

Succeeding in a Faculty Position
at a
Predominantly Undergraduate
Institution (PUI)

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Why Work at a PUI?

- Passion for teaching at the undergraduate level
 - I really enjoy the intellectual stage that undergraduates represent
- Passion for research
 - Granted we tend to work in niches
 - But, there are ample opportunities for funding, publication, and recognition within one's field

Getting a Job at a PUI

- Finding the right position to match your interests
 - Research expectations
 - Teaching responsibilities
- Council on Undergraduate Research (www.cur.org)
 - How-to Booklet on getting a job at a PUI

The Application Package

- Importance of the cover letter
 - Balance between teaching and research expectations
 - Make sure it speaks to the PUI environment
- Teaching statement
- Research statement
- References

The Campus Visit

- Flexibility in teaching responsibilities
- Autonomy over teaching responsibilities
- Contact hours
- Infrastructure to support research – lab, start-up funds, institutional matching money for equipment, institutional funds for travel
- Expectations for tenure – does everyone give a different set?

Balancing the Demands

- Put on blinders – tenure decisions are based on teaching and scholarship – enter into service responsibilities judiciously (better yet, avoid at all costs at the institutional level)
- Integrate teaching and research
- Devote summers to research – involve students in a summer program to build momentum for the academic year

Tom's (Surefire?) Tips for Tenure

- Don't expect a checklist
- Establish yourself as a teacher and scholar
 - Check wind direction (with regards to teaching)
 - Shun service
- Follow institutional criteria
- Get research going immediately by seeking external funding

Why write grant proposals?

- Most chemistry projects require money
- Refines your ideas – whether or not the proposal is funded
- Impresses your department/institution

Why many faculty members at PUIs do not write grant proposals?

- Claim that they do not have the time
- Convince themselves that they won't get funded
- They really aren't serious about doing research

Writing More Competitive Proposals

- Read the instructions
- Have an excellent idea for research
 - informally test your ideas on colleagues
- Excellent ideas are usually ambitious
 - not just a continuation of or derivative of prior work

- Explain the significance of the work to the discipline and possibly society
- Clearly explain the experimental work that will be undertaken
- Clearly explain how the experimental work will answer the questions you pose to study
- Provide a plan B if plan A is risky
- Be succinct in your descriptions
- Note that all of the comments above relate to the SCIENCE

- Convince the reviewers that you can successfully undertake the project
 - Institutional support and infrastructure
 - Appropriate collaborations (with letters of support)

- Address the impact the work will have on undergraduates
- Convince the reviewers that undergraduates can undertake your line of work (or set up collaborations for especially ambitious aspects of the project)
- But remember that the reviewers really want to be convinced that high quality science will be done

- Find colleagues who will provide substantive and critical comments on a draft of your proposal
- Listen to those colleagues
- If the proposal is rejected, resubmit a revised version that addresses the criticisms raised by the reviewers
 - unless the criticism is that the general idea does not merit funding
- Talk to the program officer – she or he won't bite!

Remember:

**You will never get a grant
unless you submit a proposal**

Sources of Funding

- Research Corporation (www.rescorp.org)*
- Petroleum Research Fund (www.acs.org)*
- Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation (www.dreyfus.org)*
- National Science Foundation (www.nsf.gov)
- National Institutes of Health – AREA program (www.nih.gov)

Programs of the NSF

- Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI)
- Major Research Instrumentation (MRI)
- Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)
- Course, Curriculum and Laboratory Improvement (CCLI)