

Some advice on preparing for your job-market year

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AERE Professional Development Panel "Job Market 101"

October 17, 2023

Berkeley Rausser
College of Natural Resources

Department of Agricultural and
Resource Economics
University of California, Berkeley

A bit about me and my path

- Born in Portugal
- PhD in econ from Berkeley (2002)
- Did the academic AEA job-market in Winter Jan 2002
- Flyouts and offers at good schools
- Got an offer at ARE in Berkeley where I have been ever since and I absolutely love love my department colleagues, students and staff
- Publish in general interest econ, IO, and ag econ journals
- Active in profession editing, refereeing, organizing sessions at AAEA and AEA

Some advice on preparing for your job-market year

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To do's summer before job-market year

- Get the job-market paper finished (not polished-finished but estimation finished)
- Sign up for a practice one hour and half job-market seminar at your department (ideally general interest departmental seminar, not field seminar)
- Meet your letter writers (references) often
- Write up a cheat sheet on how you “sell yourself” to share with references
- Practice stating what your paper is about to anyone that will listen

To do's Fall of job-market year

- Polish your job-market paper introduction
- Prepare your presentation
- Sign up for office hours of faculty and practice your pitch
- Meet your letter writers (references) often and invite them to your seminar
- Continue to work on the cheat sheet based on feedback received on how you “sell yourself” and share updates with references
- Continue stating what your paper is about to anyone that will listen, that is not necessarily in your field

To do's Fall of job-market year, cont

- Do practice job interviews
 - In person
 - And in zoom
- Submit your applications , meet all deadlines
- Continue to practice practice practice
- Respond to any requests to submit your application promptly and any follow up from the recruiting committee

To do's Spring of job-market year

- While waiting for calls, stay busy practicing, doing things you like and that help with anxiety
- Do interviews, remember the safe “script” that you practiced and can always turn to when you answer a question
 - In person
 - And in zoom
- Do on campus interviews and flyouts
 - ask about their work, research, be interested and sound excited about your own work
- Answer all inquiries and mention to places that showed interest in you what your progress is, to let them know and possibly also generate further interest on their end
- Continue to practice practice practice

Throughout the whole process ---Take care of yourself

- It is one of the most stressful periods of our lives
- Remember to take care of your mental and physical health
- Ask for help when you need
- Be kind to others also on the market
- Think positive:
 - E.g., a no response from a job is not about you not being good enough but rather someone else was a better fit
 - You know your stuff better than anyone else
 - You have practices and have a “safe spiel” and script you can always turn to when in a conversation
- Likely only time that people will read our work so carefully and be so interested, so enjoy also and have fun meeting people, potential colleagues, potential co authors, potential referees...

Looking forward to your questions

Thank you

Conclusion - Top tips

- Take care of your mental and physical health
- Think positive
- Prepare
- Practice



AERE "Job Market 101" Panel

David Stifel

Department of Economics
Lafayette College

About me

- Born in Thailand
- BA – Colgate University – *Asian Studies*
- MA – Johns Hopkins SAIS – *discovered economics*
- Research Associate – Thailand Dev Res Institute
- PhD – Cornell
- Cornell Food & Nutrition Policy Program
- Lafayette College since 2003

My position

- Position
 - Professor
 - Department Head
 - Chair of college-wide P&T committee
- Rewarding
 - Institution that values teaching & scholarship equally
 - Students!
 - Connections & collaborations with WB & CGIAR
 - Sabbatical leaves
 - It's a great gig!

What is a Liberal Arts College (LAC)?

- More than just PUI with small classes
- Educate undergrads in the liberal arts...
 - Natural Sciences
 - Social Sciences
 - Arts
 - Humanities
 - (Some couple this with Engineering)
- ...coupled with majors
- What I enjoy: Students from other majors (engineers, pol scientists, sociologists, etc) taking my Economic Development course

Faculty at LACs – Differing Roles

- Teaching
 - 2-2 or 3-2 at LACs with high scholarship expectations
 - All undergrads
 - Small classes
- Scholarship
 - Valued on par with teaching
 - Search “RePEc liberal arts colleges” for top 25 Econ Depts
 - Scholarship & teaching reinforce each other
 - High expectations
 - *Not same as R1 (more teaching & no grad students), but high*
- Service – *a distant 3rd*

Is a LAC for you?

- Love both teaching & research?
- Experience teaching?
- Misperception – LACs are a good fallback
- If genuinely interested, signal it in cover letter
 - Show that you understand what LACs are
 - Speak to your teaching, but not at expense of scholarship
 - Provide evidence of excellence in both teaching and scholarship

Applying to LACs

- Cover letter
- CV
 - Include courses taught/TA'd
 - Clearly indicate courses for which you were instructor of record
 - But start with scholarship for top LACs
- Research Statement
- Teaching Statement
 - Don't just list/describe courses you taught
 - Start with your teaching philosophy
 - What student outcomes are important & how has your teaching advanced them (examples are good)

Applying to LACs

- DEI Statement
 - Awareness of inclusivity & mindset
 - Course materials & content
 - Classroom climate
 - Teaching methods & strategies

Conclusion – Top Tips

- **Prepare! Do your homework**
 - *Anticipate questions. Don't get caught off guard.*
 - *If they are looking for a particular course, have an outline and readings in mind*
- **Ask good questions**
 - Not what can be answered by looking at the website
 - “What do you find most rewarding/challenging about being in your department”?
 - “What is your vision for the department/curriculum/etc and how do you see this position playing a role in it?”

AERE Job Market 101 Panel

Elise Breshears

Economist, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE)

October 17, 2023

Disclaimer

All views and opinions are my own and not representative of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

About Me

Born in Oregon

Portland State University

- BS Economics and Mathematics, 2015
- MS Economics, 2017

Michigan State University

- PhD Economics, 2023
(Dual Major: Environmental Science and Policy)

Previous Employment

- Energy Trust of Oregon, 2016 – 2017
 - Non-profit established via state legislature
- Bonneville Power Administration, 2017
 - Federal government

Fields: energy/environmental, public, and urban

Current Position

Economist, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- National Center for Environmental Economics (NCEE)
 - 25+ ***friendly and talented*** PhD economists
 - Research and policy work

Job Market: 2022 – 2023

Job market has rebounded since COVID-19 pandemic

My experience:

- Submitted around 200 applications
 - Job sources: AEA JOE, Econ Job Market, HigherEdJobs, The Chronicle of Higher Education, Indeed, and USAJOBS
 - Apply widely, but you **DON'T** need to apply to every job
- Interviews / flyouts do not follow AEA guidelines (Oct / Nov)
- Flyouts / offers
 - Academia
 - Research universities: economics* and public policy*
 - Research liberal arts: economics*
 - Government: federal* and state*
 - Industry: energy and housing*

General Comments

Interviews / Flyouts

- Practice with classmates, faculty, family, and friends
 - You will improve throughout interview / flyout process
- Provide explicit anecdotes and examples
- Do your homework
 - Why do you want to work at XXX university?
 - How can you contribute to XXX university and community?
 - How does your work complement other faculty members?
- Ask questions
 - Two-way search
- Negotiate all offers (helps when you have multiple offers)
- ***Your preferences matter → make the best choice for you!***
- This is your first job, not necessarily your last job

Government

Application process

- Job sources: AEA JOE, Indeed, and **USAJOBS**
- CV **vs** Resume
 - HR review via Resume Builder
 - Include all relevant work and volunteer experience

Work Experience:

Graduate Assistant and Researcher

Michigan State University

552 W Circle Dr

East Lansing, MI

7/2022 - Present

Hours per week: 20

Duties, Accomplishments and Related Skills:

- Communicated topics in economics as an instructor and teaching assistant
- Collaborated with community stakeholders, industry professionals, and scholars in engineering, natural sciences, and social sciences, communicating economic principals, theory, and research to a general audience, both verbal and written
- Drafted peer-reviewed journal articles (to be submitted to economics journals and interdisciplinary journals)
- Created a national data set of manufactured homes, evaluating exposure to environmental risk

Government

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- Job sources: AEA JOE, Indeed, and **USAJOBS**
- CV **vs** Resume
- Government employees **CANNOT** access Dropbox documents
 - Host on GitHub: <https://kevinhayeswilson.com/website.pdf>

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Interviews / Flyouts

- Process is similar to academia
- Why do you want to work in government?
 - Talk is cheap, but you can credibly signal interest
 - Cross-discipline research
 - Previous employment: government, industry, non-profit
- What is the policy relevance of your research agenda?
- How does your research agenda fit into current and future policy initiatives within an agency?

Reminders and Tips

The job market starts before your “job market year”

- Be an active member of your department
 - The more faculty know you, the more they can support you

You are more than your JMP

- Academically: focus on long-term (5 – 10 year) research agenda
- Emotionally / mentally / physically

It's not personal - “*It's not you, it's me...*”

- **A LOT** of hidden information

Find joy in the process

- You get to meet a lot of people that have read your work and are excited about your work (and hopefully in cool places)!

Be appreciative and kind

Reminders and Tips

Protect your mental health

- Silence email notifications

Random tips:

- General
 - Check spam emails
 - Empty your voicemail
 - iPhone: Delete your deleted voicemails
- Flyouts
 - Multiple forms of job talk (email, USB, etc.)
 - Backup alarm clock
 - Snacks and water
 - Emergency kit