

Pursuing an Academic Career Webinar Series

Preparing for an academic job interview in the geosciences
January 20, 2012

Audio access: Call in 1-800-704-9804

Access code: 268 37 591

*Alternate number: 1-404-920-6604 (**not** toll-free)*

Please **mute your phone** by pressing *6

Technical problems?

Contact Monica: mbruckne@carleton.edu

Program begins at:

2 pm Eastern | 1 pm Central | 12 pm Mountain | 11 am Pacific

You can find information about the event at

http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerdev/AcademicCareer2012/jan_2012.html

Preparing for an academic job interview

Presenters



Prof. Rachel Beane
Bowdoin College



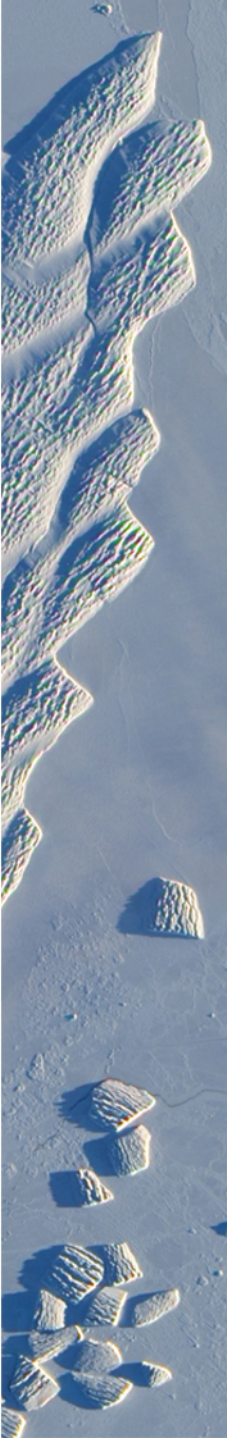
Prof. Mike Williams
University of Massachusetts, Amherst



Prof. Heather Macdonald
College of William and Mary



Monica Bruckner
Science Education and Resource Center
(SERC)



Overview

Introduction to academic job interviews

Preparing for the interview

- Research the institution
- Know the interview format
- Practice research talks & teaching demonstrations
- Get ready to meet people & answer ?'s

Words of wisdom

Evaluation of webinar

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Collaborate interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with several sections: 'AUDIO & VIDEO' at the top, followed by 'CHAT - Supervised', and 'PARTICIPANTS' at the bottom. The 'CHAT - Supervised' section is highlighted with a red circle. Inside this section, there is a message from Monica Bruckner: '...and it'll show up here.' Below the message is a text input field with the placeholder text 'You can enter text here...'. A green arrow points to the top of the chat window, and a yellow arrow points to the text input field. The 'PARTICIPANTS' section shows a list of participants, including Monica Bruckner (Moderator) and Monica Bruckner (You) in the MAIN ROOM (1).

If you have a question during the webinar, please type it in the chat box.

NOTE: you can “drag out” the chat window and expand it from the corner

Introduction to Academic Job Interviews

“When you walk into an interview, your goal is to convey an image of yourself as a colleague. After all, a colleague is what your interviewers are looking for.”

Mary Dillon Johnson
The Chronicle of Higher Education
<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Academic-Job-Interview-/44607/>

Introduction to Academic Job Interviews

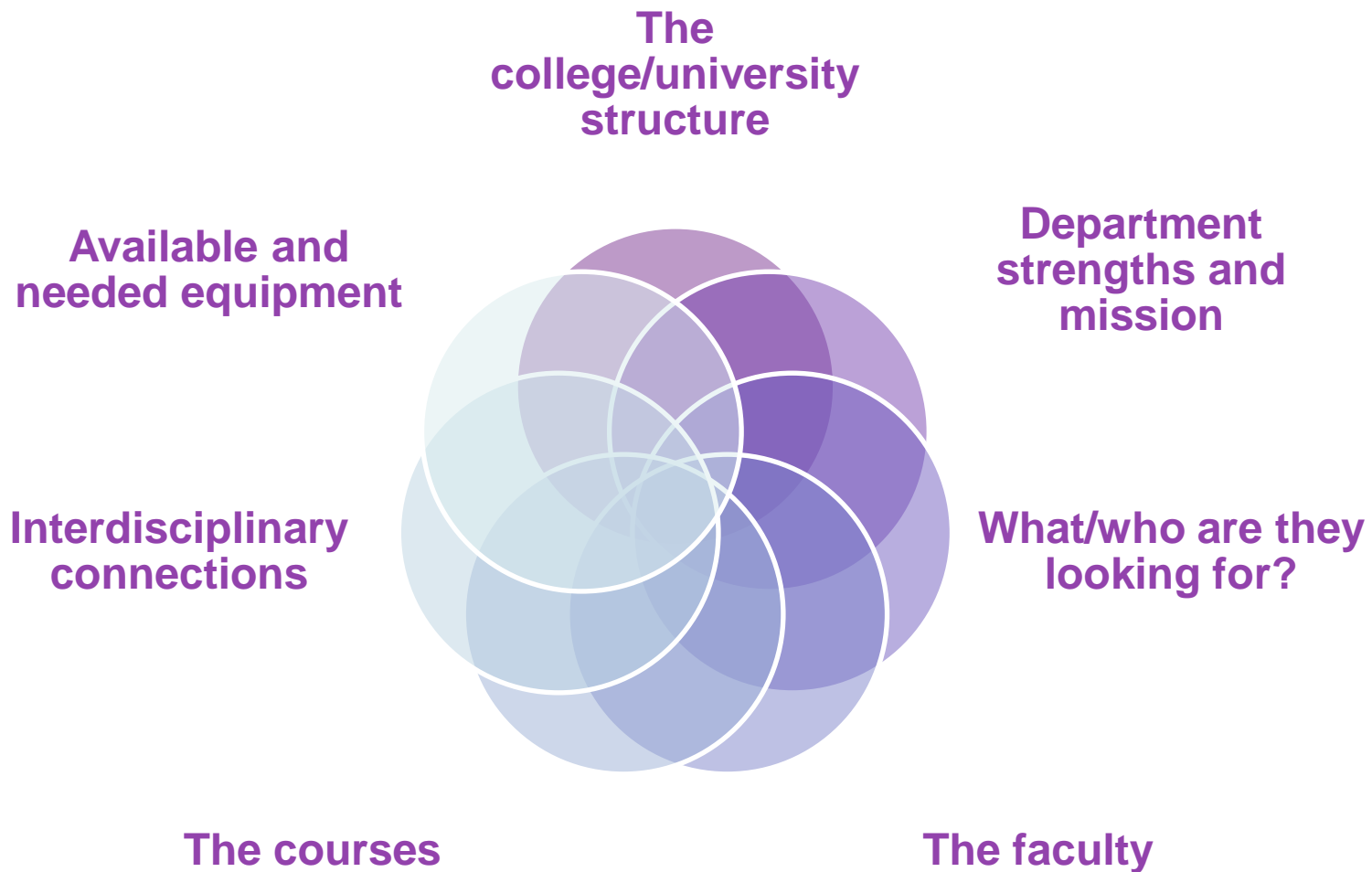


Research the Institution

“I thought about what I could offer the department and really made the case for it. I had researched a lot about the school and the department.

I went into the interview with the attitude that this was the job that I really wanted...”

Research the Institution



Know the Interview Format

	Research university	Primarily undergrad institution	Two-year college
Research talk(s)	X	X	
Teaching demonstration	(X)	(X)	X
Meet with search committee	(X)	(X)	X
Meet with individual faculty	X	X	
Meet with administrator(s)	X	X	(X)
Meet with students	X	X	
Meals, receptions, campus	X	X	(X)



Research Talks

What topic?

What level?

How long?

Lose the beginners or bore the experts?

I have more than one project??

Go high tech? Movies? Videos? Mac or PC?

Research Talks - Suggestions

- Give them your best stuff
- Pick one research project
- Use the introduction to capture the audience
- For the heart of the talk:
 - Take it to the MAX, scientific
- Start preparing early
 - Divide the talk into blocks*
- Think about “learning goals” (Take-aways)
 - ... for each block
- PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!

Research Talks

The introduction is critical!

Develop a short, problem-oriented introduction

Highlight the broad context for the study...

but quickly telescope in to the problem at hand...

Avoid statements like, “My area is...”, “My talk is about...”, etc.

Try to hook the audience; make them curious, interested, and eager to hear more.

Suggestion: Try a three part introduction:

- 1- statement of fact(s);
- 2- statement of problem (related to the facts);
- 3- purpose of talk (aimed at solving the problem).

A talk outline slide may not be necessary...

Let your introduction provide the roadmap...

Research Talks – Speaking Style

Seek specific comments and feedback on elements of style:

Speaking to the audience
... not the screen

When you turn your back on the audience, you start to lose them.

Using notes!

Anticipate the next slide, change it, talk about the new one - all without looking at the slides

The Pointer

Practice! Try to stop talking while you are pointing and stop pointing when you are talking.

Gesturing

*Gesturing with the hands can be distracting...
Let your voice provide the emphasis and the excitement.*

Research Talks - Timing



A good way to ruin a good talk is to run overtime.

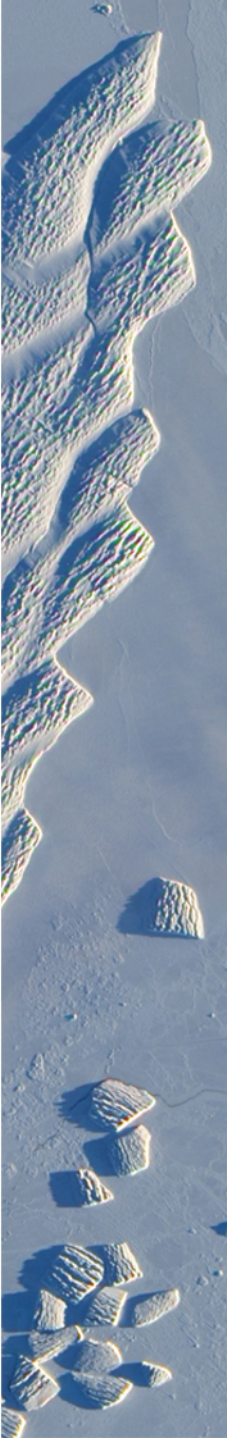
No matter how interesting the talk, the audience is aware of the time. It is critical to end on time, not late and not excessively early.

The best way to avoid timing problems is to practice the talk
Allocate time for each block of the talk; then gauge your timing block by block....

Bring a watch *It looks bad to ask someone in the audience how your time is going*

A talk should seem to be going according to plan and exactly on schedule from start to finish ...*everything is under control.*

Talk a deep breath now and then and let your mind catch up. What seems interminably long to the speaker is a short (and welcome) break to the audience.



Research Talks - Slide Design

Eliminate over-crowding!

Many speakers squeeze multiple maps, photos, images onto one slide.

*The images are generally too small to see and...
when you are talking about one, the audience is trying to
figure out another.*

Think about the one point that you need to make with the slide.

Fill the screen with the one key illustration to make the point.

Research Talks - Conclusions

A talk should reach one or more specific concrete conclusions.

Then, present some broader implications of the conclusions.

Recapture the people you may have lost in the middle.

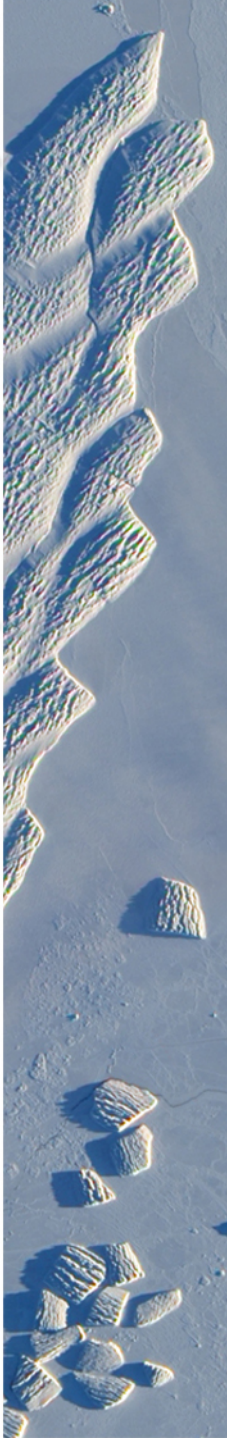
End with a BANG!

Many talks die in the end... with a closing like, "Well that's it"... or "I think I'll stop there..."

It should be clear that you have reached the single goal that you have been aiming for from the start.

Try: Memorizing your last few lines!

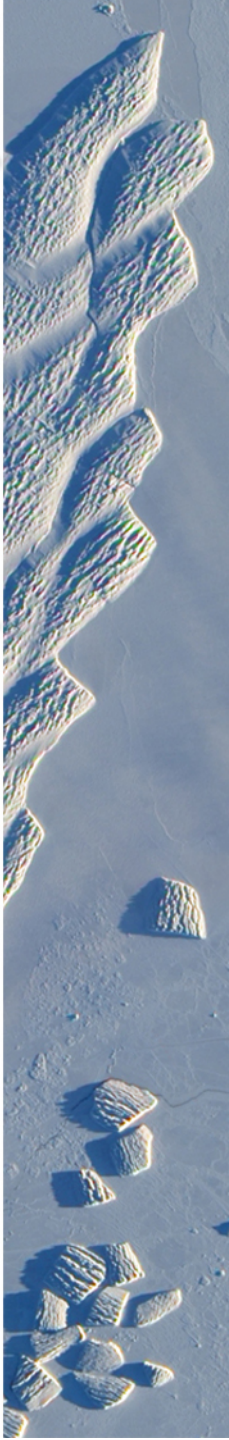




Research Talks

Prepare for Questions

- Keep the answers short, and answer the question.
Some speakers launch into a second talk...
- Feel free to ask for clarification about the question.
- Be ready for the off-the-wall question.
Steer your answer back to a point you want to emphasize.
- In general, avoid searching for some slide from the talk to illustrate an answer. *It breaks the flow when you want to be most in control.*
- Practice answering questions with colleagues, students, experts, outside-but interested, etc.



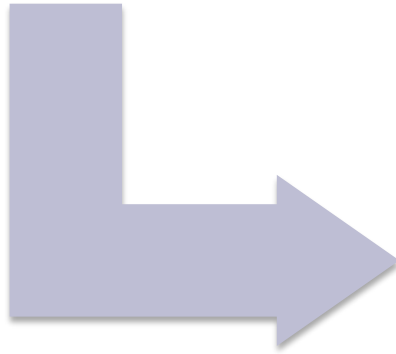
What questions do you have about research talks?



*If you have a question,
please type it in the chat box.*

Teaching Demonstration

Ask questions
about the
format and
setting

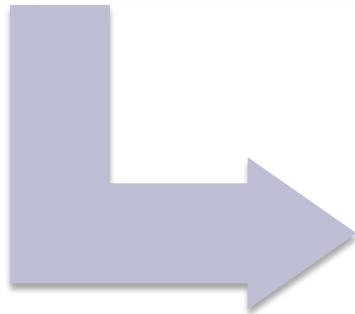


Prepare to
teach

Teaching Demonstration

Ask questions
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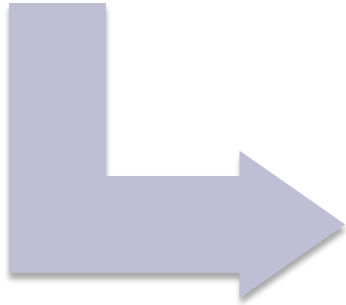
- Who will be present?
- Is the demo in an actual class?
- What level?
- Will the topic be provided to you?
- What constraints are imposed by the venue (PPT? Doc Camera?)



Prepare to
teach

Teaching Demonstration

Ask questions
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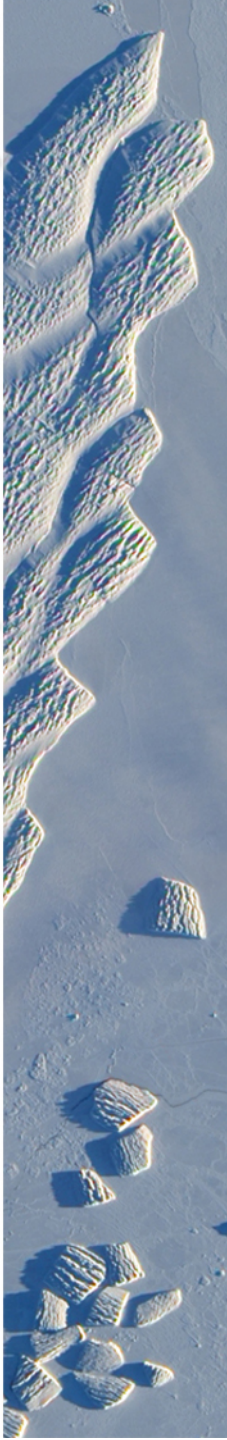
Prepare to
teach

- Target the audience
- Reach range of experiences in audience
- Provide context
- Use effective teaching strategies
- Practice
- Be enthusiastic!

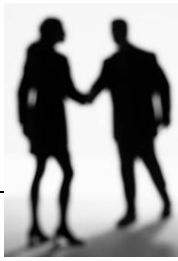
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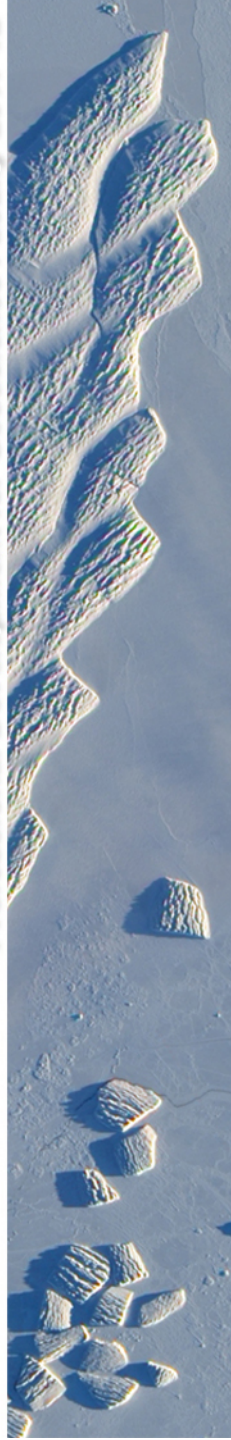


Meeting People



Research all the folks you are meeting with and know a bit about what they do. I had notes on their research in a notebook I could consult.

My interviews started to improve when my attitude changed to *"Why don't I look at this as an opportunity to learn about what they do."* Once I did this, I started asking more questions, didn't worry about looking dumb, and had more fun with the process.



Meeting People



Answering Questions

Preparing for questions on research and mentoring

Tell me about your research.

How might you recruit students?

What do you need to do your research?

What are the next steps in your research?

How will you fund your research?

What's your approach to supervising students?

Answering Questions

Preparing for questions on teaching

What courses would you like to teach?

What approach would you take to teaching?

How would you attract majors from the intro course?

What do you want your students to gain from taking your course?

How would you deal with the challenge of:

- Large lecture class
- Teaching non-science majors
- Range of students in an intro course
- Limited resources

Answering Questions

Elevator talks for research and teaching questions

What is the nature of your research?

Where do you want your research program to be in five years?

What courses you want to teach/can teach.

What is your approach to teaching... large courses? Non-majors? etc.
Be careful about lecturing teachers about teaching

Need at least three:

- 1) Short, several sentences
- 2) Long(er): one paragraph
- 3) For the non-specialist



Answering Questions

Preparing and practicing “elevator talks”

What is the primary audience for one of the elevator talks you prepared?

- A. Colleague in your field
- B. Geoscientist
- C. Humanities professor
- D. Undergraduate major



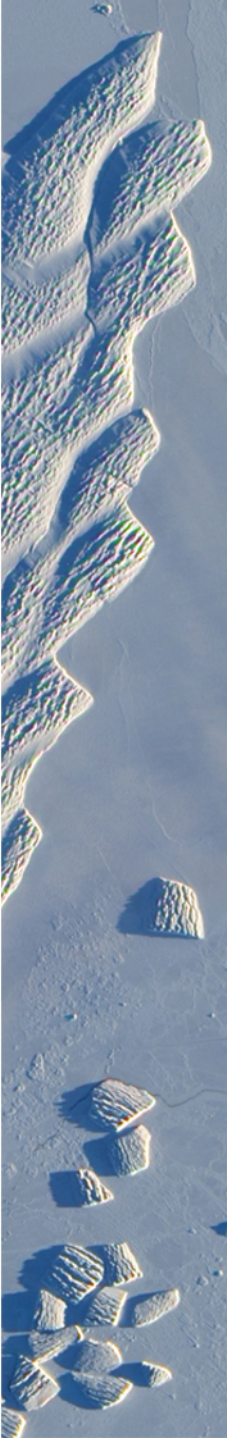
Answering Questions

- Anticipate questions and prepare answers
 - with specific examples and the general case
 - consider the context of the department, institution, setting
 - not too short and not too long.
- Consider it a conversation.
- Avoid jargon.
- Good eye contact and volume.
- Practice transitions to move the conversation along.
- Practice ways to say I don't know.
- Rehearse with faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, others not in your field.
- Make a list of questions you want to ask.

Answering questions

I prepared a list of my most current projects and made a plan for implementing similar projects during the next 2 years. Once I finished making all of these plans for my 2-year program, I did the same thing for my 5-year plans to demonstrate that I knew how long the tenure track was going to last.

I reviewed my teaching statement the night before the interview... and the web pages about teaching at the department I am visiting.



Preparing for Questions about Equipment Needs (“The Wish List”)

- Think in terms of what you will need to be successful
- What is critical? What is desirable?
- Be aware of what is available, and what is practical/feasible
- At the interview, this is a conversation - not a negotiation.
- Bring a list with you; know about prices, costs.
- Be prepared to talk about how you might get work done elsewhere if equipment is not available.
- Don't forget about equipment for teaching

What additional questions do you have about preparing for interviews?



*If you have a question,
please type it in the chat box.*

Words of Wisdom

Everything is part of the interview

Be positive, interested, and professional

Know and be interested in each person with whom you will interview

You are also interviewing them

Find ways that will help you relax during the interview day

Have an attitude of “This is a job I really want”

Additional Resources

On the Cutting Edge: Academic Job Interviews

<http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerprep/jobsearch/interviewing.html>

On the Cutting Edge: Typical Questions

<http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerprep/jobsearch/interviewquestions.html>

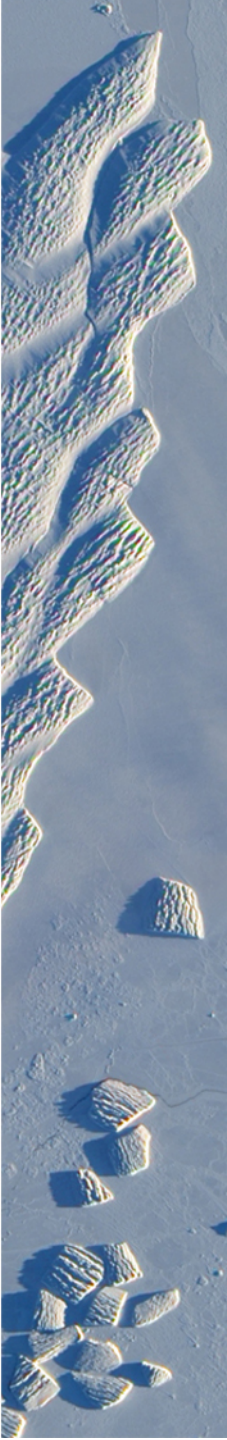
Tomorrow's Professor: Interview preparation guide

<http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/cgi-bin/tomprof/posting.php?ID=94>

The Academic Job Search Handbook, by J Vick and J Furlong, 2008

Pursuing an Academic Career *Webinar Series*

- February 15, 2012 (Wednesday) **Learning to learn: What will they remember in 5 years?** Leader: Karl Wirth
- March 9, 2012 (Friday) **Linking goals, assessment and teaching strategies to promote effective learning,** Leader: David McConnell
- April 10, 2012 (Tuesday) **Setting goals for effective and innovative courses,** Leader: Barbara Tewksbury
- May, 2012 **Developing a thriving research program and balancing it with teaching, service and other passions,** Leaders: Rachel Beane and Michael Williams



Thank you!

We're glad you were able to join us today.

Please help us by completing an evaluation form at:

http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerd/ev/AcademicCareer2012/jan_eval.html