

Perspectives on Interviewing for a Faculty Position

R. Russell Rhinehart, Head
School of Chemical Engineering
Oklahoma State University

2004 ACC, WIC Session, Boston,

Oklahoma State University

- Tier x, and driven to enter the top 50
- Outstanding undergraduate program
 - Parents like us
 - Recruiters like us
 - But, alumni donate to the athletic programs
 - And, research success determines rank
- Struggling to build research program
 - This is where the national reputation is
 - This supplies missing funding (in 1997 OSU was 2/3 State supported, in 2003 1/3)
 - Faculty need to create resources

Oklahoma State University

Chemical Engineering

- Preserve outstanding undergraduate program
 - Seeking committed, patient, nurturing, energetic, effective developer of human resources (teacher)
- Build research program
 - Seeking creative, energetic, careful, scholarly, resilient, driven, national intellectual leader and income generator

Think Mission Neptune

- Mission Team = Academic Unit
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Students
- Tenure = long time in relation
- Success = long hours, dedication, service, discomfort, incredible joy
- We're seeking a **team player and team maker** with **multiple and strong skills** for **survival in a critical enterprise position**

Think Marriage

- Tenure = long time in relation
- Success = long hours, dedication, service, discomfort, incredible joy
- Offspring = students and ideas
- Family = Academic Unit
- We are seeking a permanent, beneficent, enabling, trustworthy, family member. One compatible with values, manners, style, etc.
- Ever been married? We seek those who will improve in self-understanding and human skills
- No Tenure = Divorce = great pain

Think Volunteer

- 60-hr work week for 12 months. 9-mo nominal pay at 85% of industrial scale.
- You get paid for $(40/60)(10.5/12)(85)=50\%$, 20 hours of your nominal 40-hr time.
- You volunteer for the remaining $60-20=40$ hours – full time in the real world!
- We seek those with a **passion to contribute their special gift** that will sustain their volunteerism.

Consider the Autonomy

- In charge of class – can be an excellent servant, or slack, or abusing privilege of authority
- In charge of quality of proposals and graduate student advising – can be excellent, or slack
- Tenure grants lifetime employment
- We seek those who have **demonstrated** a lifetime of **independent initiative and achievement**
- We seek those whose **passion matches the university mission**
- We **avoid** those with any hint of counter-productive **personal needs that autonomy and security might attract**

Consider Research Life

- Funding opportunities in your research area will disappear soon.
- We seek those who can tap into the **current and coming funding streams**.
- We seek those who are **flexible** to find new areas when the primary direction fades.
- We seek those who are **resilient** to bounce back from rejection after rejection.

Consider Curriculum Evolution

- Unit Operations to Transport Phenomena to Molecular Control - and
- Continuous manufacturing of basic chemicals to batch specialty chemicals - and
- Slide Rule to Mainframe to DOS PC to XP Laptop
- Loss prevention, zero to full - and
- Pneumatic control to nonlinear, multivariable, optimizing, ... process management -
- Just in my partial career
- We seek those who will **continue to study and grow (technology, topics, mathematics)**

Balance

Record of diverse accomplishments	Vision matches forecast opportunities
Aggressive, individual striving, persistence, driven to achieve and gather \$	Cooperating, flexible, volunteering, team health, generous
Volunteer passion for mission	Personal and family health
Excellent at promoting self and vision, confident	Tempers hyperbole, not braggart
Math, science, fundamentals	Engineering, practice
Educated, prepared	Still seeking knowledge in all aspects of life
Seeking knowledge	“Do not study.” properly punctuated is “Do, not study.”
Nurturing, patient, giving	Strong defender of excellence, “Show no mercy. Take no prisoners.”
Will use University resources to achieve personal goal (fame, power, stature, control, ...)	In a beneficent way that enables others

Be Yourself in the Interview

- Audience analysis aside: If deception gets you the job, you will not like the job. They will not like you. You will be unhappy; and, consequently, less productive.
- Know yourself and find the opportunity that fits you. UBU.
- Happiness, personal fulfillment, and the joy of having your gift be appreciated, are much more important than whatever else.
- Fulfillment and joy energize personal growth, lead to success in career and personal life.