

Reflection on Surviving the Academic Job Market – A Primer for Rockefeller Grads¹

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Be sure to(a) download the slide show and (b) take a look at the documents in the electronic reserves that associated with this handbook. Links to the slide show, reserves, and other materials are available at:
http://www.albany.edu/rockefeller/career/career_phd_job_manual.htm

Introduction.

During the 2001-2002 academic year I went on the job market seeking a position in a:

- Public administration department
- Sociology department
- Political science department

Thus my impressions and ideas are probably particular to these markets and may not be applicable to the economics market especially. Many of the ideas and impressions were also informed by suggestions and hints given to me by my dissertation chair, Jane Fountain (Harvard; now UMass) and a long-time advisor, Vivian Gadsden (Penn). However, the presentation and spin I put on those suggestions and ideas are mine.

Do you really want to be a professor?

Are you sure you want to go into this market, when starting salaries in public administration tops out at no more than \$75,000 and where the average is about \$50,000?

Here is data on new assistant faculty salaries from 2000-2001 and from 2002-2003 and 2004-2005 (nine-month contract) across the disciplines in which PAD graduates are hired. As you can see, the average has floated around the \$50,000 mark in public Administration, while there has been steady increase in the other fields:

		Public (low – avg – high)	Private (low – avg – high)
Public Admin	00-01	36,000 – 48,093 – 62,500	40,000 – 51,696 – 75,000
	02-03	36,500 – 51,539 – 73,946	45,408 – 51,776 – 62,000
	04-05	28,964 – 48,781 – 80,000	30,000 – 49,388 – 64,000
Political Sci	00-01	26,374 – 42,092 – 73,023	30,000 – 41,974 – 71,993
	02-03	32,000 – 45,646 – 63,577	31,000 – 44,713 – 64,000
	04-05	32,500 – 48,037 – 80,000	32,000 – 47,496 – 67,263
Sociology	00-01	35,202 – 42,533 – 52,248	29,449 – 39,467 – 53,000
	02-03	34,000 – 44,935 – 67,008	26,176 – 43,904 – 62,489
	04-05	35,000 – 47,057 – 65,004	32,000 – 46,784 – 65,000
Economics	00-01	33,000 – 51,636 – 66,000	29,448 – 50,109 – 77,000
	02-03	31,185 – 59,090 – 83,304	35,891 – 54,910 – 82,000
	04-05	50,000 – 65,755 – 90,000	28,500 – 57,797 – 89,000

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However, there is also another reality: Business schools pay more:

		Public (low – avg – high)	Private (low – avg – high)
Management	04-05	38,000 – 81,242 – 148,000	32,493 – 72,157 – 140,000
All fields			
Mgmt, Business	04-05	38,000 – 79,010 – 140,000	33,370 – 70,995 – 123,000
Admin, Ops			
Finance /	04-05	45,000 – 93,818 – 148,000	42,600 – 86,417 – 130,000
Fin. Mgmt			
Human resources	04-05	48,000 – 77,643 – 94,000	N/A – N/A – N/A
MIS	04-05	41,920 – 81,155 – 142,000	45,000 – 78,250 – 103,000

Sources:

College and University Personnel Association. (2002, 2004, 2006). *National faculty salary survey by discipline and rank in colleges and universities*. (Library of Congress call number: LB2334.A27.) The UAlbany library has the 2006 survey.

Academic salaries are usually negotiated on a 9-month contract. As you may know, most schools allow faculty to augment their salary with “summer” months at the rate of 1/9 of the base salary per month. With sharp negotiating (see below) and successful grant-making, you can increase your effective salary.

Example: A \$55,000 base salary can be supplemented with three summer months which brings the yearly salary to \$73,333. However, this usually requires finding grants on a regular basis.

Or you can choose to leave the summer unencumbered. The ability to control three months of your life is a major, major advantage of academic life — remembering, of course, that the college or university effectively owns those three months through the “publish or perish” phenomenon – summer is the time to do research and write.

Where do interdisciplinary grads fit?

As products of an interdisciplinary program, PAD grads could potentially fit into multiple markets — economics, sociology, public policy/public administration, political science, business, etc. However, unless you have a strong disciplinary background, you may not look sufficiently like one of the disciplinary grads to get a job at a “Tier 1” school.

Conversely, the public administration/public policy and business schools often want people who can teach across one or more of the core disciplines those schools draw upon. If you are too focused in one area, it makes them wonder if you can teach in the others, and teaching really matters to the professional schools. In many public policy and business schools, the faculty is

quite small. For this reason, the division of labor is not very elaborate. Every school that interviewed me wanted to know if I could teach in at least two core fields.

The upshot is that if you want to have the broadest possible market, it is necessary to have both a disciplinary home (identifiable by the courses that appear on your transcripts) and a breath of coursework across the disciplines traditionally drawn upon in professional schools. If you want to be in a disciplinary department, take all the core courses of the chosen discipline. If you want to only look at professional schools, develop a disciplinary focus but also seek breath of exposure.

What can you do in your first, second, and third years to help prepare for the job market?

With the following discussion in mind, I would recommend the following:

1. Choose courses that build on one of the three strategies outlined above. If in doubt, I think disciplinary depth may be more important. How many policy and public administration grads are there teaching at top policy and public administration schools? The answer is relatively few. Most professional schools are filled with disciplinary graduates who specialize in an area relevant to that profession.
2. Teach in at least two different courses. It worked well that I taught both a statistics course in the Kennedy School and a sociology class (on social network methods) that has some relationship to my theoretical focus (organizational theory) in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. Thus, I could reasonably argue that I could teach in two different types of core courses – statistical methods and organizational theory.
3. Seek a teaching experience where you have some responsibility for the syllabus and primary instruction. I had the good fortune to get an adjunct job at the Kennedy School. This helped convince people that I could really teach. Others schools – for instance, the Maxwell School at Syracuse – require students to complete an instructional practicum. Such independent teaching experience matters on the job market. If you plan to seek a job in a liberal arts college or professional school, I would recommend trying to find at least one independent teaching opportunity – at another school as adjunct faculty, during the summer, or on a contract basis for some other organization. Such experience can sometimes be gotten at UAlbany, but we often has PhD students teach at Hudson Valley Community College, Saint Rose, Empire State, etc.
4. Begin developing a relationship with an advisor. Advisors are essential for both successful completion of the dissertation and a job search. My dissertation chair, Jane Fountain, guided much of my job search. We were in contact several times a week for over six months. During the interviews and negotiation phase, we often spoke several times a day. I felt comfortable relying on her judgment because we had worked together for several years before I went on the market. Moreover, job openings are often an inside game – you need an insider who you trust will spread your name widely.

5. Get your name out by making conference presentations. Dr. Fountain pressed me to do this; I had other high-priority obligations and could not attend many conferences, so my resume looked somewhat light in this area – and schools noticed.
6. Apply for outside research support. The ability to write and get grants is highly valued. Some colleges now list external support as a tenure and promotion criteria. Having grant-writing experience and a track record can sometimes matter nearly as much as your publication record — grants provide money for everyone else to live off.
7. Get a publication record started. Over the years, this seems to have grown in importance. Most students should try to have at least one publication on their record before going on the job market. Ideally, the publication should be a single-authored piece or a piece where you (the student) are the first author. Our recent searches here have caused the faculty to wonder how much we can infer from publication where a senior faculty member is the first author and the student is second or third. The “signal” such publications provide may not be very reliable.

When you publish, you should seek placement in a peer-reviewed outlet. In public administration and policy, the most prestigious outlets are the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Administration Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, and the *American Review of Public Administration*. Equally impressive are publications in disciplinary journals – *American Management Review*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *American Sociological Review*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Economic Review*, and so forth. A single-authored piece in any of these outlets will substantially help your chances of employment, but pieces in other peer-reviewed publications are definitely a plus. If you are unsure how widely a journal is read or valued, ask your advisors and/or consult that ISI Citations Ranking indices or the reputational rankings found in some journals. For instance, the April 2003 issue of *PS: Political Science & Politics* ranks journals in political science reputationally. The Public Management Research Association website (www.pmrnet.org) has (as of March 2007) included a citation-based ranking of journals on its homepage.

The application and interview process.

The process of applying to academic programs is very long and very time-consuming. During the fall, I sent out 44 packets, which meant creating 44 individualized cover letters, chasing reference letters from faculty 44 times, etc. And it is expensive — I spent around \$2,500 on my job search — even though the colleges and universities paid all the travel costs. These expenses are related to copying, shipping, and travel to conferences or meetings that my program did not cover.

There are several primary sources for job announcements:

- (1) The Chronicle of Higher Education (<http://chronicle.com/jobs>)
- (2) the APPAM, NASPAA, ASPA joint site, PublicServiceCareers.org (<http://www.publicservicecareers.org>)
- (3) APSA (political science) (http://www.apsanet.org/section_226.cfm)
- (4) ASA (<http://jobbank.asanet.org/jobbank/index.cfm>);
- (5) High Ed Jobs.com (<http://www.higheredjobs.com>).

The Chronicle is probably the most comprehensive source – it seems to be the source of record for EEOC purposes. However, postings on the Chronicle site seem to come and go for random reasons. I found it important to visit every two or three days to look for new announcements between September and December. The Chronicle now offers an e-mail alert service which makes this process less cumbersome. Be sure to wade through the listings in the “Other” category in both the professional and social/behavioral science listings – I found a few gems hidden in these lists. PublicServiceCareers.org also seems very comprehensive in the field of public affairs. The listings here include faculty slots, government positions, and positions in what I think of as the “quasi-academy” – major think tanks and research units, like MDRC and the Urban Institute.

In addition, I downloaded the (however flawed) *U.S. News and World Report* rankings (http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/rankindex_brief.php) of public affairs schools. (You must pay a few dollars to gain electronic access to this list; there are also copies of this list available from Kara Pangburn or Linda McGrail.) Using this as a guide, I sent unsolicited e-mail to whatever contact I could find at highly-ranked schools to see if they were expecting to hire. I sent e-mail to about fifty such contacts.

It is highly advisable to attend the major fall conferences – for instance APPAM, APSA, AoM, ASA, etc. – because many schools have “pre-interviews” at the conferences. It will also give you a feel for the school, what they are looking for, etc. In recent years, APPAM has become more organized in terms of its facilitation of job market interviews, but the Fall Research Conference is now coming late in the process.

Finally, remember that faculty slots are often allocated through a relatively closed network. By law, the slots must be advertised (usually in the Chronicle), but the announcements may be in obscure places for short periods of time. For example, the 2001-2002 public management search at the Kennedy School was only advertised once – in the Chronicle *during the week of Thanksgiving*. I only knew to apply for the position because my adviser kept me in the loop. Harvard is far from the only place to have similarly closed processes. Check with your advisors and other faculty members regularly to see if they have heard about new positions.

Portfolio

It is never too early to start on a job market portfolio. There are several components to a job market portfolio, including a cover letter, curriculum vitae (CV), statement of research interests, statement of teaching interests, dissertation summary, transcripts, letters of recommendation, and 1-3 “job market” papers. Each part needs attention.

From a timeline perspective, getting good letters of reference set up may be the first thing you need to do. Start asking for letters of recommendation no later than May or June of the year in which you plan to go on the market. All four of my references found it difficult to get a letter together in September – because everyone else was asking for a letter, the term was starting, etc. Make sure you have at least three good recommendations; you may wish to get four or five. There are many strategies for getting a good mix of letters. I sought to have letters that could speak to four areas of my preparation and experience: teaching, substantive research focus/dissertation, methodology, and experience with contract and grant-sponsored research. I wanted the letters to provide a multi-dimensional picture of my research and skills. I also wanted at least two letters from people who knew me personally and professionally. In this case, I asked a long-time advisor and collaborator from Penn to write for me in addition to my dissertation chair.

Choose your references carefully. You want referees who will write a thoughtful letter that will help to place your dissertation and research agenda into a context. When I write letters I try to explain how the student's work contributes to a particular literature; I point out journals in which the work may be published. You want to give your referees time to think about this. A one-page reference with boiler plate about your qualifications may do you more harm than good, so get started on this early.

Once you are ready to start sending out materials, the first piece is the cover letter. If you send out forty to seventy packets, you will have to create boilerplate that can be fitted into any letter. However, both Jane Fountain and my reference from Penn, Vivian Gadsden, impressed upon me the importance of creating customized letters for each position. Some committees will gauge your level of interest by whether they think your letter actually speaks to their needs and their program. For the positions and schools that I really liked, I went to their web site and tried to figure out what need the advertised position might fill by looking at the faculty and the course catalog. I particularly looked for gaps in coverage of basic topics and for courses that had not been offered in several years. The cover letter needs to make you look unique and interesting; it also needs to highlight the most impressive parts of your CV. I noted a “revise and resubmit” I had on a submission to *Administrative Science Quarterly*, my teaching award, my dissertation topic, and the foundations from which I had received grants. For the disciplinary positions, I tried to explain why my public policy degree had prepared me well for their position. One page is supposedly better than two, but I was also told that if the story in the first page is interesting enough, the committee will read on. I also figured that most people were uninterested in what my signature looked like, so I pushed a short salutation onto the second page in order to free space on the first page for stuff I wanted to get in. *Make sure to have someone proof your cover letters before they go out.*

Your CV needs to highlight both teaching and research fully – especially if you plan to seek a slot in a professional school. I asked my advisor for a copy of her CV; she also let me look at CVs sent in by senior faculty seeking positions at the Kennedy School. (I have additional examples available on request.) It was useful to see how people who are already successful in my field structured their CV. You can often find CVs from successful academics on their personal or institutional websites. If you have experience with grant writing, make sure to highlight it in the CV and possibly summarize it separately. If you are bringing grant money with you, note that fact prominently in the CV and in the cover letter. *Be sure to have someone proof your CV before sending it out.*

Next, think about supporting materials. I sent my graduate transcripts, whether they were requested or not, because they helped to show both the scope of my coursework and the number of courses I accumulated in my field of specialization – and frankly because my GPA was high. If your transcript is not that stellar, only send it if requested.

I also sent my KSG teaching evaluations. Since teaching fellows are not reviewed formally in the Rockefeller College, you might ask a student or professor to write a testimonial or assessment. I also created my own evaluation form; I sent summary statistics from that form with the application packets.

Here is a dirty little secret: Many search committees do not have time to read your entire job market paper (or papers), at least during the first stage of review, where a pile of 40 – 100 application must be whittled down to maybe 10 or 15 finalists. However, your CV alone does not provide sufficient depth regarding your teaching experience and dissertation. You need to help the search committee members by giving them a synopsis of your qualifications. The strategy Dr. Fountain suggested and which I used was to create 1-2 page summaries of my dissertation, research interests, published/publishable work, and teaching experience.

Despite my earlier comment, the job market paper is still quite important – especially once you get past the “weed-out” phase of search committee review. I got two contradictory pieces of advice on how to select job market papers. One line of thinking says that the only real measure of research potential and the direction of your research program is the dissertation, so you should include one or more finished chapters. A second line of thinking started from the assumption that anything longer than 20 pages will probably not get read, so the chapters are too long. Moreover, if the dissertation is tightly organized and interrelated, the chapters may seem disjointed without the surrounding materials. So a second strategy is to submit one to three shorter papers. If the committee is going to scan, this gives them one to three abstracts and conclusions to scan rather than relying on one chapter (which may not have an abstract) to convey what you can do and what you want to study in the future. I decided to go with the later approach, though some schools wanted only dissertation chapters.

Interviews – aka “Fly-outs”

In the public administration, public policy, and sociology markets, finalists are named starting in mid to late Fall, with interviews starting as early as the first week of November. In this respect the hiring process has become much more compressed over the last five years. It used to be the

case that invitations to visit came out no earlier than late November, and many schools waited to make invitations until January. That is no longer the case. For reasons that have to do with both the decision and negotiation process, it is in your interest to schedule your interviews as close to the end of each school's process as possible. You want to leave the last impression. You also want the offers to come in as close together as possible. One way to compress the offers into one time period is to request a late visit date – use whatever *truthful* excuses you have at your disposal.

Overview. Interviewing is very hard work. Each visit will kill most of a week: I usually needed at least half a day to prepare. Most visits last at least 36 and sometimes as much as 72 hours. Each school will usually have you interview with at least 6 faculty members and administrators; one place had me meet with *14 different people*. It is also quite common to meet with graduate students and possibly even the administrative staff. Each faculty interview will last from 30 to 60 minutes. You will usually have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with faculty and administrators. Two schools also had a “party” with faculty and graduate students in the evening. Many schools had a one-hour “exit” interview with some or all of the search committee; these interviews will often tell you whether the committee is really interested. These interviews are also used to try to tell whether you are really interested in them. (Some universities have regulations that allow them to make only one offer at the end of a search process; if the offer is rejected, they must restart the process – thus the high priority on knowing whether you want to come.) Plan to be busy for at least twelve hours straight the first day and at least 6 to 8 hours the next day. You may have to travel part (or all) of two days to get to and from the interview. I can't imagine doing more than two interviews in one week; I was completely exhausted after each one. I interviewed at seven universities. I got very little done over those seven weeks, except preparing for interviews.

Interviewing is hard on the ego — every school seems to have one faculty member whose job is to make you sweat during the job talk or interview.

Preparation. It is important to know the place before you go. If the job announcement does not list the chair of the search committee's name, call and get it. In fact, it is useful to find out the entire membership of the committee. I tried to know something about the research agenda of the school generally and of the search committee members specifically. The goal is to pitch oneself as adding complementary skills and knowledge to the school – you don't want to look like everyone else and you don't want to look too unique. Most schools wanted to know what I would teach, so I tried to be very familiar with the course offerings in the department or school so that I could rattle off the course names and numbers I thought I could teach. Other materials I found useful included department or school strategic plans (to see where the institution thinks it is going) and school or university newspapers.

As you might realize, the “graying” of the academy is beginning to occur as boomers age and retire. One thing I tried to determine from the faculty web pages was what the overall age and rank distribution was within the school or department. There are some schools (mostly public) that have developed bi-modal age/rank distributions – lots of full professors, lots of junior faculty, but few associates. This age structure can cause several problems. First, it often means more service work for junior faculty than at a place where balance exists. Second, it sometimes leads to less clout within the university for the department or school because those with seniority and institutional memory retire. The demographic crunch creates opportunities, too: one school

noted that *all* their full professors would probably retire before I got tenure, leaving my cohort in charge. However, I have also seen disastrous consequences in other situations.

Job Talk. Unfortunately, the job talk matters even more than I originally thought, because *many – maybe most – faculty members don't read the job market paper(s)* — or at least they don't read them thoroughly. Thus, most of their impression of your ability to teach AND to do research will be set in the presentation. ***It is imperative to give practice talks before going "live" on the market.*** Because the presentation and your ability to handle questions will improve with practice, try to schedule your least interesting job talk earliest – use the first job talk as practice for the ones that matter most. Although it isn't required, you might consider having printouts of your slides and supporting materials to hand out before the presentation. Several of the schools remarked on how “professional” my presentation seemed because I took the extra (though expensive) step of having handouts. (Some schools offered to do the reproduction for me.)

Other things to consider. I had a smaller college call and ask me very directly whether I planned to stay for more than a year or two. Because schools make a large investment in training and acclimating new faculty (by one estimate, nearly \$500,000 in the first two years), they want reassurance that you won't leave for greener pastures. If you really do plan to stay (because, for instance, you don't want to relocate your family again), try to come up with a convincing story about why you want to stay.

The process of interviewing is as much social as intellectual. Faculty members may stay for 10 to 20 years; the existing faculty want to make sure that you will fit in. Part of the evaluation is an attempt to answer the following questions: Will this person be a good colleague? Will this person be a willing collaborator? Will this person contribute with service? Can I stand to see and hear this person for the next 15 years?

Since the PAD program is highly ranked, you probably expect a big payoff after years of work – and rightly so. However, if your salary expectations are out of line for your potential employer, its geographic location, its type (public versus private), and its ranking, then the committee may not bother making an offer. I tried to reassure people that I knew the market and had reasonable (though high) expectations. I never told anyone a specific number I expected. I did tell them what I had on offer from other schools once an above average salary offer came in.

Questions. There seem to be stock questions in this process:

- What is your research agenda for the next two to four years?
- What do you want to teach?
- Where would you publish your work?
- What associations do you belong to? What conferences do you attend?
- What courses would you like to develop and why?
- What are the major theoretical trends/contributions to your area of specialty of the last decade?
- Are you prepared to teach at night?
- Have you thought about how our students' needs might be different than those of Rockefeller students? How will you need to change your teaching style to meet those needs?
- What will you bring to this program? This school? This university?

- Why do you want to come west (north, south, etc.) when you have studied out east?
- Why do you want to teach at _____ ?
- Do you plan to stay here more than a year or two?
- What do you think are important components of advising Masters/Ph.D. students?
- What discipline do you place yourself in?
- Do you have funders in mind for the projects you would like to pursue after the Ph.D.?
- What salary are you expecting? (This question should not be answered, ever.)

Now the bad news...

In some cases, hiring decisions have relatively little to do with qualifications – provided, of course, that you are qualified. The number of job announcements in “public management” or “public policy” can be very deceptive. The announcements are often very general. In part this reflects the fact that committees or whole departments won’t really know what they are looking for until the process is well under way. For instance, during the 2006-2007 cycle, PAD began a search look for an “HR” person, that might have some interest in IT, nonprofits, or organizational behavior and theory. We ended up hiring a sociologists who specializes in nonprofits in Hungary. We got some nonprofits and OBT from this person, but nothing really about HR. What the Department sought to hire morphed as we saw who was on the market and listened to the job talks.

Once the narrowing/redefinition process begins, the number of truly relevant positions goes down dramatically. Unfortunately, there is no way to know *a priori* which committee process will result in a position specification that fits you. It is quite possible to see 35 position announcements that seem to fit and get no invitations to visit. Realistically, there are probably no more than three to nine positions around the country in any given year that will fit any given candidate. In some years, there won’t be any that fit. For this reason, you need to have Plan B.

There are many ways for a position to morph from a good to a poor fit. I wasn’t interviewed at one place because they assumed they couldn’t afford a Harvard grad. I thought I would get interviews at Wisconsin and Michigan, but they decided they needed an internationalist and an economist, respectively, after the search was well under way. At another school, the Dean was very interested in my work and left me with the impression that an offer would be forthcoming. It turned out that the faculty had one agenda and the Dean another; the faculty won in that case. At another school, the committee was preparing to invite me to visit, but then the development department landed a relatively large donation, which made it possible to convert the position into an endowed chair for a tenured faculty member. A joint position I really coveted was offered to no one because the policy and information science schools could not come to a meeting of the minds on what they really wanted. Two schools suffered reductions in state funding and thus called off their searches.

Even if the fit is right, other processes can intervene. I had two tendered offers revoked because of state budget cutbacks. Another place canceled their search because a new dean announced a new set of priorities.

The process might actually be random...

I have an offer. Now what?

An offer usually comes in the form of a faxed, mailed, or express-mailed letter. Don't rely on oral "commitments." In the last year I know of two oral "commitments" to students that became real offers. A written offer is the only enforceable document. Offers usually are time-limited – a week or two at most, though extensions can sometimes be negotiated.

The process of negotiating an offer is also very time-consuming and stressful. However, this is also your time of maximum leverage. Packages almost always include the following:

- Base salary (nine or 10 month contract with an option to earn up to 1/3 more during the summer – so-called "summer months")
- Terms of appointment if your Ph.D. is not completed in time for the Fall term
- Base course load (usually at least four courses per academic year)
- Course buy-outs during the first year or two (if any)
- Course preparations (how many new courses you must prepare to teach in the first year or two)
- Package of benefits (health, dental, retirement, life insurance, etc.)

If your offer letter does not spell these things out, ask for clarifications in writing.

Offers may also include:

- Computer equipment and software
- Relocation allowance
- Summer salary support (often one or two summer months in the first year or two)
- Research support (a slush fund used to pay for a project or get a grant)
- Administrative and course support
- Office space and furniture
- Spousal job placement
- Spousal and dependent tuition support
- Dependent care (day care, adult day care)
- Housing or home purchase support
- Parking
- Travel for a family visit
- Limits on service and advising loads
- Budgets for supplies, materials, and telephone
- Arrangements for mentoring
- Deferral of start date
- Offer to advance one month's salary during relocation
- Consulting opportunities
- Family leave outside usual policy

If any of these supports/benefits are offered, make sure to get the offer in writing. If you don't have it in writing, there is no obligation for the institution to perform.

These factors, coupled with the school's rank and prestige of course, create the most basic parts of an offer comparison. You may also want to consider:

- Presence/absence of potential collaborators in the department, school, or university.
- Age/rank distribution, as I discussed before.
- Relationship with foundations/government agencies that already fund research like that you wish to do in the future
- City and state tax rates – offers in New York City or Philadelphia do not go nearly as far because of city wage tax.
- Housing costs (one useful site for comparisons is <http://www.bestplaces.net/col/>).
- Child care costs (when I was on the market, my day care bill was larger than my mortgage payment); subsidized child care can make a very big difference.
- How soon your health benefits kick in? Many schools have a waiting period before health benefits start. In my case, the waiting period was 42 days. This means you may have to pay for COBRA to maintain health coverage for two or more months, an expense that can exceed \$800/month for family coverage. In retrospect, I should have negotiated a one-time subsidy to cover this cost.
- Spousal willingness to relocate to this area.
- Other costs – travel to visit friends and relatives; auto insurance. (Don't underestimate how much insurance costs can go up when moving from Albany to Philadelphia, New York, or other major metropolitan areas. I found this out in reverse when we moved from Philadelphia to the Boston suburb of Watertown, MA – my auto insurance dropped by \$1,000/year.)

Rank of school and your estimation of how the school's rank will change over the next 5 – 10 years may be the most important non-compensation issue to consider. Many faculty members warned that taking a job at a "Tier 2" school means you cannot move up to "Tier 1" later in your career. (I wish they would have defined what constituted these "tiers.>"). At this stage, you compete as a "Rockefeller College graduate"—with the program's name and your advisor's name working for you. If you wish to move to a different school a few years later, you will compete primarily as an assistant professor at _____, who has published _____, and who graduated (a while ago) from the Rockefeller College. Your alma mater will mean much less, according to this line of thinking. I think publications can trump almost anything, but mine was a minority opinion among those who were advising me during my job search. Their view was that the quality of the school at which I taught first would matter a great deal to future mobility.

The ideal situation is to have two or more offers so that a bidding war starts. In the absence of this, many schools and departments will assume that a grad from a highly ranked program may have multiple offers – never do anything to disturb this assumption.

Because the market for public administration/public policy, sociology, and political science is less organized than that for economics, there is great deal of gamesmanship related to the offers. Once an offer was made, the schools immediately pressured me to respond. The problem was, the offers came in separated by one or two weeks. Thus, it is often not possible to evaluate each in light of the others. To minimize the pressure, it is imperative to schedule late in the process

and to use whatever leverage you have to get departments to decide in temporal proximity to one another. Clearly though, the schools control this process – as does the law. Failure to complete an interview series could cause a university to face legal sanctions.

There are a variety of stalls that can be used:

- Appeal to the difficulty of evaluating an offer while still giving job talks
- Note the unfairness of canceling a visit when the invitee has already paid for airfare, hotel, etc.
- Ask directly for more time to evaluate
- Ask for a second visit, preferably one which includes support for a spouse/significant other to visit – note the importance of having “family buy-in” to the decision
- Begin negotiation where you raise issues sequentially rather than as a package
- Refuse to answer definitively yes or no until some date certain; this forces the school to make the decision for you – but at your peril

These negotiation techniques only work for a while. In the end, I let two offers expire in the hope that a better one would be forthcoming. This was a dangerous game: two schools ended their searches because of state budget cuts. I was down to the last offer by the end. Because one may gamble and lose, it is imperative to have a backup plan in case you lose all the offers that are available.

Uh-oh: I don't have an offer. Now what?

At least hundreds and maybe thousands of talented PhDs finish their degree every year and are unable to find a faculty position immediately. Most departments suggest a number of backup strategies:

- Adjunct faculty positions
- Post-doctoral work (which is the norm in most hard sciences anyway)
- Staff research work
- Consulting
- Deferral of graduation
- Choose to be a stay-at-home dad or mom for a year

Most faculty advisors will tell you that the backup strategy must keep you firmly ensconced in the academy. If you leave to do outside consulting work you may be “branded” as not serious about a faculty position. I have a friend who was a year ahead of me at the Kennedy School. He decided to try consulting for a year after he graduated. He hated it. So he tried to get back into the academy after three years in the private sector. To date, the best he has been able to do is a non-tenure track research faculty job at Yale. His recent publications will probably let him re-enter the market this year, but his difficulties have been very painful.

If you don't have a tenure-track job right away, your goal must be to continue building a publication and research portfolio. Thus, an adjunct position that allows for nothing but teaching

may not be the best option, unless you supplement this with either diligent efforts to get your dissertation published or other research work. Many students simply defer graduation for a term or a year in order to “look” like a recently completed PhD rather than one that has “been on the shelf” for a year.

The exception to this rule seems to be if you choose to have or take care of children for a year after you finish, though two advisors suggested that this course of action for men may be viewed with disfavor, depending on the age distribution of the departments to which you apply later. Recent discussions with female faculty at the 2006 Academy of Management meeting also raised questions about the safety of this strategy for women. However, I do know of some female colleagues who have taken a year off to have a child and then found a tenure-track position without too much difficulty.