mind…

- Probably one of the few times that you will meet so many people at a professional level is so little time!
- Keep in mind that, even though you might not end up at that institution, these will be people you will keep in touch in conferences etc.
- So it is imperative you leave a very good impression about yourself.
- If you get an offer, you could go for a second visit if you wish.
  - Ask for deadlines if any and respect them!
  - Usually if a place really wants you it will provide ample time to decide.
  - If a place is rushing you greatly, not a good sign.
Aftermath..

- Great way to form an impression about places:
  - In my experience my perception of various places changed after visiting them and spending a day with the people there.
  - Have your eyes and ears open.

- Things to ask yourself:
  - Are the people very friendly?
  - Do they appear happy?
  - Do people work with each other?
  - Is it a friendly environment?
  - Do you see yourself working there?
Above all..

- Relax and try to be yourself.
- In my opinion, there are three qualities you should have in order to have a successful interview season.
  - CONFIDENCE
  - CONFIDENCE
  - CONFIDENCE
  - To your work and yourself primarily.