

University-related questions:

- What opportunities are there for research/conference travel funding outside whatever may come with your offer? (E.g., are there junior faculty development grants?) These may be at the university, school/college (e.g., college of arts and sciences), or department level.
- Ask about university support for grant applications in your area.
- Ask about relevant interdisciplinary centers on campus that you've found on the university's website, or, if you don't find any, ask if any exist that you may have missed.

Combined university/department question, probably best for after you've been made an offer: is there summer funding? Just like we may receive summer fellowships at Duke, some programs pay their faculty for summer work, as research is expected to go on year-round. Find out if this is the case or even an option, if it is guaranteed, or if you have to apply for it and what the criteria are.

Departmental questions:

- How do TA assignments work in the department? Are there PhD or MA students who work as TAs (or advanced undergrads), are there class size limits before you can request a TA, how does compensating TAs work (e.g., does the department fund TAs or does that come out of your research budget)?
- Similarly, if the department has a PhD program, what's the employment process for Research Assistants if you want to have someone working with you? [I'm in a discipline that does not use a lab-based model, so that's undoubtedly different in other programs.]
- Do classes over a certain size count as multiple courses for your teaching load? (e.g., a lecture of 250 students might count as multiple courses)
- What courses does the department need taught?
- Are there any degree programs being launched, closed, or considered for change/development?
- People have differing opinions on asking about tenure requirements; I'm in favor of bringing it up in a way that doesn't sound like "tell me the secret recipe for success," because there isn't one and it might offend some people. Some departments are described as "reading" departments while others are "counting" departments for tenure decisions. Basically, do you need a certain number of papers in X set of journals, or will the department take the time to actually review the substance of your work, even if it isn't in the number one journal in your field? Similarly, do faculty have preferences for or against thematic journals (i.e., do you need to publish only in generalist journals the whole field reads or in sub-disciplinary specialized journals?). Part of this can be answered by looking at the CVs of people who have tenure in the department you're interviewing with. This seems particularly tricky if you are jumping fields from PhD to job, so finding out what journals a department values (and doesn't) is important for future success.

Student questions:

If the department you're interviewing at has a PhD program, you may have a meeting or meal with current students. Here are a couple questions I asked at one such meeting:

- Do the students feel adequately supported by the department and university (both for basic needs and conference travel/research support)?
- Are there courses the students wish they could take but aren't offered in the graduate program? [Depending on the type of teaching you would be expected to do, this can give you a starting point on a course you might want to teach or develop later on.]

Geographic area questions:

- A boring but practical questions: how do people commute to work?
- If you have a personal connection to the area that you don't mind sharing, finding a way to communicate that can signal that you're more likely to move there, or at least that you know a bit about life in that area already.
- If the department takes you out for a meal, that can be a good time to ask about the local scene and talk about things other than work. With that said, this area of conversation can reveal or make salient minority status or characteristics that activate biases. This is a highly person choice on how much you want to reveal or talk about (e.g., sexual orientation, parenting status), so think strategically about the personal topics you bring up.