

Stanford Law School

Law Teaching Placement Program

How To Get A Job Teaching Law



2012-2013

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There are two issues you need to consider if you are thinking of becoming a law professor. First, is this a job you would enjoy and be good at? Most of your time as a law professor will be spent teaching and writing scholarly articles, so the answer to this question depends on your enthusiasm and talent for both of these tasks. Particularly in the early years of one's scholarly career, the job is emotionally and logistically demanding; simply not wanting to practice law is emphatically *not* a reason to go into teaching. On the other hand, if the job is the right fit for your talents and interests, it can be tremendously rewarding. You have great control over your professional agenda; you get to work on ideas that excite you and work with smart, interesting people; and you can influence the development of the law and other people's understanding of legal issues.

I would be happy to discuss with you at greater length whether being a law professor is for you. This memorandum, by contrast, assumes that you have already decided you want to be a law professor and focuses on a second set of nitty-gritty, instrumental concerns. How do you go about becoming a professor?

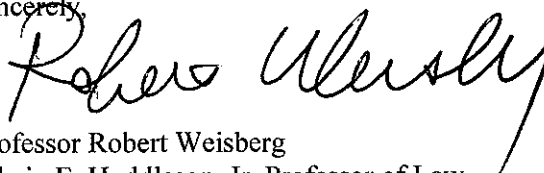
This memorandum addresses the entry level market (applying, interviewing, etc.) and offers suggestions as to what students and alumni/ae who are thinking about becoming professors can do to become more appealing candidates. It is divided into two sections: (1) advice and guidance to current students and recent graduates considering a teaching career, and (2) immediate practical advice to current and former students who are going on the market soon.

If you are thinking of applying for a teaching job to begin in the fall of 2013, you need to know that the appointments process will begin over the summer of 2012—at least one year in advance of when your job will start. The Association of American Law Schools (AALS) conducts a hiring convention in the fall (this year from October 11th to 13th) and in advance of that compiles a registry of all applicants that law schools use to decide whom to interview at the hiring convention. We strongly advise applicants to get their information submitted to the AALS in time to be included in the first distribution to law schools. This year, the deadline for inclusion is August 8th.

This memorandum covers only tenure-track academic positions that are primarily non-clinical. The criteria for obtaining a clinical position are somewhat different from those covered herein. If you are seeking a clinical position, you should contact Professor Larry Marshall, the head of our clinical programs, at (650) 723-7572.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



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A. Preapplication: What You Can Do in Advance to Increase Your Chances

Over the last twenty-five years, the criteria for hiring law professors have changed dramatically. Traditionally, law schools were looking for applicants who:

- *Attended an elite school*
- *Received exceedingly high grades*
- *Clerked for an elite circuit judge and preferably the Supreme Court*

These attributes are still regarded highly by many faculty appointments committees, but have become much less important. In their place, two other accomplishments are increasingly valued in the market. The most important one is having produced some scholarly work. The other one is having a Ph.D. or other advanced degree in an allied field of study.

Over the past six years, we have placed 57 J.D.'s in tenure-track teaching jobs. Most of these people were not in the top 10% of their class (many were not even in the top 25%), but almost all of them had published articles. Indeed, some of the advantages of coming onto the market with a Ph.D. may have less to do with the degree itself than with the fact that graduate school has provided the candidate with an opportunity to produce a substantial piece of scholarship (the dissertation) and to formulate a promising research agenda going forward.

The most important thing to emphasize is that most law schools are looking for applicants who will write scholarly legal articles. Increasingly, law schools want to hire entry-level professors who can articulate a fairly well-developed and interesting scholarly agenda that will carry them at least through the first few years of teaching, and who will hit the ground running on their scholarly projects. Schools have slowly come to recognize that the traditional criteria for hiring—very high grades and prestigious clerkships—are not the most reliable predictors of a person's ability to produce good scholarship. The best predictor of future scholarly performance is *past* scholarly performance. As a result, many law schools now will not hire people, even those first in their class with a Supreme Court clerkship, if they have no substantial written work. This is more likely to be the case the *more* prestigious the law school that is doing the hiring, but it is often the case at less elite schools as well. This factor puts candidates who have not done Ph.D.'s or other advanced graduate work in allied fields at some disadvantage, since—unlike Ph.D. programs—J.D. programs are not set up primarily to educate future legal academics in the scholarly side of the enterprise. For this reason, Stanford Law School has made a concerted effort in recent years to create more structured opportunities for students interested in an academic career to get exposure to legal scholarship and to produce it themselves. For those of you who have already graduated and are having trouble carving out time to write in a busy practice schedule, there are a growing number of post-J.D. opportunities to spend a year or two in a law school, many of which will give you some time to write. We have described the alternatives below.

Preparing for an Academic Career While in Law School

Many students enter law school knowing that they want to teach eventually, or consider teaching as one of many career options. There are some steps you can take as a student to put yourself in a better position to get a teaching job.

1. Writing

As emphasized above, one of the most important criteria for getting an academic job is one's publication record. There are some practical steps you can take now as a student to publish scholarly work.

(a) Develop Research Ideas: Take classes in which you will have the chance to write scholarly papers and get to know professors. As you take classes, start a file of ideas that might become articles. It is advantageous, although not essential, that there be some intellectual relationship among your different

articles, so as to form a coherent research agenda. This doesn't require that they all deal with the same subject matter (e.g., environmental law). They could instead share a common set of questions you are asking or a common set of methodological tools that you are applying in different substantive areas. But the most important thing is to get writing done, and on subjects you care about, even if the various papers don't obviously cohere.

(b) Write an Article: If possible, you should try to produce at least one paper while at law school that you can turn into a publishable article (or student note).

(c) Write a Book Review: Many law reviews like to publish book review essays regularly, and often have fewer such submissions from established faculty than they would like. If you pick out a book on a hot topic or by a prominent professor and submit a review to a flock of law reviews, there is a good chance of having it published, even while you are a student.

- *Unlike other disciplines, in law the book review essay is often article-length and gives the author space to develop independent ideas. At the same time, many scholars starting out find book reviews easier to write than conventional articles because reviews typically require less independent research or a freestanding thesis. They count less than articles, but they count.*

2. Develop Relationships With Professors

Taking seminars or paper-writing courses will give you a better chance to get to know your professors and a chance for them to learn about your writing skills. These courses will also give you the chance to develop the key skills you will need for an academic career—scholarly research and writing.

When you are ready to go on the job market, by all means get in touch with all professors who know you well and who you have reason to believe are in a position to give you a positive recommendation.

Working as a research assistant for a professor may also be a good way to establish a solid relationship with a professor. You can work as a research assistant either during the summer or during the academic year. The summer jobs as research assistants can be very good alternatives for first year students who want to stay in the Bay Area, since many Bay Area law firms do not hire first year students. The pay may be lower than other opportunities you have, but you may find that the job is a valuable investment in your future.

Most professors hire their research assistants on an ad hoc basis. Professors often hire in May or even June for their summer R.A.'s; they typically hire during the beginning of the fall quarter for the rest of the academic year, although opportunities crop up from time to time throughout the year.

The best way to find a job as an R.A. with a professor is to approach the professor or check the Weekly Brief e-mailed to all students by the Office of Student Affairs.

3. Law Review or Other Journals

Many students think that law review membership or editorship is a prerequisite to academic careers. This used to be true, but no longer is. Traditionally, employers (including law school hiring committees) valued membership on law review primarily because it correlated with very high grades. It no longer does at many law schools, including Stanford, a fact well known to most hiring committees. Moreover, if hiring committees care about grades, they can just look at them directly.

As a result, many law schools recruiting new faculty place no weight on membership or officership on law reviews. Perhaps surprisingly, this is more likely to be true the *more* prestigious the law school. On

the other hand, some law schools will still value it somewhat, it will give you some exposure to current legal scholarship, and it is unlikely to hurt you anywhere. But these possible benefits of law review should be weighed against the costs. If you do law review, chances are you will be spending a lot of time doing routine work editing other people's articles. If you would use that same time instead to do more of your own writing, or even work as a research assistant for a professor, those alternative uses of your time will in many cases be more advantageous.

The above advice, however, goes only to the direct value of the bare credential of law review membership or officership on the academic market. There are two collateral benefits that may flow from membership that may have some independent value on the academic market. The first is the opportunity to publish a student note. Some student-run law reviews will publish student work only if the student is a member of their own editorial board. You should not overvalue that opportunity, however. In most cases, having a good idea and turning it into a good article is the hard part. Finding a place to publish it is relatively easy. Specialty journals and faculty-run (peer-reviewed) journals *will* publish student work. In addition, you can write while a student, but wait until right after graduation to send it out to conventional law reviews for publication as an article.

The second possible benefit is that, because many judges still value law review membership, being on law review is (all other things being equal) likely to boost your chances for a prestigious clerkship, which will be a mild plus with some law schools (see below). Again, however, one would want to weigh those advantages against the opportunity costs of time spent on law review.

4. Grades

Of all the traditional criteria for hiring, grades probably continue to have the most significance at the entry level. But—at least for Stanford graduates—they matter much less than they used to, and much less than most prospective applicants think they do. In general, law schools will be nervous about people who graduated in the bottom half of the class. But even that will not be fatal if other things in your record (writing, references, job talk, interviews) give them confidence that you are smart and will be able to command the respect of your students in conventional law courses. For graduates with a Ph.D. in an allied field, law school grades seem to have even less significance than for other applicants.

Once you land your first teaching job, your academic record as a law student will become largely irrelevant. What matters in moving laterally is the quality of your writing, teaching, etc.

5. Teaching Experience

You can also get some teaching experience under your belt as a law student by working as a teaching assistant for undergraduate courses or for some law school courses.

If the teaching opportunities open to you will give you a chance to demonstrate your teaching skills and be evaluated on them by students *and* you do a bang-up job, that will be a mild plus on the job market. But in general, that record will not count for a lot, except perhaps to help counteract fears generated by a less than stellar job talk.

Even if a teaching assistantship does not help you gain credibility with a hiring committee, it may be useful to you in figuring out whether you like teaching and whether you are good at it. In addition, your first experience teaching in an academic position will be less daunting if you do have some teaching experience.

6. Academic Presentations

It is also a good idea to seek out opportunities to present works-in-progress at conferences, classes, etc., while you are in law school or after. Doing so will give you valuable experience and exposure *before*

you go on the job market. Keep your ears open for conferences (e.g., Law and Society) that welcome student and practitioner presentations. Also look for opportunities to give presentations in law school classes, whether as part of a seminar in which you are enrolled or a guest speaker in seminars or classes on a topic in which you have developed some expertise. You can also present your work in an informal context, to fellow students and/or faculty. In 2012-13, we will be experimenting with a new format for the Legal Studies Workshop; it will run all year, and be devoted entirely to the presentation of student works-in-progress, with feedback from other students and faculty. In addition to the intrinsic value to you of getting experience and feedback, doing presentations at academic conferences will get your name circulated with other academics before you go on the job market, and give you the opportunity to meet other academics. Giving presentations in Stanford law school classes will give Stanford professors an opportunity to vouch for your teaching skills first-hand. (Our being able to tell a hiring committee, for example, that a student gave one of the best student presentations we have ever seen will count for a lot.) Finally, presenting your work to others is a valued part of an academic's life, and being able to list such presentations on your CV signals to committees that you understand this, and are eager to participate in that part of the job.

7. Judicial Clerkships

Many law students also believe, incorrectly, that a prestigious clerkship (appellate court or Supreme Court) is a prerequisite to an academic career. Again, this used to be true. Now, however, fancy clerkships are neither necessary nor sufficient to land a teaching job. A Supreme Court or very prestigious appellate clerkship will help you get your foot in the door with many schools at AALS. But you can get your foot in the door just as well (and in many cases better) by writing really good work and getting strong support from faculty members here. Once your foot is in the door, clerkships will matter hardly at all. Over the past decade, the job market floor has been littered (figuratively speaking) with Supreme Court clerks who found, once they were in the interview, that they had nothing to say in a scholarly vein. On the other hand, as noted below, having *some* sort of practical experience before teaching may be advantageous, and many applicants find a clerkship a more congenial option than law practice.

8. Other Jobs Before Teaching

Most law schools are reluctant to hire candidates straight out of law school, unless the candidate has a Ph.D. in an allied field. Our sense is that they want candidates to get some "seasoning" before making the transition from student to teacher, which can take many forms. A one- or two-year clerkship, a post-J.D. fellowship, or a brief stint as a practicing lawyer all seem to suffice for these purposes. Law schools generally don't make distinctions among jobs as a practicing lawyer. While there may still be some preference for elite law firms and public interest impact litigation jobs, this variable is in flux. The one important exception is jobs in which applicants have acquired significant substantive knowledge that will be directly relevant to their teaching and writing (e.g., staff member at the Joint Committee on Taxation intending to concentrate in tax, prosecutor or public defender intending to concentrate in criminal justice, lawyer for the EPA or a public interest environmental organization like NRDC intending to concentrate in environmental law). Such experience is not only strategically valuable in securing a teaching job; it can also be very helpful in developing a teaching and research agenda.

It is difficult to switch into teaching after too many years in practice. If you are coming from a private law firm after six years and have not yet made partner, law schools will worry that you are applying only because you weren't going to make partner. Even if you have made partner or are clearly successful in some other area of practice, law schools worry that you will have trouble starting to write academic articles after so many years in practice, or adjusting to being at the bottom of a new career ladder.

Increasingly, prospective applicants are seeking one- or two-year positions as a legal research or writing instructor at a law school before going on the teaching market. (Some, like the Legal Research and Writing Program at Stanford and the Bigelow Program at Chicago, are specifically designed to assist aspiring law professors.) In addition, an increasing number of law schools are offering one or two year fellowships for

a small number of recent J.D.'s who are planning to go on the academic market, but need time to get more writing done before they do. (They go by a variety of names—"Visiting Assistant Professor" and "Fellow" are the most common.) The fellowships typically pay a stipend you could live on (modestly), and require some teaching. But the teaching load is relatively light, and the expectation is that Fellows will spend much of their time on scholarship.

In addition to giving you time to write, LRW positions or fellowships provide an academic environment to do it in—with access to faculty, libraries, etc. If you are wavering about an academic career, they also give you an opportunity to find out whether you like teaching and research, without precluding you from obtaining a good position as a practicing lawyer if you decide the academic life is not for you.

The list of schools providing post-JD opportunities of this sort is growing yearly. Current lists of schools with formal programs can be found at the following website: http://taxprof.typepad.com/taxprof_blog/2008/03/teaching-fellow.html. But it is quite possible that you can work out a similar ad hoc arrangement with a school that has no such formal program yet, particularly if you can cover some of their teaching needs.

Finally, you might also consider teaching on a part-time basis as an adjunct. While this is unlikely to give you much time to write, it will give you teaching experience, and bring you into some contact with faculty members who may be useful to you as you prepare to go on the full-time teaching market.

B. An Overview of the Entry Level Market: A 3-Step Process

Every school has a hiring committee, usually called the Faculty Appointments Committee. Most begin reviewing applications in mid-August for jobs to begin a year later.

1. The Association of American Law Schools (AALS)

The AALS assists people in finding an initial teaching job (the so called "entry level market"—to be distinguished from "the lateral market" for those who want to move from teaching at one law school to another). The AALS distributes applications of prospective teachers to every law school in the country. For entry-level jobs beginning in the 2013-14 academic year, the deadline for the initial AALS mailing to law schools is August 8, 2012, and we strongly recommend that you get your application in to the AALS in time to be included in that mailing. (Applications received after that date but by September 19 will go out in subsequent mailings, but many committees will already have put together their preliminary list of candidates to interview by that time.) (See Part II, The Application Process.)

2. The Preliminary Interview

If a law school is interested in you, it will ask you for a preliminary screening interview in the fall. Typically these interviews will be held at the AALS-sponsored Faculty Recruitment Conference, usually held in mid-October in Washington, D.C. As noted below, occasionally schools will hold screening interviews *before* the AALS conference, either on campus or by teleconference, possibly in an attempt to get a jump on their competition. (The fact at least some schools schedule their screening interviews early is one reason why we strongly recommend that you get your resume to the AALS in time for the first distribution on August 8.)

At present, though, the majority of screening interviews are still done at the AALS conference. In the fall of 2012, the conference will be held on October 11-13th. Law schools send members of their faculty appointments committees to interview candidates in 30 minute, back-to-back sessions for the two days. The conference is usually known as the "Meat Market." The AALS job conference enables schools to screen candidates cheaply, and thus being willing to attend the conference enhances your chances of getting your

foot in the door with a school, and ultimately getting a job.

- *You must pay your own way to the conference, as well as a substantial fee to the AALS. In cases of severe financial hardship, our committee may be able to help.*
- *Usually you will be interviewed by two to four faculty members.*

3. The Full-Dress Interview

If a law school is still interested in you after the AALS recruitment conference interview, they will offer you a “fly-back” to interview on campus to meet with their whole faculty. For the fly-back (full-dress) interview, you would normally:

- (a) Arrive the night before and have dinner with four to five faculty members or have dinner at the end of your visit;
- (b) Have a series of one-hour office interviews the next day, each typically with three to five faculty members present;
- (c) Present a scholarly “job talk” to the faculty and respond to questions; and
- (d) Meet one on one with the dean.

A few schools have two levels of screening at their campus: they invite all prospective candidates back first to meet only with the appointments committee (generally, over lunch), and then recommend some number of those candidates to go on to a full-dress interview with the faculty.

Schools will pay all your expenses for the preliminary or full-dress interviews on their campus. Most full-dress interviews take place in the period between November and February. If the law school faculty likes you after the full-dress interview, the faculty might then vote to offer you a job. Sometimes schools will vote offers as early as two or three weeks after the interviews are completed. Others will wait until March to make any offers, after the faculty has seen all of the candidates. On occasion, the timing of offers can be awkward. Candidates may receive offers from a less-preferred school that (nominally or actually) expire before they hear from more-preferred schools. There are no hard and fast rules to deal with such timing conflicts, but you should be aware that they may occur. We are happy to discuss your options should you find yourself in such a position.

C. The Application Process

The Faculty Appointments Register (FAR), as the name suggests, is a registry of candidates interested in teaching at law schools. To participate in the FAR, candidates fill out a one-page form, which asks for basic information on education, teaching and employment experience, publications, and references. Applicants may now also submit a full resume as an electronic attachment to the AALS form, and we strongly encourage you to prepare one to attach. In addition to the standard information on an academic CV, you should include a research agenda and a full list of recommenders. The AALS application and attached resume will be the only information most schools receive about you before they make their initial cut for interviews at AALS, and you want to make sure it presents your strongest case. *We are happy to counsel you on what information will be most significant to hiring committees and the best way to present it, and to review drafts if you wish.*

The 2012-2013 FAR candidate form is available online; the website is www.aals.org. The website

also lists all member schools, with links to each school website.

1. Where To Apply

By applying with the AALS form resume, you will automatically apply to every member school.

In addition, we strongly recommend that you send letters on your own to a targeted set of schools where you would like to teach (see Section II D). We suggest targeting approximately 20 schools, but no more than 40 schools.

Do not restrict your application to schools that advertise positions. Almost all schools interview every year, but many schools never advertise.

Restricting your job search to certain geographic areas is not a good idea:

(a) There is a tremendous “bandwagon” effect in legal academia. Law schools are much more likely to hire you if a peer institution has made you an offer or has at least shown interest in you. Thus, even if you have a strong preference to teach in the Washington, D.C. area, you will have better chances for a job at Georgetown if you are given a fly-back offer from Michigan.

(b) The market is tough in many of the most desired geographical areas (New York, Boston, San Francisco/Northern California).

(c) Wherever your start, if you are a productive scholar and plugged in to the scholarly community in your field(s), you may well have opportunities to move laterally to a geographic area you prefer.

(d) You may even discover that you like parts of the country where you thought you could not survive.

We also strongly urge you not to limit your search to so-called elite law schools. First, it is very hard (increasingly so) to get an entry-level job at any of these schools, even for people with sterling credentials, and it is often hard to predict at the beginning of the appointments season how strong any one candidate’s chances are. If things go very well for you, you can always withdraw from consideration at other schools once you have an offer in hand from a school you would prefer. But if things go worse than you had hoped, it is very hard to put yourself in play at “second-tier” schools half-way through the appointments season. Second, if what you really want to do with your life is write and teach, the differences between so-called “elite” law schools and other schools are less significant than the differences between any of them and (say) being a practicing lawyer. If you want to be a law teacher, but only if you can get a job at one of the top-ten schools, it is worth thinking about whether academia is really the job for you. Finally, as noted above, if you are a productive scholar, you may well have an opportunity to move later on. Many schools have a demonstrated track record of having their younger law teachers hired laterally at others schools.

2. Keep Us Informed

The Program to Promote Stanford Students and Alumni/ae in Law Teaching will give you help in the job search if you want it. Specifically, if you request it, we can:

(a) Go over drafts of your resume, cover letters to schools, and a statement of research interests;

(b) Include your resume in the Stanford resume book that we send to all law schools in August;

(c) Hold a moot job talk;

- (d) Hold moot AALS interviews;
- (e) Pitch you informally to other schools; and
- (f) Notify you of schools that are looking specifically in your areas of expertise or have otherwise reached out to us to find promising Stanford graduates.

But we cannot provide these services if we do not know you are applying. Please get in touch with Bob Weisberg (weisberg@stanford.edu, 650-723-0612) early in the process—by mid-July at the latest, but earlier is better—and by August 6 send the following to Amy Applebaum (amya@stanford.edu; Stanford Law School, Stanford, CA 94305-8610; (650) 723-3960):

- (a) A camera-ready copy of your resume (we will be happy to review a draft first); and
- (b) A list of teaching/research interests;

3. How To Apply

It is important to submit the resume form to the AALS by the first deadline on August 8 so that you can be included in their first mailing.

How important is it to use the AALS service at all? The short answer is, very important for almost everyone. It used to be the case that all elite schools and all “hot-shot” candidates bypassed the AALS, with those candidates relying on elite schools to contact them directly and fly them out for on-campus interviews. Those days are gone. Virtually all schools (including elite schools) and virtually all candidates now interview at AALS. Schools may by-pass the AALS interview for local candidates whom they can screen on-campus at low cost to themselves, or candidates whom they already know through other channels (e.g., their own graduates). But, with a very few exceptions, they will screen everyone else at AALS.

It is true that each year a handful of “hot-shot” applicants nationwide still market themselves directly to a handful of elite law schools, without going through the AALS job conference. Some are successful and some not. We emphasize that the odds of getting an entry-level job at one of these schools are very low, and hence the strategy a risky one for most applicants.

Bottom line: unless you are restricting your search to a small number of schools in your geographical area that you know will screen local candidates on-campus, you are almost certainly putting yourself at a disadvantage by not registering at AALS. We would strongly advise applicants to seek our advice before forgoing the AALS process.

In addition to applying through the AALS, you should apply directly to a selected list of schools, as we noted above. Your applications to these schools should contain your resume, a cover letter, and samples of your scholarly writing, if at all possible, in particular those that are not generally available (e.g., unpublished manuscripts not posted on the web).

- *Again, we can advise you on what to include on the resume and cover letter.*
- *Your application letters should be sent to the deans of the law schools—you do not need to identify the chair of the faculty appointments committee. Deans routinely pass applications along to the faculty appointments committee.*

You should also see if your Stanford recommenders would be willing to send written recommendations to the deans at these schools and possibly to friends of theirs on the faculty. This should be done in September. These letters will help you stand out, because committees receive hundreds of resumes.

You should feel free to update your application later in the application process. For example, if you have an article accepted for publication or you finish a draft of an article, you might send the information or draft to the schools with a cover letter saying that you wish to update your file. Or if you receive an award of some kind, it is a great excuse to bring yourself to the attention of the faculty appointments committee. These letters might also present an opportunity for you to keep schools in which you are interested up to date on any favorable and relevant information about interviews, fly-backs and/or offers from other schools. Obviously, there is a delicate line between being an effective advocate for yourself and becoming a nuisance or being regarded as too self-promoting. Common sense should be your guide here.

D. Preparing for Job Conference or Other Screening Interviews

1. Describing Your Teaching Interests

Every interviewer will ask you about your teaching interests. You should have a well thought-out reply. Most academically-oriented faculties will be interested primarily in your scholarly agenda and only secondarily in your views about law practice or legal pedagogy. However, all schools will want to know how your teaching interests will fit in with their curricular needs, that you take teaching seriously, and that you have given your approach to teaching at least a little thought. The extent to which hiring is driven by curricular needs varies from school to school, as do the particular areas of need. In the end you need to fix on a teaching package that makes sense for you.

You should be ready to say what your “dream” load of four courses would be, but also indicate flexibility in accommodating the school’s needs. In this regard, it is helpful to most schools if you are willing to teach at least one first-year course.

It is not necessary that each teaching interest be related to your research interests, but it is important not to appear too scattered. You should aim ultimately for a coherent intellectual agenda, but not all your teaching fields must also be research fields.

Think about your methodological approach and be prepared to discuss it. For those of you with significant training in another discipline (economics, philosophy, history, political science), this may be your theoretical framework at least for advanced courses.

2. Describing Your Research Interests

Force yourself to write a paragraph on at least three ideas that you are ready to start writing about. Again, the goal here is to convey the impressions that you are full of interesting ideas and ready to hit the ground running.

Think about how to describe your article’s “hook.” What are the fewest number of words that describe your contribution? Someone will say, “State your thesis.” Be prepared with a coherent reply.

Do not simply recite the law or its interesting conflicts and ambiguities. Your thesis may be normative. That is, the content of some legal rule or political/moral norm should depend on your analysis: “Stock lockups should be legalized because they do not impede the market for corporate control.” “Federal rules allocating kidneys should be amended because they hurt African Americans without an offsetting medical benefit.” “The estate tax should be abolished.” Alternatively, your thesis may be explanatory, from an historical, sociological, or economic perspective: “Late 19th century divorce law reflected the influence of Darwin and Marx”; or “Litigation rates are sensitive to the business cycle.”

You might give examples of the kind of scholarship that you admire and would try to emulate. If you have time and a list of the names of interviewers ahead of time, make yourself familiar with some of their scholarship, in particular in your areas of interest. In general, say what you want to do and why—not what you do not want to do and why you are against it.

E. Preparing for Full-Dress Interviews

Before you go to your full-dress interviews, you should obtain a list of the school faculty and their biographies. Most of the information can be obtained from their website. It is also a good idea to familiarize yourself with recent faculty publications. This information can be gotten off of Lexis or Infotrac. While it will usually be impossible for you to research all of the faculty members, it is a good idea to look at some recent scholarship by the faculty who teach in your fields or whose work is closest to the subject of your faculty talk. We have witnessed candidates who have been rejected largely because their job talk ignored the scholarship of one of the law school's faculty members.

1. Preparing for “The Dinner” the Night Before

Usually you will be invited to have dinner with several faculty members the night before your day of full-dress interviews. Some schools have the dinner after your interview day instead.

Try to obtain at the dinner a copy of your interview schedule for the following day. The schedule is often made at the last minute, but you should be able to get a copy the day before. This schedule will list each interviewer. Obtaining a copy of the schedule in advance will allow you to look up the faculty members before meeting them.

2. Stress Your Commitment to Scholarship

Most generally, you want to convey the impression that you have many ideas. If your interlocutors do not give you a chance to bring up another article idea, just find a way to give them more information about what really matters or is most interesting to you. Do not wait for smooth segues.

You also want to convince them that you are enthusiastic about the scholarly life. Ask your interviewers about their scholarly projects and tell them about yours.

When asked whether you have questions about the school, you should ask questions about the school's support for faculty scholarship, scholarly strengths, etc.

3. Show Enthusiasm for the School

To the extent you can do so with credibility, it is always a good idea to show enthusiasm for the school and the city in which it is located. Schools hate to think they are your third or fourth choice, just as you would hate to think you are theirs.

4. Keep Your Story Straight

Faculty appointments committees at different schools talk to each other constantly. You should assume that anything you say to someone on one faculty will get back to other schools. Therefore: (1) be consistent in your stories; and (2) do not run down one school to another (bad form in any event).

5. Preparing for Job Talk

It is very important that you practice your job talk. We can assist you in setting up practice job talks (“moot job talks”) with professors at Stanford Law School, either in person or by video conferencing.

You should plan to talk, at the most, for 20-30 minutes. Law professors do not want to hear an entry-level person talk for a long time. They want to hear themselves talk—and see whether you can carry on an intelligent dialogue in responding to their questions.

If you end up with multiple callbacks, we would recommend trying to schedule them so that you do not interview first at the school where you most want to teach. People rarely do their best in their first job talk, so it is a good idea to have a few other schools under your belt first.

For many job talks, it is useful to distribute an outline for your talk, write on the board, or use slides or PowerPoint during your talk, so that your listeners can follow your line of argument.

6. Preparing for Your Decanal Interview

After the job talk, you would normally end your day with a one on one interview with the dean.

- *Do not raise the issue of money unless and until you have an offer.*
- *You can ask about research support (again showing that you are interested in writing), course loads, time off to write, etc.*
- *Emphasize how much you enjoyed meeting the faculty and how impressed you are.*

F. Keeping Your Recommenders, Your “Moles,” and Us Fully Informed

Because schools are so concerned with whether their assessments are shared by others, it is extremely helpful to let them know that they are in competition for your services. Do not underestimate how reluctant law schools are to make independent assessments. For example, Michigan is much more likely to make you an offer if it is clear that Texas has made you an offer. However, it is a trickier question whether it is to your advantage to let one school know that a “less prestigious” school has given you a fly-back or made you an offer.

To facilitate this bandwagon effect, it is very important that you keep all your friends and supporters in the market apprised of any offers or fly-back interviews you receive. You should send your recommenders and our committee periodic bulletins of how you are doing in the market. That way, when we are talking with faculty at another school we can say things like—“This candidate is generating a lot of interest, she already has a fly-back from Virginia and an offer from Duke.”

If you feel comfortable doing so, you should also feed this information to your supporters at schools where you have interviewed. If you have gotten a fly-back, there is probably someone on the faculty appointments committee who affirmatively wants to hire you. It is often easy to figure out who that person is from how she or he interacts with you. If you can identify that person, funnel all your positive information about interest from competitive schools through this person to the faculty appointments committee.

- *If you give the information to someone who is not on the faculty appointments committee or to someone who is not enthusiastic about your appointment, the information may get lost.*

Attachment 1

AALS Faculty Appointments Register Form

ID# not yet
published

1. Name	John Smith	5. Personal Data
2. Phone	* (* Pref)	Gender:
3. Fax/E-mail	Fax: Email:	Race:
4. Address		
4a. Alt.Address		
6. 1st Law Degree		
8. Advanced Law Degrees		
8a. Other Advanced Degrees		
9. Undergraduate Education		
10. Law School Teaching Experience		
11. Other Teaching Experience		
12. Subjects Most Like to Teach	Comments:	
13. Other Subjects May Be Interested In Teaching	Comments:	
14. Other Subjects Would Be Willing To Teach, If Asked	Comments:	
15. Geographic Restrictions		
16. Employment		
17. Major Published Writings		
18. Bar Admissions		
19. References		
20. Comments		
21. Date Available		22. Resume

Attachment 2

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Uncloaking Law School Hiring: A Recruit's Guide to the AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference

Don Zillman, Marina Angel, Jan Laitos, George Pring and Joseph Tomain

And gladly wolde [s]he lerne, and gladly teche.
-Chaucer, "Prologue," The Canterbury Tales [our revision]

For those yearning to be a law professor, who would gladly trade clients and collectibles for students and scholarship, the main "hiring hall" is the Association of American Law Schools' (AALS) annual fall Faculty Recruitment Conference. The "Meatmarket," as it is ingloriously known, can be an opaque, exhausting, and sometimes disappointing experience, both for candidates and for recruiters.

Several of us who have been recruiters-ranging from a rank neophyte of one conference to a veteran of a dozen-thought we might break through the seeming but unintentional "conspiracy of silence" surrounding this bizarre tribal ritual. Our article, then, is an attempt at "full disclosure" for the newcomer who wants to break into legal education. All standard disclaimers apply. We all have idiosyncratic perspectives. All schools may not look for the same things. In our experience, however, there are common, predictable patterns.

As we exchanged ideas, experiences, and endless redrafts of this article, two themes emerged. This first is how poorly some very well-credentialed candidates handle the hiring process. The second is how little guidance is available on what is expected of candidates. Naturally, we suspect that a postconference gathering of candidates would also agree on how poorly most faculty recruiters interviewed and how little sense many faculty members had of what they should be doing. We cannot write that article. But we can write the first.

Thinking Seriously About a Teaching Career

Before doing anything else, a candidate should ask seriously "Why Teaching?" Our suspicion is that at least half of the candidates we interview at the conference have not done this. Their interviews reflect their failure to their discredit. A candidate who wants to use the event as a first introduction to legal education does so at peril. We doubt many recruiters are excited about selling a candidate on teaching in half an hour at the conference.

The best sources of information on "Why Teaching?" are probably current law professors and deans, most likely one's former teachers in law school. Borrow an hour of their time or buy them lunch and ask them about what they do, how they like it, and what advice they have for you. If the relationship permits, you may even explore such things as salary, work hours, tenure, and

faculty politics. Meetings with two or three faculty members should inspire or discourage you. Moreover, keep in touch with your mentors as you go through the conference process; they can be a great source of information and advice. Your alma mater's contingent at the conference also may provide help. (Some schools come to sell as well as to buy.)

The professors will tell you that their work revolves around teaching and scholarship. Both are hard work. Teaching is not just getting up before a group and talking. Most new teachers, including practitioners very familiar with the field they teach, underestimate significantly the preparation time needed to make fifty minutes with a class a valuable learning experience. Scholarship is vastly more than just polishing ideas that may have sufficed for a local newspaper's page, a Bar committee report, or your last Second Circuit brief. Take a realistic look at your strengths, weaknesses, needs, and desires. How well do you like public speaking? How well do you enjoy counseling persons less legally knowledgeable and experienced than yourself? Are you comfortable in a less adversarial role when speaking or writing? Are you comfortable in a less structured work environment in which you may get limited guidance from "above" and be able to give very few orders "below?" Are you (and your "significant other") really prepared to relocate? If you have not thought through these questions, you are not ready for the conference or for an academic career.

Even if you are comfortable about other aspects of teaching, you should weigh salary now. Is a comfortable but hardly upscale wage acceptable for the rest of your career? Practitioners with three years of experience may face a halving of their paychecks on entering teaching. Are you prepared for graduates' starting salaries to exceed your own? Will you need to do consulting work in order to close the gap (a practice some schools forbid and most schools restrict)?

The AALS Hiring Process

If your soul-searching persuades you teaching is worth exploring, what are the entrées to a faculty position? The AALS hiring process is not the only method. If you are interested in a single law school in the town in which you have your professional and personal roots, the AALS Registry is unnecessary. You probably know the dean or several faculty members. Approach them and see if they are interested. Even if you do not wish to restrict your search to a single school, you can use former professors or other law faculty contacts to get your résumé to other schools that may be looking for new faculty. If your credentials (primarily law school performance) are outstanding and recommendations compelling, you may receive an offer to interview without intermediate steps. If your credentials are very good but not outstanding, the reference will at least get you in the consideration stack of unsolicited applications for teaching positions every law school recruitment committee receives. Finally, you can simply make a "cold" contact by letter and résumé to a school at which you are not known and see if anything results. Bonne chance. Yours will be one among scores or hundreds of applications.

The AALS Résumé

The most structured way of making known your interest in teaching is through the AALS Faculty Appointments Register. For a fee, you can have the AALS supply your one-page résumé—along with some 700+ others—to all accredited law schools in the country and to some unaccredited schools.

The one-page limitation is provided by the AALS in the interests of uniformity and brevity. Give some real thought to résumé preparation: it makes or breaks the vast majority of candidates. Make a few dry runs before preparing the final version. Although it is hard to gain points for a stylish résumé, it is possible to lose points for a handwritten résumé or one that jumbles items together in an attempt to appear so qualified as to overwhelm the form.

The ideal AALS résumé is readable, factually accurate (later checking will catch errors and exaggerations, usually with devastating consequences), specific (class rank, writings, law review position), and avoids trivia (sadly, at the first screening, no one cares about your treasurership of the Student Bar or your Young-Lawyer-of-the-Year award).

AALS résumés arrive at law schools in stacks of several hundred at a time. Most recruitment committees approach the résumés with certain expectations and certain curricular needs, and they will cull the résumés very quickly with those needs in mind. (One of us has scanned two hundred résumés in an hour during a particularly pressured time.)

What do we look for? What lines are crucial? Although they disclaim uniformity, recruiters tend to follow patterns. A sweep of law school, class rank, honors, and law review seems to be a dominant pattern. Publications may be an equally important “make or break” for a number of recruiters. The reading often ends there if the baseline expectations are not met. The next categories of significance are law employment, judicial clerkship, teaching interests, and prior law school teaching—depending on the school’s or recruiter’s biases. One or more of these factors may also end the scanning process with a decision against the applicant. Minority or gender status may also be significant. Candidates who survive the first scanning will typically receive fuller consideration of their résumé, in which undergraduate honors, chairing of the Bar Ethics Committee, pre-law stint as a foreign-service officer, and a reference from Sandra Day O’Connor may be noted.

The one-page AALS form and the nature of the screening process limit your ability for “creative résumé writing.” Nonetheless, several suggestions are in order. First, be specific on the items that are likely to be significant to résumé scanners. “Third in class” may be better than “top five percent.” The “name” of your references may be crucial. Law review “articles editor” may be more or less prestigious than “senior editor” to screeners.

Second, give some thought to your teaching interests. When seeking entry-level faculty, hiring committees are usually looking for good generalists who have the potential to teach in several of the “bread and butter” first-year and large advanced courses. They may also have specific curricular gaps they would like to fill. Position yourself to respond both ways. Unless you rule it out, you are presumed to be able to handle a variety of courses. An expression of subject-area interest is requested on the AALS form; fill it in carefully. Unless you are quite rigid on only teaching certain subjects, give yourself flexibility and rule out very little. If you insist you can only teach Advanced Health Law or Chinese Environmental Law, your chances of employment are slight to nonexistent. If you have a clearly focused area, make sure you highlight the area or areas for schools that are subject-matter shopping. Describe your area clearly enough to catch the attention of all schools interested in it. Consult with faculty friends about the proper terminology. “Labor Law” may not include “Employment Discrimination.” “Environmental Law” may not encompass “Natural Resources Law” or “Energy Law.” “All Criminal Law” may not suggest “Juvenile Law.” If time permits, have a faculty friend review your resume before you send it to the AALS.

Third, take seriously the geographic location questions. On the one hand, leave the “preferred”/“not preferred” lines blank if you truly would consider an invitation from a school in the Deep South, in Giant Metropolis, or Smallburg, U.S.A., or 2,000 miles from your family or from your spouse’s current job. On the other hand, if there are indeed locales you would not seriously consider, be forthright and save everyone the embarrassment and time and money drain of finding out the hard way. Both of you should assess locational preferences and mismatches. You should recognize that dual careers have become something of a norm in faculty interviewing. Unless you are serious about a bicoastal relationship, a geographic veto from either party should control your geographic preference line.

Fourth, give careful attention to selecting your references. Contact them before including their names. The best reference is a person who (1) will impress law faculty members, (2) has recent, close experience with your ability to think, write, and speak, and (3) can give a firm “yes” to the crucial question: “Should we hire this candidate?” Law school professors and judges with whom you have worked are the best references. Members of your firm or office may be useful if they can provide significant information on your thinking, writing, and speaking skills. If they can only speak to your billable-hours reputation or your ability to service clients, they should not be listed. A few references can be positively harmful. This is particularly true of the “prestige” reference who knows you only slightly. The U.S. Senator in whose local office you worked as an undergraduate intern or the chaired professor who knew you only as a student in a hundred-person class has little useful to say about why you would be a good law professor. The hiring-committee member making the contact is likely to come away with a negative impression of you.

The subject is delicate, but it is appropriate to ask your references whether they feel comfortable providing a recommendation for you. The obvious (possibly unspoken) question is: “Can you provide an excellent recommendation?” If the answer is less than an enthusiastic “yes,” consider another reference. A negative or lukewarm report from a listed reference can be devastating to a candidacy. Do not assume the faculty member who has written glowing letters for you to the bar examiners or law firms will dust off the same letter. Most faculty take their teaching recommendations even more seriously. Often they will be providing them to valued colleagues at other schools. Also, the jobs are different.

Fifth, the brevity of the AALS résumé should encourage you to prepare a separate full résumé. This may be more than a single page but should not be more than three or four pages. Highlight your strong points, whether academic excellence, publications, or practice. Things you may want to include but that are not essential, such as marital status, birthday, hobbies, or foreign languages, can go at the end. When you describe your practice experience, use words that will ring bells for law school recruiters, words such as “contracts,” not just GATT, or “domestic relations,” not just “spouse abuse.” Send the full résumé to schools in which you have a special interest. The detailed résumé and compelling cover letter will allow you to expand on your experiences and highlight matters that may be of particular interest to a school. Certainly, you should send the full résumé to any school that invites you to interview at the conference. Bring extra copies to hand out in interviews. Finally, get started early. The AALS résumés are distributed to the law schools in September and October. Get yours in the first distribution. The AALS deadline is usually August. Contact AALS during the summer to obtain the form and the exact deadlines. (Current address: AALS, Suite 800, 1201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.) Plan to return it by mid-August.

The Interview Selections

You have submitted your AALS résumé. You wait anxiously. The phone rings. Acme Law School's recruitment committee has seen your résumé and would like to interview you at the Conference. With luck several dozen other Acmes will also phone or write. Your sense of worth fluctuates accordingly. But you suddenly have a problem. Do you take everyone or are you selective?

A word about the interviewing format should help your decision. The conference is spread over three days (Thursday afternoon to Saturday afternoon) with interviews from early morning until late afternoon. Evenings may also be used. Most schools will book interviews every half hour throughout the day. In theory, you could accept forty offers to interview. In theory, you can also run ultramarathons, prepare appellate briefs on no sleep for a week, and bend steel in your bare hands. Take a good look at your capabilities and interests. An interview for which you are too late, fatigued, or stressed may be worse than no interview. Chances are nothing will come of it, and you may harm your performance at other interviews.

Here it is worth emphasizing a crucial point. Law faculty interviews should not be viewed as another version of the law firm interviewing process you remember from law school. In the latter, your excellent credentials charmed interviewers who had similar excellent credentials as they emerged as young generalists from law school. The half-hour first interviews in the law school placement office were often little more than a validation of your high academic performance and a demonstration that you probably would not insult the important client at the firm's cocktail party. Those were "easy" interviews.

For interviewing at the conference, forget those largely pleasant memories. For the most part, you are competing with equals or near equals, and your paper résumé will not insure success. Your performance in the thirty minutes with the recruiting team decides whether anything else takes place. Ivy League law-review editors crash in bad interviews. Their State U competitors shine and receive the "call back" invitations. Most interviewing schools probably can pursue further negotiations with no more than one in four candidates they meet. Many pursue a far smaller percentage. This suggests that you are far better off to do ten or fifteen interviews well than twenty-five in adequate but unspectacular fashion.

Consider the offer of an interview time "negotiable." It is good to have a thirty-minute gap between interviews, to "come down," take notes, and cope with overloaded elevators. Recruiters would prefer an up-front "I have a problem with 11:30 a.m., Friday," than a request to reschedule later, when their schedules are full.

If some selection seems necessary, do your homework. We are constantly amazed at candidates' lack of knowledge about the schools they are interviewing. Ask each school for some literature about itself and the community. Often a school will send this in any case. The catalog and dean's annual report are two common documents. Less obvious material could include enrollment demographics and the most recent list of faculty publications and activities. Some schools may be sensitive about sending these. Inquire politely but make clear your interest in learning more about the school. A second source of information will be faculty friends. Often their information may be more current than general ratings of law schools or the obviously self-serving statements in college catalogs or dean's reports.

Your inquiries should give you a basis for narrowing your selections. Comments from faculty friends are most useful for getting a sense of the overall quality of a school. A school's literature gives a sense of the place. What things does the school emphasize? Heavy clinical experience? Specialized seminars? Small first-year classes? Particular subject matter or programs? What is the general makeup of the faculty you seek to join? Are there many new faculty? Colleagues in your field of interest? The facts you gather can be positive or negative depending on your needs and can help you make an initial ranking of schools. When you have set your priorities and decided how many interviews you feel you can handle at top efficiency, pare down your list. If you have already accepted an invitation by phone or letter and wish to cancel, inform the school at least two weeks before the conference. Although it may seem bad form because the unspoken message to the school may be "I've got too many better offers," the alternative is worse-forcing parties to sit through half an hour at the conference that neither wants to waste. Adequate notice of cancellation is essential. The school may wish to place another candidate in the precious (and now vacated) timeslot. The day-before cancellation does not afford that opportunity.

Suppose your luck on invitations has not been good. You have a low quantity or quality of interviews. (Many candidates whose résumés are distributed obtain no interviews at all.) The AALS advises that you consider not coming to the conference if you have "few or no pre-arranged interviews." Its advice has merit. Most schools have filled their interview calendars (often beyond their capacity to interview well) before they reach the conference. Most plan to see only previously invited candidates. Opportunities for contact at cocktail parties, lunch, and in the halls and elevators are limited, overrated, and only rarely conducive to more than brief pleasantries. With few exceptions, faculty recruiters do not want to see candidates other than those they have selected before coming to the conference.

However, if you do go to the conference with fewer interviewers than you want, or if you have not heard from a school in which you are particularly interested, leave a copy of your résumé and a compelling cover note (with room and phone numbers) for the school at the conference message center. Be sure to check your own room-phone and message-center messages frequently. Do not hesitate to prevail on faculty friends at the conference to call colleagues at the school of your choice to tell them what they are missing. Do use the cocktail parties and halls to introduce yourself to schools in which you are particularly interested and to say hello again to favorites you have already interviewed.

If you have received few invitations, consider them carefully. If some are from schools in which you would have a definite interest, the conference may be worth the time and expense. It is a near certainty that it will be your best chance to meet in person with faculty members from New York, California, and Kansas. Schools are almost certainly going to be unwilling to pay for your trip to campus without a prior meeting. Should your "serious interest" list reduce to one or two schools in the same area, consider whether you are better off buying a plane ticket to visit them rather than buying one for the conference. Before choosing between the conference and a direct visit, a call to the recruiting committee may let you discover how serious their interest is in you.

The Interviews

Many of the rules of standard interviewing practice apply to the conference interviews. Dress conservatively. Arrive well ahead of time, both for the conference (winter air travel is notoriously tricky) and for each interview. Scout out the time needed to move from one room to

another (if elevators are unlucky for you, consider the stairs). Try to learn something about the interviewers.

Keep track of time. If an interview is going well, but you are running into a conflict with another interview, mention the time crunch. You might call the school next on your schedule to let them know you will be a few minutes late. This is a proper courtesy to Interviewer No. 2 and a nice way of suggesting your interest in staying with Interviewer No. 1 as long as possible.

What are the faculty recruiters looking for? In one way or another all want answers to three critical questions. How well will this person teach a class and do work that goes with it? What are the candidate's interests in published scholarship and how good will it be? What sort of faculty colleague will the candidate be and what sort of impression will he or she make on the variety of groups that interact with the law school (alumni, members of the bar, other University faculty and administrators)? You want to impress the recruiters that you will do well on all counts.

The interview format varies considerably and the best advice is to be prepared for different approaches, even within one interview. Expect three types of questions or comments. First, some portion of the interview may be the small talk of members of a shared profession or an attempt to find areas of common ground. Did you enjoy the Moot Court competition at your law school? Is Joe Bftsplk still managing partner at the firm? Are they still doing the court clerks' lunches out in the park? These questions typically give you a chance to establish rapport and reinforce your credentials.

Second, another segment (almost all of the interview for some schools) may consist of a rigorous examination of your intellectual abilities. The interviewer wants to know if you are as good as or better than your paper record. The conversation also gives the recruiter a little sense of your skill in a classroom, your potential for scholarship, your collegiality, and your intellectual spark. Clearly, this is a crucial part of the interview. Styles vary, but a common approach is to take a topic the candidate knows and explore it. It may be your law-review note, the topic of your latest brief, the subject on which you want to pursue research, or just the hot topic in a recent issue of the National Law Journal. An interviewer may start with: "Tell us your theory..." "What do you think about...?" "Do you agree with...?" and the discussion is under way.

As in law school exams, typically it is not the conclusion you reach as much as the knowledge and analytic ability you display that counts. A few questioners may be probing your values and beliefs. "What do you think of the Critical Legal Studies movement? Law and Economics? The Takings Clause? Roe v. Wade?" On these questions you take the chance that honesty may kill your candidacy. If it does, you almost certainly are well rid of that school. In the large majority of cases, candor will help more than hurt. Good intellectual disagreement is one of the joys of law teaching. Stridency may not be popular, but well-reasoned dissent should be.

Occasionally, you may find some out-and-out game playing. Members of the recruiting team will take different sides of the argument to draw you out. Use of big words or obscure references may be thought useful to catch the dishonest or merely glib candidate, "What do you think of Goombah's theory of stasis?" Respond to these as you would to a legitimate question that hits an area of ignorance. "I'm not familiar with that. Fill me in on the basics of the theory." That lets you pursue the line of conversation if the questioner wishes.

Even if you are familiar with the subject, be cautious about the generality you cannot back up. If you opine that “I find Bushwah’s conclusions flawed in several major aspects,” be ready for the logical response: “Name two.” In this intellectual exercise, you are probably at the mercy of the questioners. If it is what is most useful to the interviewer, be prepared to spend the entire interview discussing your views of the consequences of corporate antitakeover laws. Normally, however, this will not happen.

The “intellectual power” portion of the interview has real risks. Your ignorance of matters that you should know can be fatal. Your analytic capacity may be shown to be inadequate. The narrowness of your intellectual interests may be held against you. Your answers may be thought “unthoughtful” or, worse, factually wrong. The recruiters’ reaction to your comments may be the single most important part of the interview. Regardless of your paper credentials, a bad or mediocre performance probably ends your chance of future consideration. As a norm, you will be competing with persons whose credentials match yours, and a good interview can jump you to the top of the list.

In a sense, your whole life has been the preparation for the discussion described. Nonetheless, more preparation helps. Reread all of your listed written works shortly before the interview. Many interviewers will use the topic of one of your writings or areas of practice as the springboard for this portion of the interview. It is embarrassing to stumble in recollecting your own past work. Also, brush up on recent developments in areas in which you have written; your interviewers may have. Spend some time thinking about further research you might want to do. (And be sure to know something about it, if you bring it up.) Beyond that, be ready to engage in intellectual exchanges. Do not be afraid to disagree or to probe the questioners’ theories.

The third part of the interview (and again, one that may be the major portion for some schools) considers your interest in teaching and the general work of a faculty member. The questions are predictable. “Why do you want to leave practice for teaching?” “What makes you think you would be a good teacher?” “How would you teach (your favorite subject)?” “What research do you have in progress?” “Where do you see your career in ten years?”

These may tempt the answers “I’m looking for something easier”; “Damned, if I Know”; “None”; and “I’m not sure where my career will be in two weeks.” Such answers are unlikely to excite recruiters about your candidacy. As mentioned earlier, you should have thought through the issues before coming to the conference. Is there a pat answer to any of these questions? Not really. The answers should be honest and reflect thoughtfulness. It is quite legitimate to say that you are still weighing the benefits of practice and teaching or that you have just begun to consider the direction of your scholarly endeavors. It is crucial to stress that you recognize the significance of teaching and research and you have given some thought to how you would advance your career in each field.

Scholarship is a crucial issue. Regular published scholarship (law-review articles, treatises, book chapters, etc.) is a general requirement for tenure and an expectation of a professional career. If you feel strongly that all you want to do is teach and engage in Bar or pro bono activities, indicate that when the schools first contact you. Almost all will make clear that published scholarship is a requirement, and they would waste their time and yours by talking further.

Candidates should recognize that some law schools may insist on prior publications. The excuse “I was so busy in school/practice I didn’t have time to write” may look rather lame as you compete against others who did. In addition, “scholarship” has a rather peculiar meaning to most

law professors. It assuredly does not equate with “any legal writing done since law school.” The recruiter typically is most impressed with writing that is exhaustive in research, analytic rather than merely descriptive in its approach, and balanced rather than adversarial in its treatment of issues. Typically, this will mean law-review articles or analytic books or chapters of books. Ordinarily, it will not mean appellate briefs, government committee reports, or bar journal notes. Further there are definite pecking orders among law reviews or book publishers. An article in a major law review will be more valuable than ten articles in a bar association or practitioners’ journal.

You may be asked if you are interested in “clinical” teaching or a “legal research and writing” position. Beware. If clinical or skills education is the great love of your life, say so. But find out if the position is a tenure-track one, and, if so, whether the school has tenured any clinicians. Probe to see if this is a school that has “two tracks,” one for clinicians and one for regular professors, and proceed with eyes open.

During most of the interview you will be answering questions that the recruiters want answered. Typically, however, you will be given (or can make) an opportunity to ask your own questions. Your chance often comes late in the interview: “Is there anything else we can tell you about the school?” You should be prepared for this question and have something you wish to explore. We always are surprised by the number of blank responses the question draws. They show either lack of interest or preparation and can be the kiss of death. Some questions (“How large is your faculty?”) suggest lack of preparation. Still others may appear so inane as to reflect on the candidate’s general intellectual powers (“How often do you have faculty meetings?”) or interest in teaching (“How much private practice can I do?”). Ideally, your best questions arise out of a relatively careful reading of literature about the school and expand on matters not stated in the literature. They also focus on your needs and desires. “What goals do you have for the school?” “Is there a faculty consensus about the importance of research?” “I see that you have several instructors in the labor-law field; what does that mean for my chances of teaching an advanced labor-law course?” “Tell me more about your summer research grants for young faculty. I would like to do research on inner-city police-department practices.” “When are faculty eligible to teach in your overseas summer program?” Don’t expect firm promises out of these inquiries. But you want to alert schools to your legitimate needs and interests. Also, you may find out matters that excite you about the school or remove it from your further consideration.

Appreciate that certain matters may be too sensitive or premature to discuss in this short, initial interview. “Do I understand that your most recent appointment is in serious danger of being denied tenure?” is unlikely to bring a candid or a friendly answer. Firm promises of salary, rank, tenure procedures, and your exact “package” of courses are generally premature before the on-campus visit, unless the interviews raise them. You should find out at the interview, however, if the position is a regular professorship (a renewable contract of several years leading up to a tenure decision) or a “visiting” position. If the latter, find out if it is for a one-year nonrenewable term (typically to replace a tenured faculty member who is on leave for a year and scheduled to return) or a “look-see” visitorship (for an opening that could turn into a tenure-track position after a year).

Your half hour nears its end. How do you close the interview? Obviously, with thanks and enthusiasm. If you have a particular interest in the school that has not surfaced, you may want to express it. “I think the ability to work on my research around a major medical center is a strong attraction to me.”

You hope that the recruiters say something about their further plans for your candidacy. If not, you may ask. Do not be surprised if, when the interview ends, you do not get any real sense of how it went. Typically, the interviewers will want to compare notes with each other, then with the rest of the school's recruitment committee at the conference. The "call back" interview at the conference is used by many but not all schools for the most promising candidates. If the school uses the "call back" (or cocktail party, meal, or other "reencounter" technique) and you have impressed them, usually some indication will occur at the end of the first interview. ("How can we get hold of you again, while we're all here at the conference?")

If you do not hear from a school again at the conference, either they do not use call backs or, if they do, you are not high on their list. Do not call them; wait for them to call you. (Check your phone messages and the AALS message center repeatedly.) If you receive a call back and have no real interest in that school, politely decline. If you fail to respond to a call-back message, the school may persist in trying to reach you.

A further hiatus typically occurs after the conference. (Some schools go into winter recess shortly after the conference ends.) You can assume the recruitment committee is now meeting with the faculty and administration to iron out on-campus interview invitations. If you have heard nothing from a school after two months, it is a reasonably safe assumption that the school is not interested and lacks the courtesy to let you know. Put them down as louts not worthy of your interest and resolve that as a recruitment committee chair in a future year you will do better.

Support Services at the Conference

There are sources of assistance available during the conference. Besides the message center, the AALS maintains a candidates' room in which you may relax, share information, and take advantage of the ever-helpful and -knowledgeable AALS staff. The AALS also plans a briefing conference for candidates on Thursday afternoon. In recent years, special hospitality rooms have been provided for women candidates, generally with experienced law professors available who will be glad to talk to you. Your law school may be among the limited number ("seller schools") that maintains a hospitality suite for its own alumni/ae and/or sponsors a cocktail party for "buyer school" interviewers to meet its protégés on a more convivial basis. Find out and take advantage of the service your school provides. Also, on Friday night the AALS sponsors a massive cocktail party for recruiters and candidates. View it as a "must-go" to affirm your interest in schools you have already seen or would like to see.

Preparations for a Visit to Campus

You have survived the conference. You return home. The phone rings. Acme Law School was impressed with you and wants to fly you out to visit the campus. In the next few days, several more schools join Acme. You are elated but again face some hard decisions. Now the odds have moved considerably in your favor. Unlike the conference, for which the marginal costs of another interview are relatively trivial from the point of view of the school or the candidate, you need to decide whether to invest several days away from work and considerable emotional capital. The school operating on a limited recruiting budget is also making a considerable investment in the invitation.

It is not bad form to accept the invitation on the spot, but you are entitled to a few days to think about it. You are entitled to ask some pointed questions about the nature of the faculty positions for which you are being considered. You should ask what expectations, if any, the school has for you. Your mention of "international law" on your résumé may have been inflated into the assumption that you would teach two courses in the area, supervise the student International Law Society, and administer the overseas summer program. Get such assumptions on the table early.

It is also appropriate to ask whether other candidates are being considered for "your" position. Some schools limit themselves to their first choice and hope they make a match. Others ask several candidates and try to sell the one who shows best in the on-campus interview. If the school will tell you, that is useful to know. Inquire as well whether the invitation includes your spouse. Generally it does not, but practices vary and you do not want to be left uncertain as to whether the school will arrange a program for her or him and pay for the visit.

Further pursue the issue of dual careers. Obviously, the school is not expected to find a job for your spouse, although most schools try to be helpful. At a minimum, the school should be able to answer questions that may be crucial to your mutual decision ("Yes, we have an M.A. program in Counseling") and to help with information that at least gives a sense of the job market in the area.

You should inquire about the format of the on-campus interview process. A particular concern is whether you will be asked to make a "presentation" to the faculty. If so, find out what topics might be of interest, how long you have, and what the "Q&A" practice is (nil or a "roast"?). The safest presentations stem from your most recent publication, if still current, or the one on which you are working, if sufficiently advanced to keep you ahead of your audience. Ideally, the topic should match the teaching area(s) the school is interested in your filling. Ask.

With these facts in hand you should gather any further information you need and then accept or decline the invitation as promptly as you can. Obviously, the more invitations you have, the more selective you can be. Regardless of the number of invitations, however, do not agree to visit a school from whom you are quite sure you would not accept an offer. It is unfair to the school, which will pour significant resources and energies into an effort that hindsight will confirm was futile from the start. It will foreclose a visit from a candidate who very much wants a job at the school. It will make for two of the longest days of your life. And it will definitely not "make friends." On the other hand, if you are genuinely undecided about locale or school, go explore. Many of us are teaching happily at schools we barely knew when we first started interviewing.

You have used the AALS Faculty Recruitment Conference to good advantage. You now have the chance to sell yourself to a school whose faculty you will illuminate. The on-campus visit is the next rite of passage-but that is another article in itself. Enjoy the visit. Good luck.

So You Want to Be a Law Professor

By Elyce H. Zenoff and Jerome A. Barron

HAVE YOU ever thought about teaching in law school to broaden your career, recharge your mental batteries or share your practical wisdom? More than a thousand lawyers seek law teaching positions each year, but they are frustrated because little helpful information is available on how to land a teaching job.

But with the knowledge of how law school appointment committees work, the talents law schools look for and some preparation for the annual teacher "meat market," you can find yourself in front of a classroom when the academic year begins.

How to apply

Many applicants fail in their effort to become law teachers merely because they do not understand the mechanics of the hiring process. The law school hiring season usually starts in September when an appointments committee is selected. The committee will know at that time how many tenure-track slots will be

More than a thousand lawyers seek teaching positions each year. Are you one? Here are some tips to help you land the job.



available because of retirements or a planned expansion in faculty size. Later in the year additional slots may become available because of unanticipated resignations, or visitors may be needed because one or more members of the faculty decide to take a sabbatical or a leave of absence.

The committee's next task is to decide whether to look for a person to teach the vacant courses or to look for the best person, regardless of the subjects the person wants to teach. Some believe that deans fear too much the approaching September morn with a scheduled course and no one to give it. Shifting the junior faculty is by no means always possible, and senior professors who have spent a lifetime learning a subject are unlikely to surrender it to a newcomer.

Many committees, therefore, will decide that the promising candidate who is dedicated to teaching only law and economics must be bypassed for one who is willing to fill the school's need for a civil procedure teacher. In the present buyer's market, candidates would be well advised to assume that they will have to take whatever slot is open.

Once the committee has decided what subject areas the school needs covered, it will begin to review the unsolicited applications that already have arrived and also will begin a search for applicants. The search will be conducted in a variety of ways, such as advertising, asking the faculty for suggestions and trying to ascertain whether people from other schools are "movable."

While the committee is organizing its search procedure, many candidates

already have started theirs. The first step for a candidate usually is to submit an application to the Association of American Law Schools' Faculty Appointments Register, which means that their résumés will be sent automatically to all law schools. In addition, many candidates send résumés to some schools directly.

A standard résumé form does not allow for a creative writing style that will distinguish an applicant from several hundred others in a positive fashion. It is possible, however, to create a negative impression. The list of "don'ts" below is offered to help avoid that possibility.

Don't furnish a non-academic reference when the register form asks for an

Creative writing has no place in a résumé. But you can create a positive impression with careful wording.

academic reference, because the committee will interpret your failure to do so as either an inability to follow instructions or to get an academic reference. In addition, these remarks are at best unnecessary, because the information is

unlikely to impress a committee: "I am an experienced off-shore sailor." "I worked for a major bank between college and law school." "I am highly regarded as a moot court judge." "I have long wanted to retire to law teaching so I can write a book on the history of music."

The purpose of a résumé is to assist the reader in judging a candidate's suitability for a position. The statements in the "Don't say" column do not serve this purpose. Either they are irrelevant to the question of whether a candidate will be a competent teacher or writer, or they contain only soft data consisting of opinion or judgmental statements about the candidate's abilities. Hard data that are objective, verifiable and pertinent should be used instead.

- Do offer substitute information about your academic record if your school does not compute class standings. For example, say, "Queen Bee Law School does not rank its graduates, nor does it have a chapter of the Order of the Coif. I was graduated with 'high honors' in 1978. Twenty percent of the class received this award."

- Specify the criteria used to select members of your law review or journal. For example, say, "I was elected to membership on the *Journal of Inter-World Space*. Only those in the upper one-third of their class who have written a comment of publishable quality on an inter-world problem are eligible for journal membership."

- Describe your duties as a research assistant and the length of time you held this position. For example, say, "I worked for Professor Jones for 15 hours a week during both semesters of my second year. I reviewed the law review literature, analyzed the statutes of 50 states and wrote the first draft of the section on dispositions for her article. . . ."

- In addition to giving the name of your law firm, corporate law department or government agency, describe any employment experiences that were particularly relevant to teaching. For example, say "I argued 15 product liability cases in 1979 in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia."

- Mention any special research. For example, say, "I have taken two courses

Don't say:	Committee translation:
Grades available on request.	Poor grades.
References available on request.	Uncertain about law teaching. Or, don't tell my boss, I'll get fired.
My varied experiences show that I am professionally adaptable.	That's what you think.
I know I will be a superb law teacher.	Inadmissible as self-serving.
I am interested in your school because I would like to live in . . . (Washington, San Francisco)	Who wouldn't?
I would like to teach at your school because you have a good reputation.	We know it.

in the use of computers. In addition, while employed at the Environmental Protection Agency, I designed a computer program that was used for a survey of state environmental programs. A copy of the survey results is available."

- Specify the topic and theory of your current research. If you are not engaged in research, briefly describe a subject you want to study. For example, say, "I wrote an article on the attorney-client privilege for NITA in 1981. Now I

given to any one criterion varies from school to school: class rank, law review experience, law school attended, publications, judicial clerkships, advanced law degrees, law teaching experience, private practice with a major firm and government service.

Some candidates and commentators criticize the weight many schools award some criteria, particularly academic honors. The principal complaint about the use of academic honors as a criterion for law teaching is that it is valued over later accomplishments.

This complaint, typical of those directed at academic performance as an important criterion for selecting law teachers, seems to foreclose the possibility that a candidate can have both excellent academic credentials and practice experience.

But a study

committee may be suggested, while out-of-town candidates are seen at the faculty recruitment conference.

Preparing for the interview

Committee members contact candidates by mail or telephone two or three weeks before the faculty recruitment conference to arrange interviews. After accepting an interview appointment, a candidate should start immediately to do some research about the school. The *Pre-Law Handbook* and the school's catalogue should be studied carefully. Research eliminates the necessity of saying, "I don't know anything about your school," an inauspicious beginning for an interview.

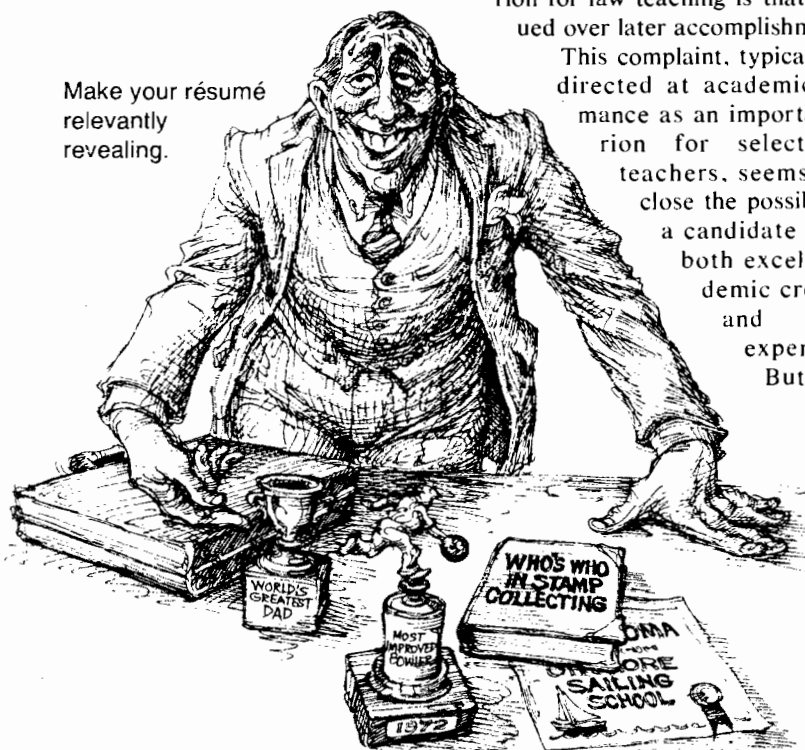
Some thought should be given next to the candidate's ideas about teaching at least one of the subjects the school has indicated it needs covered. Even if the candidate has not taught the course before, it is neither unusual nor unfair for an interviewer to ask, "What would be your general approach to teaching contracts?" and "What texts would you consider using and why?" These are not trick questions designed to trip up interviewees, but an effort to determine how the candidates would handle the positions they are seeking.

Some thought should be given to planning answers to questions about research interests. A statement like "I would like to have time to pursue things in depth instead of being confined to the time pressures and subject matter of clients' interests" communicates little besides the fact that the candidate does not like his or her present position. It is boring to be asked at every screening interview, "Why would you like to be a law teacher?" But it is a useful question to which an honest and thoughtful answer should be given.

Another question to be prepared for is "What can we tell you about our school?" Again, some preparation is worthwhile. At the screening stage, the questions particularly appropriate are:

"How many hours per day are minimal for a first preparation?"; "What kind of committee tasks do new faculty perform?"; "Are there certain kinds of research activities best suited for new teachers?"; and "Should research be initiated the first year or should all time be devoted to class preparation?"

Make your résumé
relevantly
revealing.



would like to expand my study of privileges to include the physician-patient and newsmen-source privileges."

- Visit or call the professor you are using as an academic reference to get advice on interviewing and to refresh his or her recollection of you.

What law schools look for

A typical committee probably interviews no more than 5 percent of the lawyers who submit résumés. The vast majority of the applicants select themselves out by their choice of geographical location, subjects they will teach or by indicating that they are seeking a part-time position.

Today most law schools use the following criteria, although the emphasis

of law professors found that more than two-thirds of them engaged in private, government or corporate law practice before assuming a tenure-track position.

Nor are the law schools unique in emphasizing school performance as a hiring criterion. An American Bar Association interviewing guide states: "Many law firms consider grades to be the most important criterion. . . . Grades or standing in class may be an indication of a student's legal talent, ability to compete, willingness to work hard or underlying intelligence."

After selecting the candidates they believe merit further attention, most committees will initiate a screening interview. If the candidate lives nearby, lunch with one or two members of the

The meat market

The faculty recruitment conference, which is sponsored by the AALS, is held annually the first weekend in December in Chicago. Its purpose is to allow more face-to-face contact between a larger number of schools' recruitment teams and candidates than would be possible under existing time and economic constraints if a conference format did not exist.

The "slave market" or "meat market," as it is sometimes affectionately and sometimes disparagingly called, is exhausting for both the interviewers and the interviewees. Many candidates feel harried, lonely, anxious, frustrated and sometimes humiliated. Yet the system works. Approximately 90 percent of the approved schools send recruitment teams to the conference, and a substantial percentage of candidates receive requests for subsequent on-site interviews and job offers.

The interviewing system is not unlike the screening interviews conducted by many law firms and government agencies at law schools each year. Unfortunately,

some applicants believe that the intent of the interview is to weed out unqualified applicants instead of a procedure for selecting the best two to six from a pool of 25 or 50. Those who are qualified but not selected for a second interview complain that schools interview too many people, do not have a real interest or interview for the sake of statistics.

Another criticism made of conference practices is that it is unfair to interview a candidate when the school has no positions. Speculative interviewing, however, can be advantageous to both the school and the applicant. The interviewing team frequently knows that a faculty member who is on leave is interested in obtaining another position but does not know whether the teacher will be successful in that effort. The school may have requested funding for an additional position from the university but has not yet been informed of the decision. If a position does become available after the conference, the fact that a satisfactory first interview already has taken place benefits both parties.

The following guidelines are offered to candidates to make the interviewing process as painless as possible.



cess as painless as possible.

- **Stay rested.** Do not arrive at the conference only a few minutes before your first interview tired because you sat up all night on the plane. Plan to arrive the night before your interview. This has the advantage of giving you some time to become familiar with the hotel's layout, to locate old friends or to start making new ones. Try not to schedule more than two interviews consecutively, so you won't be glazed, hoarse and out of sorts by the first afternoon. Taking an occasional half-hour off still will allow you time for at least 20 interviews during the weekend.

- **Pamper yourself.** Do not sleep on Aunt Mabel's sofa, get up at 6:00 a.m. and hike a mile to reach the hotel on time. Register at the hotel, eat three good meals a day and consider leaving the hotel at night for relaxation. Yes, it costs more to be good to yourself, but you have made a substantial investment already and the more comfortable you are, the easier you will find the interviews.

- **Dress properly.** Do not wear blue jeans and sneakers. Dress in clothes that are comfortable but appropriate. The interviewers may not be properly dressed but they are not job hunting. Be prepared for emergencies, in case you spill catsup on your tie or someone spills



Don't sleep on Aunt Mabel's sofa.
Get a good night's rest.



Leave your sneakers and jeans home. Dress appropriately.

a drink on your dress. Pack accordingly.

- **Take some responsibility for the interview.** Remember that there are two parties to the interviewing process. You should not be content with passively responding to the interviewers.

- **Have hard data ready.** Give the interviewers information about yourself that is relevant to evaluating your potential as a professor. "I like students" does not fit this category. Instead, if you have teaching experience or research experience, tell the interviewers about it. Refer to teaching evaluations. Bring copies of your publications. If you do not have teaching experience, relate your practice experience to your teach-

ing and research interests.

- **Don't bring up money.** Do not ask about summer stipends, research assistants and salary. If you must ask about research assistance, give some thought to the research you want to do. Nothing is more disappointing to a recruiting team than to have candidates ask about funds for research assistance and at the same time to indicate that their research interests are as yet undefined. Remember, at this stage you are selling, not buying.

- **Think of the school.** Ask questions that indicate your interest in fulfilling the school's needs. What would they like you to teach? When do they think you should start your research? When do they think you should start committee work? What are the most common problems of new teachers and how do they solve them? Use the interview experience to learn about the expectations of different schools as well as to present yourself effectively.

The team usually reassesses the candidates after returning home and notifies its top choices that they would like them to visit the school for an additional interview. The basic ingredients of on-campus interviews are similar. The visit lasts the better part of a day and includes a tour of the facilities, meetings with various members of the faculty, singly and

in groups, at least one session with students and a private interview with the dean. Many schools ask all candidates, or at least those with little or no teaching experience, to discuss a current legal issue with the faculty.

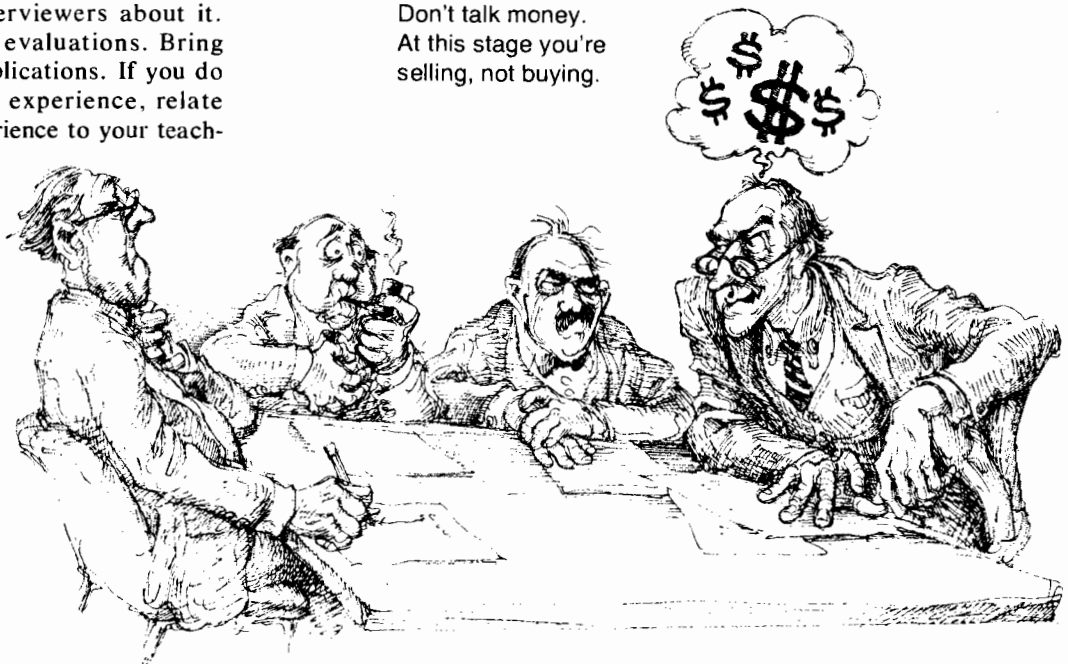
The on-site interview is not solely for the faculty's benefit. It also gives a candidate the opportunity to form impressions of the faculty, the students, the school's facilities and the community in which the school is located. It also is the chance to discuss with the dean such matters as course load, specific courses, salary, fringe benefits, contract period, tenure rules and other subjects that would be relevant to a decision to join the faculty.

Finally, an offer is made and accepted. Does the new faculty member live happily ever after? That question deserves another article.

Journal

(Elyce H. Zenoff is a law professor and Jerome A. Barron is dean and a law professor at the National Law Center of George Washington University. The authors adapted this article from a longer version in 12 *Journal of Law and Education* No. 3 (1983). They have answered the question whether a new faculty member lives happily ever after in 33 *Journal of Legal Education* No. 3 (1983).)

Don't talk money. At this stage you're selling, not buying.



An Insider's Guide to the Faculty Recruitment Conference

James D. Gordon III

Ever since you were a law student, you have toyed with the idea of going into law teaching. Perhaps some of your professors even encouraged you. Other professors unwittingly provided inspiration, in the same way that Bob Dylan has inspired countless young people to become professional musicians. ("Hey, I could do better than that. He sounds just like a Hoover upright.") And since you're currently answering 6,700 interrogatories while trying to overcome an acute case of litigation battle-fatigue, you begin wondering why now isn't the time to explore teaching as an alternative. So you write to the AALS. A week later you receive in the mail a packet of information about the annual Faculty Recruitment Conference.

First you have to fill out the Faculty Appointments Register Form. You're in pretty good shape to do this, since you've just finished writing 6,700 evasive nonanswers to interrogatories. You begin filling in the blanks. "Name." That's easy enough. Next it says, "(Day)" and "(Night)." You write, "I use the same name both day and night." Oh. Whoops. That's for the telephone number. Why do you need to include a nighttime telephone number, when you spend twenty-four hours a day at the office? Isn't that why you're applying for a teaching position in the first place?

"School & Year." Okay. Here's the tough question: "Rank."¹ Your school didn't announce official class rankings, but of course the students tried to figure them out anyway. If you write "Not ranked," the law school recruiters will have no way of knowing that you received good grades. On the other hand, the only class rank you can claim is unofficial. If you write "Top 20%," and the recruiters call your school and learn that you were really top 25%, they'll conclude that you're a barefaced liar.² The registration form states: "Subscribing schools will be notified of any material misrepresentation in this form reported to the AALS." You dwell on the word "material." Is a possible 5% difference material? How do you solve this dilemma? You finally write "Top 20% est." After all, you were in the top 20% of your Erhard Sensitivity Training course. So it's technically accurate.

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1. You could write "Rank amateur," but the recruiters probably won't have a sense of humor.
2. Or even worse, a poor mathematician.

The form then asks for "Law Review (Position)." However, law review membership won't get you hired. In the law school hiring process, all credentials are interpreted merely as screening devices to reject people. If you were on law review, the recruiters will note that you weren't on the managing board. If you were on the managing board, you weren't the editor in chief. If you were the editor in chief, they won't want to waste time on you because they'll assume you'll be recruited by better schools. So it really doesn't matter whether you were on law review or not.

The form then asks you to list your "Major Legal Writings." It does not define a "major" writing, but presumably the humorous limerick you published in your law school's underground newspaper doesn't qualify.³ Professors say that publishing an article is one of the best ways to improve your marketability. Unfortunately, you can't write an article, since law practice takes 180 percent of your time. But don't worry. If you did manage to squeeze out an article, it would probably actually count against you, because:

1. It's not published in a prestigious enough journal, and if this is the best you can do, they're not interested;
2. It's published in a more prestigious journal than the recruiters have published in, and they're threatened by your beginner's luck;
3. It addresses a controversial topic, and at least one member of the Faculty Appointments Committee disagrees with it; or
4. It does not address a controversial topic, which reveals that you are a boring clod with no political awareness.

So it's really better not to have published at all. When it comes to evaluating scholarly potential, limitless fantasy is better than limited reality.

The form continues: "Subjects preferred, if any." This answer requires some strategy. Writing "Constitutional Law" is worse than writing nothing, since the law school's current professors are probably already lined up three deep to teach it. They'll see you as simply more competition. On the other hand, if you write "No preference," the recruiters will conclude that:

1. You're a spineless jellyfish who is unable to make decisions;
2. You're absolutely desperate to get a teaching job; or
3. You're a presumptuous geekazoid who believes that he or she can teach anything.

So it's better to narrow the list a little, without foreclosing any meaningful options. You could write "Any subject but tax," but this is too modest a sacrifice. Try to narrow the subjects a little more, so that you don't appear too protean. At the end of your list, be sure to add "or any first-year course"⁴ to communicate your view that any mindless drone could teach those classes.

3. Even though your classmates thought it was pretty funny, and the dean's name could be deleted.

4. See Paul A. LeBel, *A Guide for the Selection of Faculty Recruiters—" . . . Or Any First Year Course,"* 37 J. Legal Educ. 374, 375 (1987).

Near the bottom of the form is a line that says, "Special Qualifications and Comments." Here is your chance to push yourself forward subtly. However, it must be done with finesse, avoiding both overconfidence and begging. Try to steer a course between "Legal education has been awaiting my arrival" and "I'm willing to mop floors." I recommend against including special qualifications such as "celebrity look-a-like" or "hug therapy instructor." And now is not the time to mention that enemy agents are secretly bombarding you with microwaves to interfere with your concentration. You can bring it up later—unless you determine that the recruiters are actually part of the conspiracy. After you finish filling out the form, you mail it with the registration fee.

As the date of the Faculty Recruitment Conference approaches, you wait. Every time the telephone rings, you hope it's a law school wanting to interview you; this causes approximately 150 heart attacks a week. Finally, a law school calls to set up an appointment at the conference. Try not to sound too available. Don't say, "I'm completely open; you name a time." Instead, you might say, "I could squeeze you in at two o'clock on Friday, right between Harvard and Yale." This might overplay your hand, however: the school might conclude that it can't compete for you. Try softening your response: "I can squeeze you in right between Harvard and Bob's School of Law and Hair Design." This will let the school know that it's in the competitive range. Later, a few other schools call. You decide that you have enough interviews to make it worthwhile to attend the conference.

They call it the Meat Market, and when you arrive you begin to see why. All the other candidates seem like USDA Prime beef. By comparison, you feel like horse meat. Stop this negative thinking immediately. Tell yourself that you're just as good as the others. To reassure yourself, count your interviews by stomping your foot on the floor. Neigh, whinny.

The recruitment conference is sometimes held at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. This is a nice hotel, except that the center section is open from the roof down to the lobby a dozen or so floors below. After a particularly bad interview, the drop can begin to look pretty inviting. At other times the conference is held at the Sheraton Washington. This is also a fine hotel, except that it has separate elevators for the different towers. You have to catch the elevator down to the lobby, race around frantically searching for the correct tower for your next interview, and then wait for the elevator to take you to the proper floor.

If you're able to catch an elevator, it will be jam-packed with other hyperventilating candidates who have already consumed all the oxygen in the elevator. They are furiously studying three-by-five cards containing information about the particular law school with which they're about to interview.⁵ More aggressive candidates are trying to mess up the hair or dishevel the clothing of their competitors.

5. These cards are a good idea. If you have a lot of interviews, it's easy to get the schools confused. You might tell an interviewer, "I've always wanted to live in the East." She'll respond, "Then why are you interviewing with USC?"

If the elevator is broken, or full, or just doesn't arrive in time, you'll have to take the stairs. You burst through the stairwell door and begin racing up the steps. By the time you reach the ninth floor, you're puffing and panting like an overtaxed steam engine. Perspiration is streaming down your body and forming a pool the size of Lake Huron on the floor.

An interviewer opens the door and welcomes you inside. "How are you today?" she asks. But for five minutes the only response you're able to give is "Puff, pant, gasp, wheeze." You smile weakly and clutch your breastbone, hoping they'll understand. So far, you're making a terrific impression. One of the interviewers brings a towel from the bathroom to wipe up Lake Huron.

The recruiters invite you to sit down. In the usual situation, you're surrounded by two to six interviewers. They have apparently learned their interrogation techniques by watching old reruns of *The Untouchables*. They will use a version of the good cop/bad cop routine, but without all the civilizing courtesies. After all, they only have a half hour.

The lead interviewer asks you to tell them a little about yourself. Between gasps, you talk about where you grew up, which law school you attended, and the kind of work you're doing at the law firm of Daub & Wattle. You try to make yourself sound like an important and accomplished person. The lead interviewer smiles wanly. The others in the room look at you dispassionately, with steely eyes. Suddenly you remember why you were so happy to graduate from law school.

There are essentially five kinds of interviews:

1. *The Grapeshot*. The interviewers shoot questions at you so fast you don't have time to answer them. They keep interrupting each other, and each one seems annoyed when you turn away to answer someone else's question. This type of interview actually reveals deep power struggles within the faculty. If you take a job at that school, the next cannon fodder will be you.

2. *The Intellectual Exchange*. One interviewer observes that your AALS registration form expresses interest in a subject that he teaches, so he asks you a substantive question in the area. Most people don't realize this, but there's absolutely no good way to answer this question. If your answer is a poor one, he'll demolish you on the spot with the Socratic method. If your answer is a good one, it will probably conflict with his own view. If it happens to agree with his view, it will conflict with the view of someone else in the room, probably the first interviewer's mortal enemy, who will immediately see you as aligning yourself with the first interviewer. So if you get a substantive question, just give a noncommittal answer and cross this school off the list. Hopefully your next interview will go better.

3. *The Sleeper*. The interviewers sit around like oxen in a catatonic stupor. One of them speaks for a few seconds in a dull monotone, but this is followed by several minutes in which the only sound is the incredibly loud ticking of the clock on the wall. No one has any questions whatsoever. You can't decide whether they're simply not interested in you, or whether they're all in a hypnotic trance. If one of them had a heart attack, the paramedics would have to examine four or five people before they could find the right person.

4. *The Nervous Fidget.* The interviewers constantly fidget in their seats and glance at their watches. It seems as if they can hardly wait until you leave. In fact, that's exactly the case. Their school is a major football power, and the team is playing its arch rival on television at that very moment. They had to turn the TV off when you arrived; you hear them flick it back on as you leave. (You suspected that something was wrong when the interviewer's hypothetical questions all related to fourth-down-and-one situations.)

5. *The Success.* This interview couldn't possibly go better. You hit it off well with the interviewers and instantly establish a rapport. You answer their questions brilliantly, and they enthusiastically say that they're extremely impressed with you. Unfortunately, at the end of the interview they inform you that they have no openings, but they thought it was important to attend the recruitment conference to maintain a "presence." A *presence*? As if the handful of candidates who return next year will have forgotten that the law school exists? ("No, I'm sorry, I can't remember your school at all. Do you maintain a presence?")

The interviewers may ask whether you have any questions to ask them. They do this when they're bored out of their minds (i.e., frequently). Try to think of a few questions in advance. Some questions reflect a lack of sophistication. ("Is yours a three-year program?") Others demonstrate a lack of energy. ("Are faculty expected to publish after receiving tenure?")⁶ Ingratiation is usually a safe bet. ("Tell me about your own scholarly interests.")

While at the conference, you should frequently check the message board to see if any additional schools want to interview you. To create an appearance of interest in your candidacy, you might prepare about 200 messages addressed to yourself and post them all over the message board. When people create such a false appearance of active trading in the stock market, it's called "stock manipulation." But if you don't use the telephone or the mails, you can probably avoid the jurisdictional element of interstate commerce.⁷

After the conference is over, you return to your law firm and sit by the telephone. You won't hear anything for a long time. Law professors give final exams and then go on vacation in December, so they won't contact you again until late January. If a school does telephone and invite you for a call-back, you'll be thrilled. After all, you get to begin the interviewing process all over again.⁸

But it's not so bad, yet. If you're successful and eventually become a law professor,⁹ you'll have the pleasure of going to the Faculty Recruitment Conference year after year. So how about that. There is a heaven after all.

6. Answer: no. But it's not mentioned in polite company.

7. Unless you traveled to the conference from out of state.

8. For a description of the on-campus interviewing process, see Erik M. Jensen, *A Day in the Life of S. Breckinridge Tushingham*, 69 *Denv. U. L. Rev.* 231 (1992).

9. At half your current salary and in a distant location. Compared to this kind of success, failure seems rather attractive.

If you feel comfortable doing so, you should also feed this information to your supporters at schools where you have interviewed. If you have gotten a fly-back, there is probably someone on the faculty appointments committee who affirmatively wants to hire you. It is often easy to figure out who that person is from how she or he interacts with you. If you can identify that person, funnel all your positive information about interest from competitive schools through this person to the faculty appointments committee.

- *If you give the information to someone who is not on the faculty appointments committee or to someone who is not enthusiastic about your appointment, the information may get lost.*