

The logo consists of the letters 'UF' in white, bold, sans-serif font, set against an orange square background.

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How to Ace Zoom Interviews For Faculty Positions

Strategies and Tips on Answering Typically Asked Faculty Interview Questions

UF Graduate School - September 24, 2020
Antonio Faciola, Ph.D.
Department of Animal Sciences

The background of the slide features a blue gradient with a faint network diagram of interconnected nodes and lines. Overlaid on this is a photograph of the University of Florida campus, showing the iconic Old Union Chapel and the tall, ornate St. John's Tower. The UF logo, consisting of the letters 'UF' in white on an orange square, is positioned in the top left corner.

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How to Not Mess Up Too Much During an Interview!

Strategies and Tips on Answering Typically Asked Faculty Interview Questions

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MY EXPERIENCE

- 3 Faculty Interviews: Offered 2 position
- Attended about a dozen faculty interviews
- Member of 5 faculty search committees
- Chaired 3 search committees
- Recently participated in 18 zoom interviews
- Will be presenting my own “non-scientific” views! (there are different views and different fields!)

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

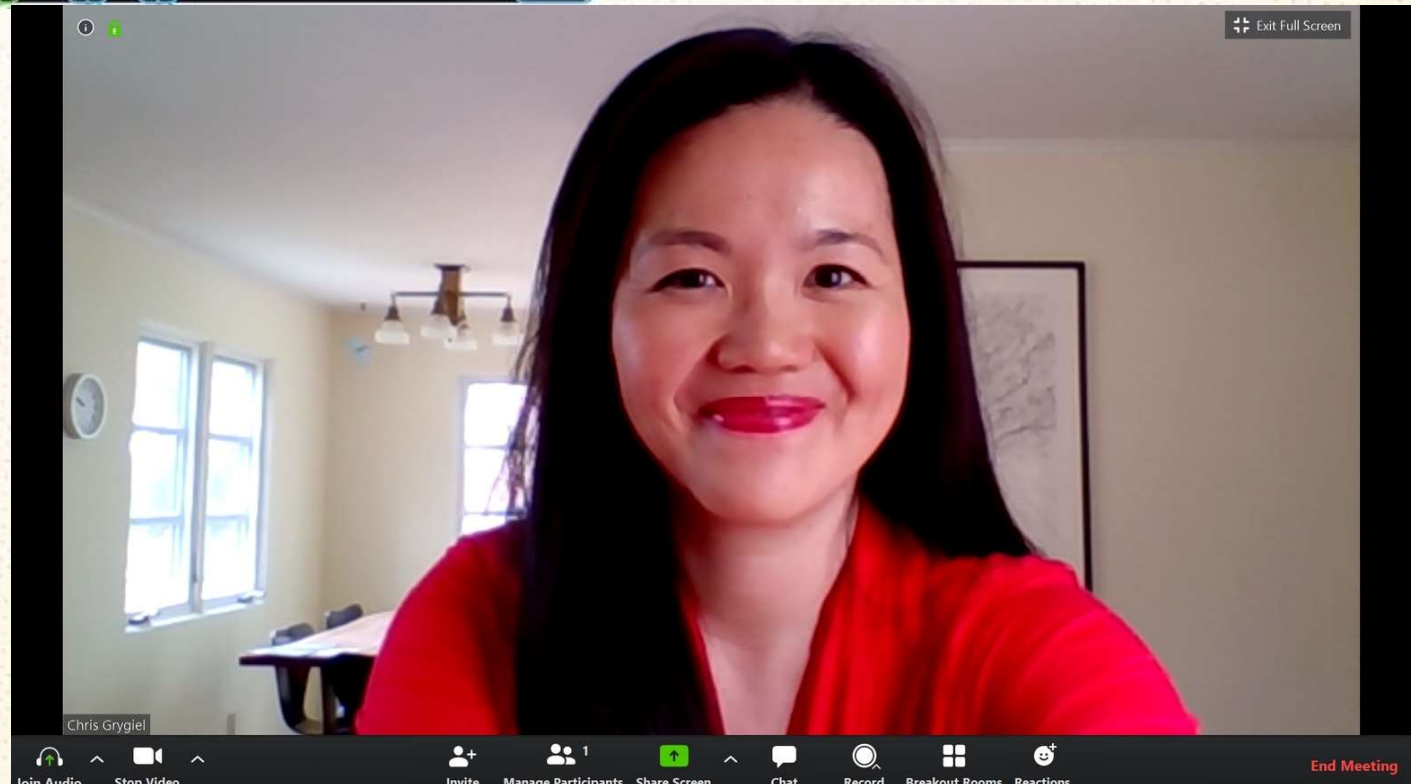
Settings





- Setting
- Background
- Video
- Audio

- Internet
- Potential distractions
- Have some water!



BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- The academic job conundrum
- Job hunt can be a full time job
- Study the job description (split, specific areas, etc.)
- Get information on the search committee (try to put yourself in their shoes)
- Get information on the department
- Be yourself, but be strategic!
- Watch other interviews
- Practice, practice, practice!

THE INTERVIEW

- First round zoom interviews
 - Typically 1h long
 - Typically ~10 questions (each question has a purpose)
 - $60 \text{ min} - 5 \text{ min intro} = 55 \text{ min} / 10 = 5.5 \text{ min per question}$
- Final round zoom interviews
 - Different ball game!
 - Can last 2-3 days
 - Research seminar, teaching demonstration, group meetings, students, Chair, Deans, etc.

THE INTERVIEW

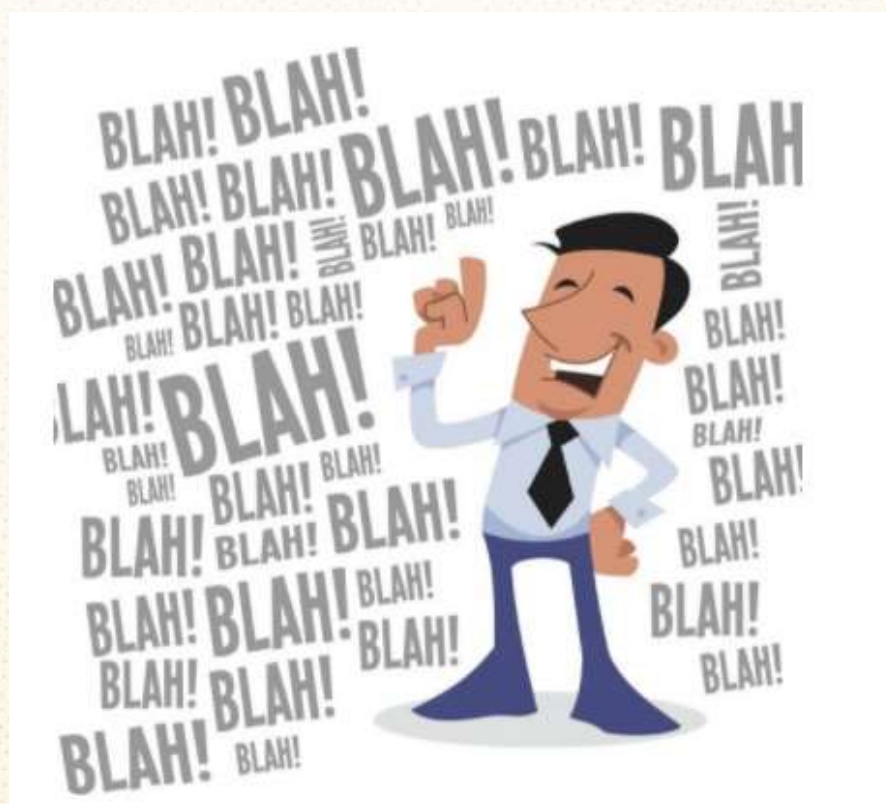
1. Why are you interested in this position and why are you interested in leaving your current position?

It's ok to talk about your ambitions and what you want to accomplish, but keep in mind that is more about "them" than you! (What would you bring to the table? How can you make the Dept. better?

Don't be too negative or critical about your current position

THE INTERVIEW

2. Please briefly summarize your current research project(s).



THE INTERVIEW

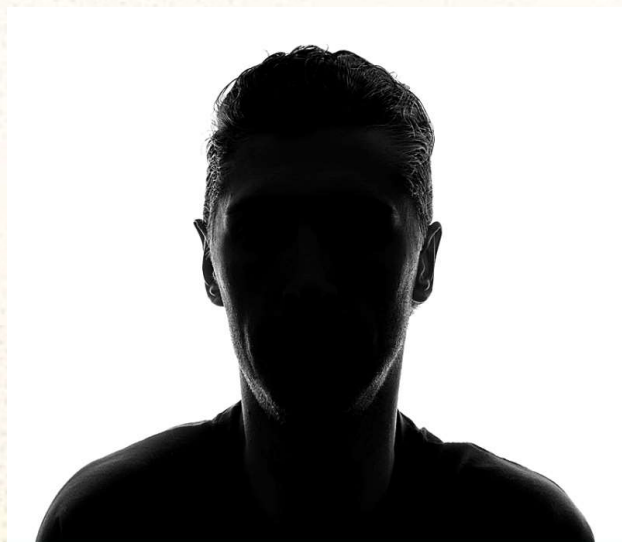
2. Please briefly summarize your current research project(s).

Be brief! Focus on the importance of the work (don't assume the committee knows it), the outcomes, **IMPACT!**

Don't be too long, don't be too specific or too vague!

THE INTERVIEW

3. What do you envision for your future research?
What are your first 5-year goal and your long-term career goals?



“Get tenure”

THE INTERVIEW

3. What do you envision for your future research?
What are your first 5-year goal and your long-term career goals?

Pre- and post-tenure

“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

Be bold, don't be shy!

Be realistic with expectations (what are your future peers doing?)

THE INTERVIEW

4. How do you think your research would fit or complement current programs at UF?

Complementing others

Competing with others

It is important to convey INDEPENDENCY

THE INTERVIEW

5. What do you think are the most important attributes of a successful faculty member?

Do you understand the job?

Productivity, focus, prioritizing, multi-tasking, **communication**, persuasion, collaborations, problem-solving, **leadership**

THE INTERVIEW

6. How do you approach mentoring undergraduate and graduate students?



“I think grad students need to suffer...”

THE INTERVIEW

6. How do you approach mentoring undergraduate and graduate students?

You need a mentoring plan!

What is your philosophy?

What is your experience?

How are you going to recruit and lead a team?

Approach: Examples can be great!

Show compassion and kindness.

THE INTERVIEW

7. What do you think are your most significant accomplishments? Why?



“I haven’t achieved anything yet.”

THE INTERVIEW

7. What do you think are your most significant accomplishments? Why?

Focus on outcomes, impact!

Be genuine

Show your passion and excitement!

Don't focus on someone else's work!

THE INTERVIEW

8. Describe your work experiences in creating or fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace.



“I don’t think about diversity.”

THE INTERVIEW

8. Describe your work experiences in creating or fostering diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

You need a diversity and inclusion plan!

What is your philosophy?

What is your experience?

How are you going to have diverse group?

Connections are important

Approach: Examples can be great!

THE INTERVIEW

9. Tell us about your grant applications and explain three strategies you will consider for improving the chance of success.

Do you have a proven record?

Do you know the funding mechanisms?

Have you worked on a grant?

Have you taken courses/ workshops?

THE INTERVIEW

10. Do you like teaching? What is your preferred style or method of teaching?



“I like teaching, I don’t think I am good at it, but I’m willing to learn it.”

THE INTERVIEW

10. Do you like teaching? What is your preferred style or method of teaching?

You need a teaching plan!

What is your philosophy?

What is your experience?

How are you going to teach?

Approach: Examples can be great!

THE INTERVIEW

11. What courses would you like to teach at UF?



“I will have to see what’s available”

THE INTERVIEW

11. What courses would you like to teach at UF?

You need to do your homework

What courses are available?

Check out syllabus, do you have one?

What's missing in the Dept. offerings?

What can you bring to the table?

THE INTERVIEW

12. What have you considered as a major impediment to an ideal progress in your research program?



“Funding”

THE INTERVIEW

12. What have you considered as a major impediment to an ideal progress in your research program?

Problem-solving (can also be a hypothetical question)

What problems have you encountered AND how have you solved them?

THE INTERVIEW

13. Is there anything that you would like to share that you have not been able to in other questions?

This is an opportunity to point out or emphasize any point that you judge as really important.

It is great to reiterate your **enthusiasm** for the position!

THE INTERVIEW

14. What leadership skills do you find most useful? How do you describe your leadership style?

Similar to mentoring question but more broad

You need a plan

You can use your own examples

You can use your mentors' examples (good and bad)

THE INTERVIEW

15. If there was one thing that you would like to improve about yourself, what might that be?



“My accent”

THE INTERVIEW

15. If there was one thing that you would like to improve about yourself, what might that be?

Be genuine

Be honest, but don't shoot yourself in the foot! 😊

"I wanna create less enemies" :o

"I'm constantly trying to be more considerate of others point of views"

THE INTERVIEW

16. What would you describe as your most positive attribute?

Be genuine

Be confident

Fine line between being arrogant and confident

It is great when your attributes match faculty perceptions! (and expectations for the job!)

THE INTERVIEW

17. What is a likely timeline for when you would be ready to assume the new position should it be offered to you?

When can you realistically start?

Are you a grad student, postdoc, faculty (would you bring students?), prior commitments, family, etc.

THE INTERVIEW

18. Is there anything about this position that might give you any concern?

Ideally no, but if you have, here is the time.

Another opportunity to ask questions or share something that hasn't been shared before.

THE INTERVIEW

19. Do you have any other questions for the committee?

Yes! Many if possible! Three is a good number.

Expectations

Resources

What am I going to get? vs. What can I earn there?

THE INTERVIEW

Other questions:

Know your audience!

Faculty, Staff, Students, Chair, Deans

Hypothetical questions

Extension, outreach, service

Position-specific, etc.

Know your needs (facility, equipment, etc.)

Accommodation concerns? (ask the Dept. Chair)

Further tips:

- A great response will not land you a job, but a terrible one can be a deal breaker!
- It's NOT about what YOU want!
- It's about what THEY want!
- What can you bring to the table, how can you help the department be better?
- Don't ruminate on previous questions

Further tips II:

- Don't be too relaxed
- Perception of balance (moderation)
- Research/Teaching/Outreach
- Be confident, but not arrogant
- Be kind, polite, and respectful
- Avoid mentioning your mentors too much
(be independent)

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Go get them Gators!

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