

# Preparing Yourself for the (future) Political Science Job Market

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# What happens on the job market?

- Departments are trying to hire someone who
  - (1) Researches and teaches about X,
  - (2) Will be a good colleague, and
  - (3) They can (eventually) tenure
- Let's break this standard apart
- *But not forget that all is secondary to your research*

# (1) Researches and teaches about X (Subfield expertise)

- Teaching
  - Knowledge of topic
  - Teaching skill
  - Teaching portfolio (specific classes)
- Research (**ability to publish**)
  - Ideas/Questions (that we care about)
  - Creativity/Quality of argument/data/analysis
  - Knowledge of topic
  - Technical skills (research design/data collection/analysis)
  - Writing ability
  - Project management/executive function (general competence)

## (2) Good colleague

(Test: If the person appeared in the office down the hall, would I be more or less happy?)

- Pretty
- Like those who are hiring you
- Socially pleasant/personable
- Useful
  - For their research
    - Research ability
    - Substantive knowledge
    - General smarts
  - For their department
    - Competent
    - Public-spirited (exploitable)
    - Test: Could be a DUS/DGS/PDO?

# (3) Can (eventually) tenure

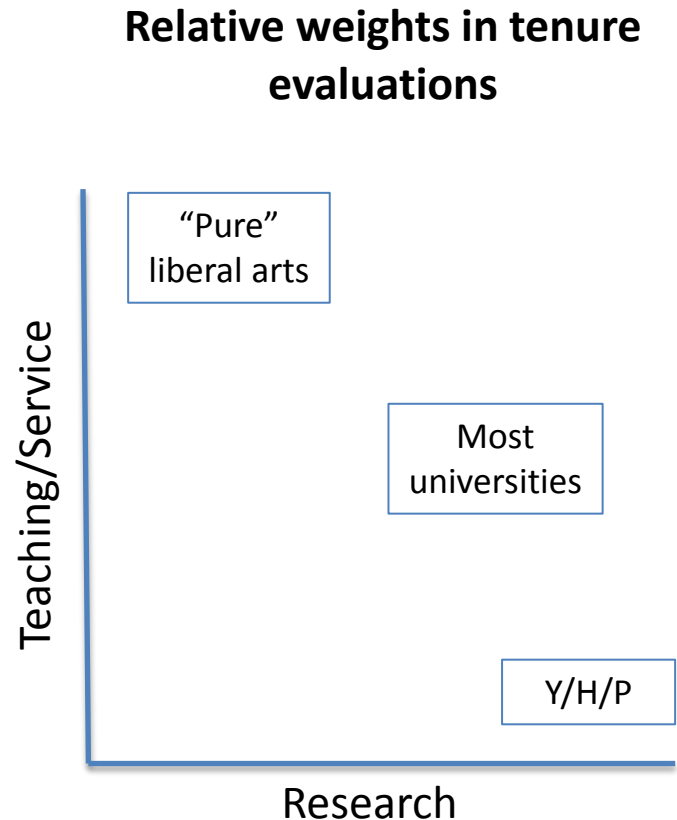
- Fundamentally about risk reduction
  - Failed promotions are costly
  - Exceptions are schools that can buy options, but even then, need to see upside
- Criteria, Duke:
  - “Tenure... should be reserved for those who have clearly demonstrated through their performance as scholars and teachers that their work has been widely perceived among their peers as outstanding.... Good teaching and university service should be expected but cannot in and of themselves be sufficient grounds for tenure.”

# (3) They can (eventually) tenure

- Bates College:
  - “The two chief criteria for tenure are excellence in teaching and significant professional achievement. Particularly outstanding achievement in either teaching or professional activity may offset a lower level of achievement in the other category”

# (3) They can (eventually) tenure

- Two key dimensions of evaluation:
  - (1) Research
  - (2) Teaching/Service
- *Relative Weights*
- Standard in any given dimension varies



# How can you make yourself a better (less risky) candidate?

- Show promise, demonstrate performance
- Credentialing (Promise)
  - Training
    - Substance, Skills, Teaching
  - Letters
  - Awards
- Demonstrations (Performance)
  - Publications
  - Teaching (and proxies, like conference presentations)



# Anticipating Market Sorting/Matching Problems

- If you want a research-oriented job
  - Market works reasonably well


- Else

- Type:

- More teaching oriented places
    - Lower ranked research universities

- Concerns:

- Searching very expensive/restricted
      - Can you teach? Do you want to? (Wrong type)
      - Don't believe you will come (safety school)
      - Fear you won't stick it out for the long term



Need to  
(credibly)  
demonstrate  
type and  
interest

# Things to do (checklist):

- CV/Website
  - It can be public later
- Classes/Training
  - “Substance”/Topical courses
  - Methods
  - Languages (Math/CS too)
  - Summer Programs
- Teaching
  - Take/TF classes you would like to teach
  - Show knowledge of the world
  - Get teaching certification
  - TF (guest lecture)
  - Teach
    - Co-teach
    - Summer teaching
    - Outside teaching/adjunct
- Develop Relationships
  - With faculty...
    - Advisors (Dissertation and otherwise) and others
    - Co-author/RA
    - Outside of Yale/Conferences
  - With peers
    - Yale & Elsewhere
- Research
  - Present at conferences
  - Publish early on
    - With faculty or independently
    - Existence more important than quality/placement
  - Dissertation
    - Completed
    - Book/articles
  - Post-dissertation
    - Remain curious/read

# Common oversights:

- Failure to discuss job market with dissertation committee/advisors
  - What should you do now for the future market?
    - (e.g., an OCV scholar, but don't take IR courses)
  - Should I be on the market?
  - How should I position myself on the market?
    - Types of jobs, types of schools
- Ignoring post-doc market (maybe teaching positions too)
  - Time to develop research
  - Much less work, usually, than junior faculty job or full-time teaching position

# What is in a job market packet?

- Cover letter, summarizing research and teaching interests
- CV with educational history, short dissertation summary and committee members, areas of research and teaching interests, publications, and list of references
- Research material:
  - Statement of research interests, no more than 2 pages
  - Dissertation summary, no more than 2 pages
  - Dissertation chapter(s)
  - Stand alone research apart from dissertation, including any publications
- Statement of teaching interests, no more than 2 pages
  - Note: Certain jobs may also require a statement of teaching philosophy, sample syllabi, and teaching evaluations
- Diversity statement, if applicable