On the Cutting Edge Webinar Series Supports Graduate Students and Post-Docs Pursuing an Academic Career

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Description and Purpose

• Series of webinars designed to demystify the process of pursuing an academic career through the use of short presentations by faculty from a variety of institutions across the US.

• Series builds on material from the annual On the Cutting Edge Preparing for an Academic Career and Post-Docs Pursuing an Academic Career face-to-face workshops.

• Intent was to make key topics from these workshops more accessible to a larger audience by providing virtual events that are free and do not require travel.

Interactive Teaching

Rachel Beane, Bowdoin College and Heather Macdonald, College of William & Mary

Participants learned about effective, interactive teaching methods such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Concept maps, among others, & how to use them effectively in the classroom.

Negotiations in the Hiring Process

Tim Bralower, Pennsylvania State University and Scott Fendorf, Stanford University

In this webinar, participants learned about the negotiation process from the perspective of a faculty member at two-year colleges, primarily undergraduate institutions, and in departments offering graduate degrees.

Strategic Early Career Planning

Rachel Beane, Bowdoin College

The Early Career Inventory sheet, from Rachel Beane, is designed to keep track of application materials, experiences relevant to applying for an academic position, and experiences relevant to starting an academic position.

Facility Positions: Exploring the Range of Possibilities

Mike Stone, Adelphi University

The webinar includes resources on preparing for tenure, research, and administration, and information on the hiring process for different types of positions.

Format

• One to 1.5 hour interactive webinar using Elluminate® web-conferencing software in conjunction with a conference call.

• Sessions were preceded with a tutorial for using the Elluminate® software.

• Interactive presentations included up to three participants in the chat feature in Elluminate.

• Participants were able to ask questions and provide comments throughout the presentation using the chat feature in Elluminate.

• Presentations concluded with an open question and answer segment.

Topics Covered

• Description and Purpose

• Interactive Teaching

• Negotiations in the Hiring Process

• Strategic Early Career Planning

• Faculty Positions: Exploring the Range of Possibilities

Outcomes & Feedback

• Each webinar had between 15-50 participants.

• 127 people participated in one or more of the webinars offered in 2011.

• Participants agreed webinar goals were met, including that they:

  • would try incorporating interactive techniques, such as jigsaw, gallery walk, or think-pair share, into their classes,
  • were more informed about how to approach negotiations for academic positions,
  • would write their teaching statements to better convey their teaching philosophies and to incorporate specific examples and experiences,
  • benefited from the career inventory to organize components of teaching, research, service, & job applications and as a way to maintain focus & strategize the professional activities they pursue, and

• gained new perspectives on positions at different types of colleges and universities. Many participants indicated that they expanded their scope of interest to institutions they had not previously considered, such as two-year colleges.

• Participants also indicated that the webinar format was useful and appreciated, but some found the chat distracting.

• Participant Quotes:

  • “I was really pleased that they were effective in getting me and other students interested in teaching, the workshop was very instructive in giving me ideas and creative ideas about teaching methods that can be applied in class and that would keep students engaged.”

  • “The whole presentation was great—really hit all the main points and was easy to follow and relevant to the issues of how to approach negotiations. Answered a lot of questions that I had about start-up costs, etc and mentioned several things I hadn’t even thought about.”

  • “Discussing the different types of teaching philosophies and how they are suitable for different institutions was valuable. I strongly believe that I have learned how to better present myself in interviews, and that I have a clearer understanding of different aspects of teaching philosophies in my related field (i.e., geoscience). Even if I did a description about what makes a successful teacher or a description of teaching methods, I would consider it one of the most illuminating parts of the presentation.”

  • “The early career inventory was presented so well that I actually didn’t notice I was playing an inventory game!”

  • “Before the event, I did not appreciate just how different a career can be on different types of institutions. The discussion of the early career inventory was also helpful in getting me to set goals. Now, I have a plan that I want to work toward.”

  • “Despite the overwhelming amount of information, it made a huge difference to have been introduced to the different institutions and how they are run. It really helps you to get your mind in the right place on different cultures.”

• The Early Career Inventory sheet, from Rachel O’Brien, is designed to keep track of application materials & experiences relevant to applying for an academic position, and experiences relevant to starting an academic position.

• The webinar includes resources on preparing for tenure, research, and administration, and information on the hiring process for different types of positions.

Related Sites and Upcoming Opportunities

• The Career Development Site Guide features career resources from across the SERC sites.

• Frequently asked questions from the Preparing for an Academic Career workshop participants.

• The Early Career Geosciences Faculty Development Program includes resources on:

  • time management
  • professional development
  • effective teaching
  • developing a research program

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Frequently asked questions from the Preparing for an Academic Career workshop participants.

• Interested, but couldn’t participate? Check out our event pages for screencasts & resources!

Find it all at: http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/careerdev/AcademicCareer2011

Join us for the 2012 Pursuing and Academic Career webinar series, January – May 2012!

Conveners: Rachel Beane, Bowdoin College and Michael Williams, University of Massachusetts

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