A Young Scholar's Guide to Academia

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Last modified by J.K.

Preface

This book is, in essence, a user's guide to academic life, conceived for those considering taking up the career -- seniors in college, perhaps, or others thinking about going into graduate school -- as well as those who have already started out along that path, which is to say, men and women in graduate school working on a Ph.D. and those already with appointments as assistant professors at a college or a university. Some of our remarks may also be of interest to others as well: senior professors who are interested in other perspectives on the academic scene, confused and bewildered parents of junior academics, professional advisers, spouses of graduate students and junior faculty, laymen interested in learning about the mysteries of academia, and no doubt others.

The observations that you will find in this book are based entirely on our own experiences in academic life, as well as those of our friends, colleagues and students. We've written this book as an ongoing dialog among a number of academics, and we'd like to introduce ourselves.

Mr. Goldsmith, tell us a bit about your background.

I'm a professor of linguistics at the University of Chicago. I have been in this business more than twenty five years now, twenty of them as a professor, and my own views have changed -- I would like to say "grown" -- over this time in countless ways. I began with many assumptions about how academia worked, and what it was about, that I have since found to be grossly in error. Not surprisingly, I have found that my own preconceptions were not unique to me -- not by a long shot. In fact, as I have come to see, there are a host of misconceptions about academia as a

way of life that virtually all young men and women coming into the university share -- misconceptions that they must slowly outgrow, or else, in one way or another, pay the price. Linguistics is considered a part of the humanities at the university where I presently work, though at most other universities it is considered to be a part of the social sciences. My perspective thus leans towards the humanities, with a very strong inclination toward the social sciences. At the same time, I have had a number of contacts with colleagues in the natural and biological sciences, especially mathematics and computer science, and this has helped balance the general remarks that I have to offer. In my career I have spent a good deal of time at two universities, quite different from one another. One was a large, public, state university; the other, a small, private university. Both are research universities with strong graduate commitments, but there the resemblance ends. I have also had the opportunity to be a visiting professor at a number of other universities in this country and in Canada, and most recently have spent a quite a bit of time as a visiting scholar at a large software company in the Pacific Northwest.

One thing that sets the academic life in a different category, as far as I can see, is that it is the only field in which so many of the myths are perpetuated without any ready source of realistic advise to serve as a countermeasure. In the business world, there are countless "how-to" books; in the medical world, there are long and rigorous periods of internship in which medical students (or recent recipients of the MD degree) learn how the system works while being overseen by doctors with greater experience. In many parts of academia, though, such as my own, there is little in the way of equivalent. In a brief two or three year period, the research period, the typical

student learns to do research in her chosen field of study, in collaboration with a research adviser. Thereafter, she is typically thrown into an academic job, generally quite ill-equipped for the challenge. The junior academic enters the system still with the set of experiences -- the mindset -- of a student, and she is supposed to somehow play the part of the professor. Sauve qui peut!

Mr. Komlos, how about you? How did you become interested in going into academia as a career? Did you know what you were getting into when you made the decision?

Before I answer that question, let me just say that my perspective has also been molded to a considerable degree with my association with the University of Chicago as a graduate student of both economics and history. Consequently, like Mr. Goldsmith's, my perspective also bridges the social sciences and humanities, and I've spent about as much time in Academia as he. We also have in common that I, too, entered the world of research, teaching, and scholarship with few expectations that, in hindsight, I consider realistic. I thought at first that this was the case, because I am the first generation in my family to attend college, and therefore I had no inside information easily available to me on the workings of this world. Learning-by-doing is the way I gained experience. It has become increasingly obvious to me, however, that this is a rather widespread phenomenon. So there seems to be a need for a candid introductory book on the topic. College seldom prepares one sufficiently for the complexities of graduate school - as graduate school, in turn, seldom provides a balanced view of the inner cloisters of university life from the other side of the podium. This is just as true for the social dynamics of interaction within the community of scholars, as for the practical mechanics of fulfilling the subjective and objective expectations of

one's colleagues for acceptance into, and promotion within the discipline. As a consequence, many of us leave graduate school with idealized expectations, and have to piece together tediously for ourselves the puzzle of ow things work. The key for success in not apparent at first. As a rule, professional groups have unspoken rules on which topics are considered indiscreet, and this is also true for academia. Hence, survival techniques generally have to be learned through on-the-job training.

It was not only naivete, but perhaps also a sensibility shared with my cohort that came of age intellectually at the end of the 1960s that led me to make the choice of profession without much deliberation. I entered academia willy-nilly, not by some rational choice weighing the pros and cons. Money or career mattered to fewer members of this generation than it has to subsequent students. We were more preoccupied, it seems to me, with a sense of doing something meaningful. Success was often measured in doing the best we could. I think we assumed implicitly that the world could be changed for the better, that it was in our power to do so, and it was actually our moral obligation to rise to the challenge. Many of us chose to become an integral part of this process, even if in small ways, without necessarily being well informed about what that choice really entailed. I entered graduate school in 1971, and have spent the intervening years, - more than a quarter century - in academia as a participant, and as an observer from many different vantage points. I advanced, in the meanwhile, from a non-tenure track position at a tiny institution to a chaired professorship in economic history at the University of Munich, a top European university. I held tenure-track and non-tenure track jobs; I was a student

and a post-doctoral fellow; a visiting lecturer, and an associate professor. I worked in Europe as well as in America. I earned two Ph.D. along the way. Hence, I interacted with the academic world in a broad spectrum of ways. I blundered, I persevered, and ultimately soared, and in the process I learned and matured.

I must say that a great deficiency in my graduate education at the University of Chicago was the faculty's apparent disinterest in the practicalities of professionalization, and a book such as this one would have been very helpful to me when I was a student! In neither economics nor in history, the two departments I knew best, was there even an oral tradition of how to approach academic life after we acquired our diplomas. Other universities are, of course, different, and much has changed since I was a graduate student. But I do think that the more information a student has about the way academia functions the better! and we hope to be able to describe it as viewed from the ground level -- without lofty idealism, but with a good dose of realism.

John Goldsmith [J.G.]: This book is an attempt to redress the imbalance between reality and perception that now seems to prevail. We will do our best, first of all, to inform the reader about how academia is set up and how it works -- to answer the questions you always wanted to have answered, but were afraid to ask, and we also try to give some advice about how the academic world should be viewed. We'll put our cards on the table: we like the academic world very much, and have enjoyed our choices of career a great deal. We have also seen any number of friends and acquaintances suffer a great deal in this world, partly because there was an unfortunate mismatch between academia and their personal needs and gifts, and partly because they carried

around in their heads inaccurate assumptions about how the system functioned. These people were, without exception, bright enough to make it in the academic world, however you wish to interpret that; academics are, by and large, no more and no less intelligent than the successful people in medicine, in law, in business, or in engineering. These folk, as a rule, also had something to offer, and did indeed have the potential to make a contribution, which for some reason could not be realized. To succeed in a profession, two things are necessary: one's goals and abilities must match those required by the profession, and one must possess a realistic understanding of how the profession works. This book is an attempt to help future academics or junior academics come to grips with those matters.

We hope to provide the reader with an unbuttoned view of the academic life. The kind of advice that we can offer in this book is much the same as what I'd offer any student who made an appointment and came to talk to me in my office. We'll call the shots as we see them, and there's a lot of personal opinion that is bound up in the remarks that we offer.

CHAPTER 1: MAKING THE DECISION TO ENTER ACADEMIA

Is there a typical way for people to enter academia?

[J.G.]: One of the odd characteristics of academia is how many people manage somehow to slide into it without ever making a serious decision to become academics. In the present day and age, a student who does very well in college gets a good deal of encouragement to continue an education in graduate school. Why not, after all? Those in a position to advise these young students -- their professors -- have themselves all gone through graduate school, and many of them did so directly from college, too. Unless economic pressures such as the need to support parents or a spouse intercede, continuing in school -- graduate school, now -- will often appear to be the course of least resistance. It may even seem to be a way to avoid choosing a job, and perhaps thus a career. What an irony, to be sure! Having chosen to go on to graduate school, the student is quite likely to have chosen a particular career track having hoped to avoid making any decisions at all! As we'll see, it doesn't really work that way. Academia is a very specific career choice, with its pros and cons, its ups and downs, and its ins and outs.

Can you recommend academia as a career choice?

[J.G.]: As with any other career track, the person and the job have to fit, or there's bound to be friction and trouble. But if the fit is right, then becoming a professor is an excellent choice. What are some of the good points? First of all, there is a good deal of flexibility in the scheduling of your day: for most professors, there is nothing like the 9 to 5, stay in your office, stare-out-the-window life that many of our friends know. You'll have hours when you have to be in the

classroom teaching, scheduled times when you have to be in your office to meet with students, and hours meeting in committees; but the rest of the time is yours to schedule. Don't get the impression, however, that being a professor is like being a preacher, who only works one hour a week, on Sunday mornings. I haven't said anything about the number of hours spent working -- there will be many of them. Still, there is a good deal of flexibility on when you're going to spend those hours, and where. There's a lot to discuss about this in connection with having a family, but we'll hold off on that till later. [forward ref.]

The second good point about an academic job comes about seven years into it, for those fortunate enough to get tenure. A professor who gets tenure is guaranteed a job for life, subject to various conditions regarding moral turpitude and the like. It has happened that a tenured professor has been fired, but it's extremely rare. For most practical purposes, a professor with tenure has a secure job for as long as he or she wants to keep it. For life, in short. Third, there's the summer vacation. By and large, a professor is free from specific responsibilities for about three months during the summer. That's a good long time. Finally -- let's not lose sight of the fact that if the job fit right, then the professor has the chance to do something that he or she really loves: research in the chosen field, and teaching that material to other people who care about it. John Komlos [J.K.]: In other words, there is potential for lots of job satisfaction. It seems to me that academic life will be most rewarding to those who consider it as a calling rather than as a profession. By entering academia, you will have responsibility for the intellectual treasures of the ages, and by teaching and researching have a chance to increase them and to relay them to

successive generations. It can become almost like a sacred endeavor in a predominantly secular age. It can be pretty rewarding in the sense that you will see students benefit from your classes and advice, and the process of creation of knowledge is an exhilarating experience in itself. At its best, it can be extremely satisfying, and each day will bring its new challenges and rewards. This is not a monotonous world by any means.[1]

So with all these pluses, why isn't academia the perfect career for anyone who can get in?

[J.G.]: Good question! The truth of the matter is that there is a down side as well. First of all, in many academic fields, there are not a lot of jobs. When there are jobs in your chosen field, the job may not be in a geographical region in which you would like to live. If you're married and your spouse has a job in an area that he or she does not want to leave, you may have an impossibly difficult task finding an adequate job within commuting distance -- or you may face the possibility of commuting over long distance (as much as 3,000 miles, in some cases, not to mention intercontinental relationships).

Moreover, the tenure factor is a double-edged sword. Many people do not get tenure. Imagine such a situation: after investing five years or more in graduate education, and then six additional years in teaching at a university, a person may find themselves out of a job in a field where there are far more applicants than jobs. It's true that anyone in the business world can lose their job, too; but in academia, to make matters worse, one can fail to get tenure not because one has been doing a poor job, but simply because one has not been turning in a stellar enough

performance. To be sure, there are options in and out of academia. There *is* life after a denial of tenure. But not getting tenure is a heavy blow.

We'll discuss this at length later, but I should point out now that one of the most striking characteristics of academia is the tenure system, according to which an assistant professor is judged during her sixth year of service. Each university sets its own standards, though virtually all appeal to some combination of research, teaching, and service. For many universities, only research really counts, and the candidate need only do an adequate job of teaching and service. At other universities, outstanding teaching and service may well balance a mediocre record of research. But despite differences in tenure standards across universities, the professor who is awarded tenure receives, in all cases, the same quite valuable reward: a job guaranteed virtually for life, or until retirement, though there is no mandatory retirement age. A professor with tenure may decide to look for a job elsewhere, but if another university chooses to offer him or her a job, it will unquestionably be a job with tenure, even if the tenure standards of the other university are clearly higher than those of the first. A university will not attempt to hire without tenure a professor who already has tenure at his home institution. In sum, the tenure decision looms large in the career of the academic. We shall return to this issue with a whole chapter (9) devoted to it, because that decision marks your entry into the senior ranks of the profession.

Academia also requires an inordinate amount of self-motivation. Or put it more negatively, even: there is remarkably little in the way of a support system for the aspiring academic. Graduate students may be able to provide greater or lesser degrees of solidarity and support for

each other, but in my experience, junior academics -- who face equally heavy challenges and burdens -- by and large have to make it on their own, with little support and little feedback from their colleagues at any level. It can be just as lonely at the bottom as at the top.

And money? It's hard to say if this is a pro or a con. By and large, though, academics make less money than they would if they were working in business. Why not, after all? They have greater job security, much more independence, more potential for self-realization, and much longer vacation than in the business world. But the fact remains that entry level salaries in most academic areas do not reflect the years of graduate level preparation necessary to get a Ph.D.; by and large, assistant professors in the humanities or the sciences are not going to earn significantly more than they would have,, had they gone into a business job straight out of college. In 1997, The *Chronicle of Higher Education* wrote that starting salaries in the humanities for recent PhDs was in the mid $30,000s, while in the social sciences it was perhaps $5,000 higher, and in computer science, accounting, or business management, a starting salary of $50,000 or more was not unusual. (Bear in mind that figures of this sort always leave medical school faculty out; medical schools operate by quite different rules in many ways.) On the other hand, one can do quite well financially. At the upper ranges of the salary scales, there are professors whose salaries are in six figures, and full professors can typically expect to make $60,000 to $70,000. These salaries can be augmented in various ways, including lecturing, getting grants for summer salaries, and writing.

[J.K.]: Another issue to consider is that you ought not think that you can change the world by joining academia. Although you will obviously be able to make a contribution, you will be joining a bureaucratic administrative structure in which big changes take place quite infrequently. So patience is required.

You should be aware of the fact that, if you find personal realization more along the lines of social and financial advancement, you would be better off probably choosing a professional school, or going directly into the business sector. Academia is not for those who have great financial ambitions. There are no stock options, and even the most successful, such as Paul Samuelson who sold 300 - 400,000 copies of his textbook annually for many years, do not come close to earning as much as the Lee Iacoccas. Samuelson received the Nobel Prize, to be sure, but the CEOs of the major corporations receive the equivalent and more every year.

[J.G.]: One more point about the lifestyle of the academic. Academics tend to let their profession take over much of their private and personal lives, for work and hobby often merge. Weekends and evenings are very often taken over by work – reading journals and books and student papers, going to conferences, drafting papers, correcting page proofs. Whether this is good or bad depends on your own take on life – and that of your spouse, of course, and of the rest of your family.

What is the profile of a typical graduate student?

[J.K.]: Typically a graduate student should want to make a contribution to the intellectual life of the community. He or she should be well above average intelligence, self-disciplined, enjoy the

anticipated freedom and autonomy of academic life, and not be particularly interested in pecuniary rewards. Patience is also an important quality to have, as is the willingness to persevere in solitude for uncertain rewards well into the future. If you have a fair dose of these attributes you should continue to read on.

CHAPTER 2: ENTERING GRADUATE SCHOOL

What is graduate school all about?

[J.G.]: I would say that the most important thing to bear in mind is that, in general, the purposes of graduate school and of undergraduate studies could hardly be more different. A college education -- in the United States, at least -- is aimed at providing a general education, a liberal education, even if the choice of a major subject does allow some degree of specialization. In contrast, graduate education is aimed at creating a professional. When I use the term professional, of course, I am not using it in the most familiar way. The term is generally used to refer to disciplines such as law, medicine, or business school. These provide specific training along what are generally well-established lines, bringing the student to the point where she may, in most of the cases, pass a standardized examination, such as the bar exam or the medical boards. The professional schools do not require students to write a dissertation, or engage in individual research efforts --those hallmarks of graduate education in a research university.

Yet, it is still true that graduate education is aimed at forming a particular type of professional: a professional researcher. There are some important things to say about this. The most significant of all is that this kind of intellectual formation has relatively little to do with passing on specific information. Oh, it is true that all educators make similar claims: they are not teaching specific things, but rather how to learn; still, this is nowhere as clear as in graduate school. Alas, the graduate research environment need not be the training ground for epoch-making geniuses either. There

are too few of them to justify (or help shape, for that matter) the enormous institutions that we are talking about. No, graduate education is about training graduate students to become researchers (and to some extent, teachers) in a research environment, within a specific intellectual tradition. Psychologists create new psychologists; linguists create new linguists; musicologists create new musicologists.

[J.K.]: Undergraduate education concentrates, in the main, on learning a body of knowledge, whereas graduate school is essentially about exploring the frontiers of knowledge in a particular field. Hence, the latter is an extension of the former, but differs from it greatly. Being on the frontiers of scholarship, like its geographic counterpart in early-American history – is not always a comfortable experience. There are lots of uncertainties which fork in the road one should take.

Can you offer any advice for the person who is seriously thinking about entering graduate school?

[J.K.]: Yes, indeed. A very good rule is this: you should be excited about the field you choose. This is most important! By the time you contemplate entering graduate school you should have your goals well sorted out. The American undergraduate education allows, even encourages, a great deal of searching by trial and error. Flexibility is its strength, but at the same time, it places an immense amount of responsibility on the students to build a program that makes sense in terms of their intellectual development. By the end of your undergraduate education you should have a good sense of what you want out of life. Is academia attractive

to you? If you are still unsure, you must talk to people whom you respect and whose judgement you trust as much as, or more than, your own.

Here's something else to bear in mind: genuine introspection helps a great deal. However, as long as you feel uncertain, you should delay making a commitment. Premature decisions often mean excessive risk taking, and the chances are high that you will not be making optimal use of your time or talents. The point is that graduate school is much too grueling an experience for you to go through, if your interest in the subject is merely peripheral.[2] Half-hearted commitments won't work out very well. You have to find the field you are entering stimulating in order to come out of the process un scarred. Otherwise, the chances are good that you will be disappointed.

If you have not done well academically until now it would be foolhardy to think seriously about continuing in graduate school. But if you are making plans to enter a graduate program, you should prepare yourself well in advance in the basic prerequisites of the specialization you have chosen. If you want to be an economist, for example, make sure that you have the needed mathematical background. Obviously, the sooner you decide, the sooner you can start working on the subjects that will be important to you in graduate school.
[J.G.]: I'd like to second that. Oddly enough, students who are considering entering an academic profession often have little idea of what they're getting into. In most cases, they are coming straight out of college, where they were able to take college-level courses in some areas, and do some additional reading in other areas. They likely as not had no real contact

with faculty researchers, and likely as not did not attend a university with any significant number of researchers. In a few cases, they may even choose a graduate specialization entirely on the basis of reading, never having taken a single course in that area. This is true, for example, in my area, linguistics, where students often come from language or psychology backgrounds.

And yet, as John said, a most important precondition for a graduate education to work out well is that the student must love the discipline. It is surprising how often this condition is not met! Students may (so to speak) wander into graduate school in a specific discipline, take a year or two of courses, or more, and be not at all sure of the correctness of their choice. Still, inertia, the time and money invested, and the fear of losing face, all push the students on, often propelling them to the point of writing a dissertation, or even beyond.

Yet, as the student moves further along in the education process, she will find that there is less and less personal support, and that the hurdles rise higher and higher, with longer periods between moments of reward and relaxation. (This trend continues, of course, when the student moves into faculty status.) Without a strong emotional attachment to the field -- simply feeling fascinated by what one is doing -- this difficult task becomes no more than a long-term commitment to masochism. Loving the field means that the hard work is its own reward.

[J.K.]: Moreover, I suggest that the student seek advice, again and again. As with any other important decision, you should continually question and rethink this one as well. After all, it

will have an enormous and generally irreversible impact on the rest of your life. By making this choice you have in many respects chosen your lifestyle. If you're entering graduate school, you are about to invest several years of intense effort and often at a considerable financial burden. So it behooves you to take the decision very very seriously. New information may become available that might be put into the decision-making equation. Did you make the right choice, after all? Are you as prepared for graduate school as you had thought you were? Do you still find the field as exciting as before? Do you actually have the skills, intuition, and talent you thought you had? If you can identify some marked deficiencies, how long would it take for you to overcome them? For example, how long will it take you to learn another language? Do you write well? If you come out of an urban secondary educational system, followed by a large state university, it is quite possible that you have still not perfected the art of written communication, even in your native language. You can teach yourself, of course, but it is best done before you enter graduate school. Obviously, the sooner you sort out these issues the better.

You might also consider if your motivations are sound. What are the rewards in the field you are considering? What is the ratio of pecuniary to non-pecuniary rewards you can expect? Is that mix about right for you? Try to avoid conflicting goals such as being at the upper end of the academic salary range, and at the same time pursuing graduate education in the humanities. Original research requires much self-reliance, perseverance, a high I.Q., as well as creativity. Do you have enough of these qualities to succeed?

Self-questioning is, of course, an important quality to nurture in yourself, but it certainly requires practice to do it effectively. One cannot develop such critical skills overnight. Do you know yourself well enough? Are you practicing self-deception without even knowing it? Are you able to judge yourself without making excuses? Do you rationalize your mistakes, so you cannot learn from them? You can improve your forecasts about yourself by consciously updating your information set periodically. How have you erred in the past, and what can you learn from these errors about your true abilities and about your forecasts? Are the goals you are about to set for yourself reasonable in light of your past performance? Are you getting closer to formulating an optimal strategy for solving problems?

If, for example, you have a tendency to start projects without finishing them, it is much better to acknowledge this attribute than to make excuses about why this is the case. In short, do not externalize blame. How can you use that information to predict your ability to succeed in a Ph.D. program? Disregarding that trait in yourself would be a considerable mistake, and you may well pay a price for it later on. First, take that information into account, and then work on improving your predictive ability by searching for answers why your actions fall into a particular pattern, and just how these mistakes are changeable. Once you are able to finish some projects ahead of schedule, you can be more certain that, with some probability, you can actually complete a particular task you set for yourself in the allotted time. In other words, you should not be making systematic errors about your abilities or about your

performance.[3] If your mistakes are systematic, that means that there is some information available to you that your are disregarding.

I'll make this point yet another way, because I think it is crucial for success. I believe that making mistakes is OK, in general. It simply cannot be avoided: *erratum humanum est,* and if you are not making enough mistakes, it might well mean that you are not challenging yourself sufficiently to find out where your limits are. The real problems arise if you do not learn from mistakes already committed, and this can happen either because you blame others, or else because you fail to see clearly important patterns in your own behavior. If you continue along that path, you can systematically get farther and farther away from where you want to be. So make an effort to recognize mistakes, explore the systematic reasons for them, including flaws in your own thinking, and make a concerted conscious effort to avoid the same mistakes in the future. I know that it is easier said than done, but you will find that practice does help.

And another thing: do not forget that your personal life should be in congruity with your current aspirations. If you are married, it is imperative that your spouse fully support your going to graduate school. Otherwise you will have too many frictions with which to cope, in addition to the tribulations encountered in your daily work. Your career choice will also put requirements on your spouse, inasmuch as your obligations will limit your social life, including your ability to maintain contact with relatives, clubs, organizations, or friends to the extent you did before. You should be prepared for these changes in your life. In addition, you

will probably feel a certain amount of financial insecurity, unless you are independently wealthy, or are married to an employed spouse. Because the financial constraints could affect your peace of mind, and therefore your performance in school, I advise graduate students to earn some money during summers. In some fields, such as law, this comes automatically, since internships are common, but in other fields it is less easy to do so. I particularly recommend non-traditional kinds of employment. Open a business preparing tax-returns, for example, if you have the aptitude for it. Buy a house and renovate it. You are smarter than average; so use some of your talents to make a little profit. If you can do so, you will not be completely at the mercy of the academic job market.

[J.G.]: I know we're going to come back to this in Chapter xx, but I think people's experience varies widely on this score. Surely academics are about as social and hospitable as people in other walks of life! There are forces at work that encourage people who work in, say, linguistics to socialize with other linguists, and I think that these forces are much stronger for some reason early on in a person's career than they are subsequently.

How does a person choose a graduate school?

[J.K.]: Of course, most people will apply to several universities, and it is important to do so in order to test the market. You may have certain notions about your qualifications, but how do they look on paper? How do they compare to others? How do others perceive them? There is no reason to assume that you will *not* be accepted into a particular program simply because you do not have excellent grades in the field. You might have other qualities that can

compensate any deficiencies in your grade point average. Good GRE scores, for example, do help. Different departments weigh these various components of your record differently. In addition, departments vary on their standards for admission. Some are strict, and feel that by admission, it makes an implicit commitment to the student that she has a fair chance of completing the program. Other equally good programs might take a more relaxed, laissez-faire attitude in its admission policy, thinking that students have inside information on their abilities, and should be given a chance to prove themselves, even if their record up to then was not impeccable. Students, they believe, will be weeded out in due course anyhow, by various filters the department has instituted, if they are not really qualified to do graduate work. These idiosyncratic philosophies will not be spelled out in black and white in the departmental manuals. So you should cast your application net widely. In addition to some safe bets, you should also try some unlikely possibilities. More choices ought to be preferred to less.

[J.G.]: In smaller departments, it is usual for virtually all of the faculty to read most of the application dossiers, and read them quite carefully. Speaking personally, I am completely sold on a candidate who writes a perceptive personal statement that shows thoughtfulness and real interest in the field. I rarely see more than one or two of those in an entire year's harvest of applications. I suspect that applicants think their dossiers are going to some distant admissions office, but that's just not true. It's your future teachers who are deciding if they'd

like you to come. Let me repeat that: real intelligence can be read in a personal essay, and this can easily outweigh the matter of grades or exam scores.

[J.K] Yes, much can be read between the lines. This is also the chance to reveal some of your significant attributes which may otherwise not be obvious from your application, or to explain some of your apparent deficiencies which may no longer be relevant. You need to be credible, of course. Once offers arrive, but before you make up your mind, do visit the campuses, because you can find out much more in face-to-face conversations about the atmosphere of the department, than you can in correspondence. Be sure you talk to currently enrolled students. Ask them how much does the faculty care about the graduate program? How well is the program organized? Talk to the graduate advisor. Ask her what is the ratio of graduating to entering students?[4] If you glance at this annual you will note that even the best history departments do not graduate more than half of the students who enter their program.[5] Another factor to consider is the success of the graduate students to obtain employment in their field after earning the doctorate. Such information can be immensely useful in making up your mind. If you are unable to find it, ask the department's graduate secretary for help. You should not accept an offer blind.

It is also useful to ascertain if the department is well represented in the various sub-specialties in the field. If you plan to study the economics of the third world, for example, you need to make sure that the department has sufficient depth in that field to support such a specialty. Are the faculty members well known in their field? Are they

actively engaged in research? You should be able to form a preliminary opinion by asking for publications of the professors in your field of potential interest. If you receive a paper published recently, you can infer that the person is still actively engaged in research and has been keeping up with recent developments in the field, not just living off past achievements. Another crucial consideration is the potential mentor's track record with graduate students. If she is frequently out of the country she might be difficult to work with. Is she likely to retire soon? If so, you could be left hanging. Has she been producing graduate students lately? If she has not, that is an indication that perhaps she has not the inclination to do so, might be difficult to get along with, or that she does not have the ideas to attract young entrants into the field. In any case, you should take such information seriously. Not every professor is committed to working with students. They will give you signals to stay away, though they will usually not tell you so outright.

In any event, it is extremely important that you find the right program for your aspirations, because this decision will have a significant impact on the rest of your life, including your ability to find employment. You should realize that your abilities alone will generally not suffice to be successful either in the academic world or in any other profession. We shall come back to this theme again, but I should mention now that the academic culture in America is influenced by the immense size of the market. In such a large market it is costlier to acquire and process inside information than in smaller ones (such as Belgium, for instance) where people know one another well for an extended period of time, often since

high school. In large markets people might use symbols and images or rule-of-thumb devices as substitutes for genuine information to arrive at a decision. Hence, a department's reputation is important, and affiliation with a top department, will pay dividends. You need to know, however, that even the best departments will not cover all aspects of a discipline, and will not cover equally well those parts they do cover. You need to keep these nuances in mind before making a decision.

Can the Internet be used to gain information?

The WorldWideWeb – the HTML part of the global Internet – has changed our lives in the last few years, and information is available and at your fingertips in a way that would have been inconceivable not long ago. Every college and university has enormous amounts of information available on itself and on application procedures on their home pages. They are easy to find with any search engine using the name of the institution you are considering as the keyword. An academic department can make an enormous amount of information available to students who are thinking of applying. There will be hard and cold facts about the program, and there will be softer, more personal information that can be gleaned from a department's web page, and many – perhaps most -- active academics now maintain some sort of web page of their own, which provide lists of recent publications and research interests, and often such useful things as recent course syllabi and even lecture slides. A few hours spent researching departments on the Web is the most valuable investment a person could make.

Should financial considerations play an important role in choosing a department?

[J.K.]: No, by and large for once money hardly matters. Money should be much less important in choosing a department than the other factors we have mentioned, although your aspiration and innate talent do play a role, on how much weight to put on finances. However, it should be clear, that a scholarship from an average or below-average university will not help you a lot in the long run, if your chances of employment, and your lifetime earnings will be adversely affected by it? Other things equal, it is hardly worth it.

[JG] I agree only up to a point. I don't think it is prudent for a graduate student to take on really serious debt, and certainly not the kind of debt that can grow from paying large tuition bills for several years. Full tuition at a private university is over $20,000 now, and borrowing to pay several years of tuition at that rate would lead a student to a level of debt that would be difficult to imagine paying off in a reasonable period. I can't see recommending that a student borrow more than $20,000 – maximum – for tuition over a graduate career, and a maximum of about that for living on. That would come to a total of $40,000 – about a car and a half, by today's standards. That's my view.

[J.K.]: Often, some financial aid is tied to teaching assistantships. This is actually a less lucrative option than it appears at the beginning of graduate school, because such responsibility puts additional burdens on an already busy schedule. It is quite another thing if you would be allowed teach during summers, when the burdens are less, and teaching might become a welcome diversion from studies and research. In any event, good programs limit

teaching by graduate students, because they are usually not yet ready to do a good job. However, teaching experience during your third or fourth year will become an important asset when you start looking for your first job, though such experience is probably more important at teaching institutions than at research universities. Hence, if you are considering the trade-off between going to an expensive program with an excellent reputation with a small financial aid package, or to a less expensive second tier institution with a teaching assistantship, the extra money is probably well worth it. To be sure, one needs to weigh the choices in the context of the totality of one's abilities, aspirations, and financial circumstances.

[J.G.]: Of course, expectations of future employers will vary from field to field. In the humanities, it is a serious deficiency for an applicant not to have experience teaching.

[J.K.]: An additional caveat in this regard needs to be mentioned. If you would like to teach at a small liberal arts college with a local (as opposed to a national) reputation, you should be aware of the fact that such an institution might not be very open to hire from the top departments in the country. They may assume that if you invested heavily into acquiring a degree from Columbia, say, you would probably not feel particularly comfortable teaching at a small school in Montana. Thus, a degree from a top university will open some doors for you, but you might be surprised to hear that, in fact, it will shut others. Hence, if you aspire to the middle range of the academic spectrum, then, indeed, you might not necessarily want to acquire an expensive degree.

[J.G.]: On the other hand, there are many small colleges where faculty are expected to do (and publish) real research – only to do it at a considerably slower rate.

[J.K.]: It is not sufficient that the program you ultimately choose be a good one: it is extremely important, in addition, that there be a good match between you and the program. After all, if you find out subsequently that you made a mistake, transferring into another graduate program is usually time consuming and has a stigma attached to it, unless you have a good explanation at the ready, such as: "I went to work with Professor so-and-so, but, in the meanwhile, she went to work in the private sector."

How do you pick the right school?

[J.K.]: Once you've decided to pursue a career requiring a graduate degree, the next step is to find the right program. The American system of education is highly stratified. There are a couple of dozen top universities that are surely among the best in the world, but then the quality gradient becomes increasingly steeper. You ought to know that you are joining a department as much as (or more than) a university. Even schools which do not enjoy a reputation for excellence overall might have outstanding programs in certain fields. The University of Pittsburgh, for example, has one of the best philosophy departments in the country -- a fact well known to philosophers. Because tuition rates are less at Pittsburgh than at the elite schools, you would get a bargain if you studied philosophy there. Hence it is worth your while to ferret out this kind of information. You need to keep in mind that the

school you attend will be considered as being indicative of your abilities. Thus, if you are an average student capable of hard work you might gain by going to a top-ranked school.

Do not forget, that judging your potential as a professional is time consuming and a risky task for anyone charged with assessing your competence as a future teacher and researcher. As a consequence, it does make some sense for interviewers to take your academic affiliation into consideration in arriving at a decision. It is a sign of your aspirations, your willingness to compete, and of your personal connections, for the relationships you forge in graduate school are likely to stay with you for the rest of your life. It can also be interpreted as indicative of what you think of yourself. If you applied to Yale, you must have thought you were bright enough to mingle with the best. These are the kinds of information revealed by your affiliation. The fact that you successfully completed the program will be seen as a sign that you had a realistic assessment of your own abilities.[6] In addition, formal education is more than acquiring knowledge. It also involves the basis of the formation of a network of supporters who might well stay with you for the rest of your life, and the most important foundations of this network will be laid during your graduate years. Hence, it is to your advantage to go to a school whose faculty is well known around the country. Letters of recommendation, after all, are taken much more seriously from people with an established reputation. You may well consider it unfair that so much depends on the reputation of the graduate program, and decisions are not based entirely on your personal attributes. I know I did. However, I failed to consider that many qualities that are crucial for

one's future performance are not at all so easily ascertainable by a committee that meets you for a short period of time. That is why it is practically unavoidable for them to use external information as a proxy measure for those hidden qualities.

[J.G.]: We're going to talk about mentoring later on, but I want to mention some advice I was given when I was in college. One of my teachers -- a professor in the economics department, in fact -- was going to be on leave in my senior year, and he asked to speak to me just before he left, at the end of my junior year. He asked me what I was planning to do after college, and I had to admit that my view was pretty hazy at that point. He gave the following advice: if I do decide to go on to graduate school, I should think very seriously about precisely with *whom* I was going to study. In the end, I took that advice very seriously, and made a list of the people who I know were alive and kicking in the academe at that point. In the end, so seriously did I take that advice that I applied to only one graduate school, and I was quite content with the thought that I would get a job (probably as a computer programmer) if I wasn't accepted into that graduate program. As it turned out, I was accepted.

[J.K.]: That's an interesting story, and it worked in your case, John, but I'm not at all sure I would offer that advice to my students. In my experience, there is most frequently a trade-off between nurturing and academic excellence. The top graduate schools have many professors on their faculty who are among the top scholars in their field. They are well versed in intellectual dueling, and can easily make a novice feel inadequate, even if unintentionally. Their degree is not in pedagogy, and many have long forgotten what it was like to be a

graduate student. It would be a mistake to interpret their lack of respect for you as even vaguely implying that you are not cut out for academia. I would like to stress that if you need emotional or spiritual support from your professors, you had better go to a small program, rather than one of the top dozen schools in the country, because you could feel lost in a large and impersonal program.

[J.G.]: This must depend on the discipline, because in my area -- linguistics -- most of the very nurturing departments are consistently ranked among the very best in national studies.

[J.K.]: It is good you brought up departmental rankings, because this is important information for potential applicants, and the cost of obtaining it is minimal. Most disciplines have a system of grading departments. Economists publish such ratings regularly, and this would be one piece of information worth considering. Note that this rating is usually in terms of research performance or in terms of esteem among colleagues, and as far as I know, not according to teaching performance, or for nurturing. That kind of information is available as a rule only on an informal basis. However, do not be led into thinking that just because you are going into a top rated program your career is assured. In some fields even top departments graduate more students than they can reasonably find jobs for. You might obtain valuable credentials that could pay off in the future if you have the patience to wait until an opportunity arises, but it might not be immediately.

It would be worth your while to do a bit of market research. How is the market for graduates in your field look at the moment? How has it changed during the last few years?

Valuable information on graduate programs is readily available from professional newsletters, or from the Chronicle of Higher Education; all you have to do is to look for it persistently. Look at the internet, ask the graduate secretary, read handbooks, and talk to the graduate advisor until you have reliable evidence on the program. Most important for you to know is the share of entering students who complete the program, and what kinds of positions they have received within the last few years. Such considerations could help you make an informed guess of what your prospects are likely to be in five or so years. You should absolutely not make up your mind without being confident about your future chances.

Another important factor to consider, besides the quality of the department, is its intellectual orientation. Within any discipline there are competing schools of thought. In economics, for instance, there are departments which are more concerned with theoretical issues, others with quantitative or institutional ones. Some focus on Keynesian economics, while others refuse to take its concepts seriously. The economics department at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst has one of the largest contingents of radical economists in the country, for example. If you prefer a more traditional line of analysis, this would not be the right institution for you. As a consequence, you need to research this issue in order to be sufficiently well informed about the various intellectual movements in the field before you can make the right choices for you. The time spent on these preliminaries is well worth the effort, inasmuch you are more likely to be successful in a program if your worldview fits well into that of the department.

How much should a student specialize during graduate school?

[J.K.]: You should diversify in your education: do not put all your eggs into one basket. No one can predict the future with any certitude. Whenever a venture is risky, it pays to diversify to some extent, though the degree to which one should do so is by no means easy to ascertain. Thus, it is often worthwhile to develop an interest, or even expertise, in more than one niche of your discipline, providing the "price" is reasonable. Suppose you are in labor economics, you might be able to supplement your program with some additional work in demography. You would immediately differentiate yourself from other labor economists and possibly make yourself more attractive to some departments than you would be otherwise. It also might make you eligible for grants, fellowships, and post-doctoral programs for which you would not have qualified otherwise. Of course, such diversification may not pay off, but the chances are that it will help you to find a comfortable niche in the profession. I know for a fact that it did for me.

[JG] I agree that diversification is necessary. The student may also not find this being emphasized explicitly by anyone during their graduate experience, I might add. I can mention some examples. There are a number of fields (including linguistics) where knowledge of computer programming is not a must, but is highly desirable. By and large, the generation of people currently teaching came of age in an earlier era, and they may be – indeed, they *are* less sensitive to these shifting priorities, and they will frequently not be the ones urging students to strengthen their skills in the computational area. The same point holds *mutatis*

mutandis in other areas, where it might be a matter of truly mastering an additional foreign language, of learning statistics, or something else.

What happens to life -- what most people would think of as life, in any event -- while you're in graduate school?

[J.K.]: I think that graduate school is generally a trying period in one's life even under the best of circumstances. One is usually financially insecure in a materialistic world, and is often surrounded by relatives and acquaintances who are already earning a “real” income. In addition, one's social position is in limbo with plenty of uncertainty about the future. The typical graduate student is far away from home and family, and if already married, particularly with children, the complexities and conflicts can easily multiply. Moreover, this time in one’s development is often intellectually very unsettling. The search for intellectual moorings intensifies, and while that can be, and at times certainly will be, a scintillating experience, it is accompanied by sufficient soul-searching to be emotionally demanding. In addition, you will no longer be merely assimilate knowledge; instead, you will be traveling in uncharted territory. Research, - knowledge creation-, is full of disappointments and failures associated with the creative process. Hence, these years will not be emotionally comfortable, well balanced, or easy going ones. In order to come through such a stressful experience unscathed, it is extremely important that one possess an inner certitude that you have made the right choices, that you are pursuing your true calling. It must be practically the only thing you want to do in life, because for a while at least, it will become almost synonymous with

your life. As a consequence, it will also increase the pressure on personal relationships, and generating a feedback effect on your academic performance. In short, many sacrifices will need to be made for a successful entry into the profession.

This is making a graduate school career sound rather daunting!

That's true. Therefore, it is absolutely essential for you to take your time in reading a decision.

[**J.G.]:** But I'd like to break in and say that there are other experiences, too. I remember the years of my graduate career as being in some ways quite magical. It is true, as John has said, that it's important to really love the discipline that one is in. But when that's true, one thing that happens during one's graduate career is that what once was distant and mysterious becomes quite tangible, and one gets to meet and see close up the people whose work is forming and shaping the discipline. Intellectually this may be the most intense period of one's life.

I was in graduate school in Cambridge, Mass., in the early 1970s – I was at MIT then – and it was almost unheard of for students to live by themselves; students generally lived three to an apartment, and this was as much an economic necessity as anything else, though it also contributed to everybody's social life – I am tempted to say, their *real* life. Many people roomed with their classmates, while others shared apartments or houses with other young people who did many different things. I myself did both, at various times. I don't know how

things are in Cambridge these days, but my impression has been for quite a while that living three or four to an apartment is much less common now.

John, I share your recollections about much of graduate school days: the scintillating experience, the soul-searching, and the frequent sense of being off-balance and frustrated. But I don't have a recollection of *sacrifice*. Now, it's true that I didn't have a family at the time, and that changes the circumstances quite considerably. In any event, we'll come back to this matter later on.

[J.K.]: In any event, it must be clear that the choice of a graduate program is much too important to hurry. It might be helpful to read about the life of some of the prominent members of the profession you are considering.[7] If you can afford it, I'd suggest that you take a year off to travel. Or take a job outside academia and see what that is like. Such experiences will help you immensely to mature, and that will enable you to make more realistic decisions later on - not ones based on an idealized view of the outside world. The money you'll save can provide you a nest egg for you to fall back on. You are young; it is worthwhile to take your time in making a decision, that will have an impact on the rest of your life. It is better to be sure about your decision a year from now than to take excessive risks now. In other words, making an informed choice is not a free lunch: you have to work for it, but making a commitment only after diligent investigation of likely alternatives will pay dividends down the line.

Finally, with all its challenges notwithstanding, graduate school will most certainly also be a period of intellectual growth. So you should try to get yourself in that frame of mind prior to beginning the program. Cultivate friendships, develop your judgment, open yourself to new ideas, experiment with new directions, get to know your department, and above all, give yourself a chance to develop further. If you can allow yourself to do all that, you will benefit enormously. And do not forget that you are privileged to be able to participate in the best educational system in the world. To interact with the best collection of scholars should become an uplifting experience. So make the best of it!

CHAPTER 3: THE MENTOR

What is the importance of the mentor in graduate school.

[J.G.]: No doubt about it: the single most important aspect of graduate education grows out of the relationship formed with a single professor: the mentor. Oddly, the term has no official status in academia. The mentor is in most cases the "research adviser", or "chairman of the dissertation research committee". But more than anything else, the mentor is the person who the graduate student forms herself after, - in a profound sense.

I've already suggested that although the undergraduate education is, roughly speaking, a matter of learning, one's graduate education is a matter of restructuring and rebuilding oneself, a process that can only be accomplished on the model of a successful teacher. This may ring some bells in your mind: it sounds in some respects like the relationship between a parent and a child, or like the relationship between a patient and a psychoanalyst, or even, in still other respects, like the relationship between an aspirant and a guru. I'm sure this is no accident, nor is it a matter of a poetic way of speaking: all these relationships involve profound attempts to learn in a way that touches one's soul. Becoming a graduate student should mean becoming some mentor's student, and simultaneously a student of a particular discipline.

More importantly, it means submitting oneself to the teacher and to the discipline, to make it part of oneself. This may sound mystical, and to some degree it is, though most people don't stop and think about it along the way. But it is worth remarking on, if only

because it represents one of the most difficult stumbling blocks for would-be graduate students. The best students coming into graduate school are not only intelligent -- they are also independent-minded, and that independence has been encouraged for years, inside school and out. Of these, the very best will very likely think that they know what they want out of school. Many of them may think (often rightly) that they are smarter, or at least quicker, than any of their teachers in college.

When they come to the point of having to submit themselves in the way I have suggested to both a specific discipline and a particular mentor, many students find themselves unable to do so. As I have said, the issue is rarely, if ever, posed overtly in the way I have just suggested. It may come out as a dissatisfaction on the student's part, or an inability to work comfortably with any of the faculty members in the department. But graduate education requires, in a sense oddly akin to that of the student seeking oriental enlightenment, a submission of the ego to that of the mentor, for a certain prescribed and circumscribed period. This student-mentor relationship is fundamental to becoming a successful researcher (perhaps much as it is important to have had a good parent to be a good parent).

Central to the relationship is your common and joint research. In general, what is shared is the research interests of the professor; in a more unusual circumstance, the student may bring a special research interest and involve the professor in it, though even then it will be the mentor's overall perspective that governs the research as it develops. The student gets to see, for the first time, what it means for knowledge to arise out of confusion and ignorance. That,

after all, is the meaning of research; it is the patient struggle to achieve comprehension where there was none before. The student (we may assume), up till then, had only learned things in an individual way: reading books, trying to understand what other people had already figured out themselves and expressed in written form. The mentor shows, by doing, how one reaches beyond what is known to come up with an idea, formulate it, and test it. As this process becomes clearer to the aspiring graduate student, she becomes capable of undertaking that effort herself, and the result, after four or five years, is a research project that forms the body of the doctoral dissertation. Again, this may sound somehow mystical or miraculous, but only because it is -- and it is only as miraculous as so many other episodes in our lives. It is certainly no more miraculous than a baby learning a language!

[J.K.]: Creating new ideas has a miraculous aspect to it. Always. If I am not mistaken, one of the concepts cognitive scientists invented to refer to it is, “representational redescription”. It is truly a wonderful but challenging experience, and there is not a good way to teach it in a classroom setting. Rather, a sort of apprenticeship with a caring mentor should make it easier for you: learning-by doing, -by showing, and –by observing. And this is the reason why it is so important that you find a mentor who is motivated to help you.

How should the graduate student think about finding the right mentor once she is in graduate school?

[J.G.]: It seems to me, that it is ultimately the graduate student’s responsibility to find someone to work with. Yes: after taking courses with many professors in your department,

the time will come, perhaps in the second or third year of graduate studies, to try to establish an individual, working relationship with one of the professors. How should you choose which one? In some cases, there may be a specific professor for whom you came to that department to study, probably because she was an expert in the particular area you chose. If all other signs are positive, then your current problem is easy. You may change your mind, however -- there may be other professors with whom you would rather work. You must consider not only how your research style and personality mesh with that of the mentor-to-be, but also how she has dealt with her other graduate students: is she capable, in the best of cases at least, of providing the kind of supportive and yet demanding relationship necessary during this period of two to four years of joint research? That pretty much sums it up, and obviously that's a very hard question to answer – but it's the one that the student must try to come to grips with.

[J.K.]: From the very beginning of your arrival on campus you should keep in mind that you will ultimately need to find a dissertation adviser. You must try to ascertain what kind of reputation professors have about working with graduate students. You should talk to as many faculty members in the department as possible during their office hours, and see how compatible their ideas and interests are to your way of thinking about problems. See if the professor seems to respond to you in a positive way. If she is difficult to reach and to talk to, if she is fidgety in your presence, if she keeps on looking at her watch while you talk to her, if she seems disinterested in the issues you raise, then you probably do not have a good

candidate for the position you seek to fill. If however, she is curious about your intellectual development, if she is helpful in solving some problems you present to her, if she seems to be interested in working with you, in other words, if she appears to be nurturing, then you might, indeed, have just run into the right mentor. Needless to say, it is also important that she work in an area of the discipline that is of interest to you, that she has already made some significant contributions to the field, and that she have a character you respect. Of course, in order for the relationship to work, the commitment must be mutual. After all, you will definitely need her support and guidance well beyond graduate school.

The significance of the mentor is accentuated by the fact that the frontiers of knowledge are not easily mastered without a detailed map.[8] Navigation on the frontier is an arduous task for the uninitiated, because it is not well defined except in the mind of a handful of scholars, and danger lurks in unexpected places. Of course, the frontier is fuzzy, with few people working in any part of it. Much of the most recent research in a particular niche of the discipline is still unpublished, given the substantial lag between results and their publication. Hence, unless someone is able and willing to point out to you meticulously the direction and significance of recent research, you might be taking your research in a completely wrong direction. Moreover, there are hidden connections between various results that have not yet been written about, but is already known to a select few in the profession. Only someone who has been following the field carefully for some time can inform you about these relationships, saving you time and effort and perhaps frustration or at least months of

fumbling around. You might even be duplicating the research of others, without knowing about it. Hence, there is considerable need for the guidance of a mentor, and only she can provide it adequately. Thus, the choice of the mentor is as important as the initial decision to enter a particular graduate program.

[J.G.]: This business of forming graduate students is an intense process for both the student and the teacher. This intensity has several side effects. First of all, it means that the teacher cannot be involved in being an adequate mentor to twenty-five different students at the same time. There is a quite small upper limit to the number of students whose research the professor can supervise at any given time -- perhaps a half-dozen or so, probably less. When we talk about the teaching responsibilities of the professor at the research institute, we must bear in mind that she is (in the way of things) engaged in mentoring several graduate students at any given time, a process that may be at times nearly as time-consuming as raising a child.

We may put it another way. It is commonplace to divide professors' duties into teaching, research, and service. But from the above description of the development of the student/mentor relationship, we can see that it involves in equal parts research and teaching. Helping a student become an active researcher is simultaneously a matter of teaching *and* research; the research is a cooperative process, conducted jointly with the student *qua* apprentice. So when we consider how much work is expected of a professor at a research university, or how much is accomplished, on the teaching side of the equation we must be sure to include the number of students with whom the professor is actively involved in

research. For many -- perhaps for most -- this relationship can bring the greatest joy of the job; it is also a heavy demand and commitment on the part of the professor. As a consequence, quite a few professors, particularly below the first tier of departments, are often reluctant to work extensively with graduate students.

A side comment on a related matter involving distracted or unresponsive professors: one of the most important activities of the graduate student is writing papers, all through the graduate career. These evolve over a period of several years into dissertation chapters. It is a universal experience of students that some professors are very slack (the technical word, I suppose, is *irresponsible*) about returning papers with comments in a timely fashion. How's a student to deal with cases like that? For one thing, recognize that putting such a professor on your dissertation committee (worse yet, choosing one as your dissertation adviser) is a self-destructive move, all other things being equal. In our department, we came up with an explicit guideline for how long it should take a professor to return a paper (or chapter, or disssertation): take the number of pages, divide by 100, round up, and add 1. That's the number of weeks. So any paper under a 100 pages should be returned in 2 weeks; a 305 page dissertation may take 5 weeks. (As I write these words, I see that that formula may seem rather generous for the professor, but bear in mind that she is likely to be multi-tasking, having *several* such lengthy assignments at any one time, above and beyond his teaching and research.).

[J.K.]: One should not lose sight of the fact that the mentor will not be able to hold your hands constantly. The nurturing relationship should not become one of dependence. In any case, in many disciplines after the start of your dissertation research, you might have to fall back on your own strengths at least for part of the process. Of course, consultations with your mentor will still remain extremely valuable, but not always practical, if you are in the field, or if she is on sabbatical.[9] This is different in the laboratory sciences where frequent contact and consultation develops automatically, but you should be aware of the fact that this may not inevitably be the case. You should realize that the more famous scholars have many students working on dissertations at any one time. While some advisors are there when you need them, others will not make themselves available to you for longer than a couple of hours per month. Hence, you should be careful to choose a mentor who meets your personal needs. If you do not think you can handle much adversity on your own, you would be better off choosing a less well-known scholar as your dissertation advisor who has more time for you. I should also mention that your progress, and ultimate success, will be much enhanced if you are able to collect a support group around you, to help you through the inevitably difficult days.

Have you been in the position of turning down a student who asks to work with you?

[J.G.]: Yes. One consequence of the complexity and demands made by the student-mentor relationship is that it may not always be the right choice, from the professor's point of view, to agree to serve as adviser for a particular student. The point is delicate, and certainly

arguable, but it seems to me that the considerations that we have touched upon suggest that the decision to take a particular student on as an apprentice in a research capacity is not mandated automatically by professional commitment.

On both the student's and the professor's side, this is not always an easy relationship to maintain. The intellectual closeness that must develop if the relationship is to be successful may founder on other rocky coasts. It may be as simple as incompatible personalities on the two sides of the desk. There is no guarantee that two people interested in the same subject who, by chance, end up at the same university will have compatible personalities. In other cases, especially in the case where the student is of the opposite gender from the professor, too heavy an emotional connection may arise between the two (we will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter XX in connection with sexual harassment, though not all emotional attachments of this sort are reasonably placed under that charged rubric). And when the relationship has been successful, and the student has come to full intellectual maturity, then she must face the task of no longer looking to his mentor for the support and for the approval that was a necessary part of the apprentice stage. This, too, is a difficult transition, but one that must be undertaken primarily by the student alone. On this, we will talk more in Chapter 6 (becoming an assistant professor).

In most cases, too, the mentoring commitment goes well beyond the matter of the direct relationship between the student and advisor, and involves the latter's professional relationships as well. This is the case, insofar as the mentor has the responsibility of

presenting the student's work to the professional world, and of judging that work as the student begins to make his way out of graduate school into the field as a whole. In only the rarest of cases will the advisor ever feel comfortable in saying something negative about her own student -- if only as a matter of personal pride. And yet, the mentor's responsibilities are, to some extent, split, involving responsibility to the student who may be looking for a first job, and responsibility to the field (that is, to colleagues at another university) who need honest and frank letters of appraisal. To balance these commitments is not always an easy task.

I should point out that while each of us is concentrating primarily on those areas of academia that we know about personally, the situation in the grant-sponsored-laboratory sciences (physics, biology, chemistry, psychology, and several others) is quite different in a number of important respects. In that environment, a grad student is part of a team, and forms a partnership in a sense with other graduate students, with post-doctoral fellows, and with the professor in charge of the lab. There will typically be more or less formal laboratory meetings at least once a week, and informal interaction among all members of the team on a daily basis. Such laboratories, too, typically don’t shut down for summer vacation.

[J.K.]: After you’ve chosen your main advisor, the other readers of your dissertation should be decided upon jointly with her.[10] After you have organized your dissertation committee, you are ready to concentrate on your dissertation, probably the most challenging task during graduate school.

CHAPTER 4: WRITING A DISSERTATION

[J.G.]: Most disciplines in a decent university require a PhD as a condition for a professorial position, though some will require other degrees called "terminal degrees" -- that is, degrees which are not considered preparatory for a further degree. [These other degrees include an MD, or an LLD, or an MFA]. There is remarkable agreement across the disciplines regarding the requirements for earning this PhD-degree. A bachelor's degree is usually (though not always) required, and a master's degree will sometimes be required. If the degree of master of arts (M.A.) or of science (M.Sc.) is not required, its equivalent is likely to be: somewhere between a year and two years of obligatory coursework, some mastery of a foreign language or perhaps a computer language instead (*quel scandale!*), and possibly an extended research paper a bit longer than a semester's term paper. The PhD will have several additional requirements: frequently an examination which must be passed before the student will be admitted to the doctoral program; perhaps an explicit requirement of some additional coursework (though that requirement is often not put on paper, since the other requirements could simply not be met without the student taking the necessary courses); the presentation of a research paper or two; the ability to read a second foreign language; oral or written exams to demonstrate full mastery of area of specialization; and then -- and only then -- the biggest requirement of all, the doctoral dissertation.

The dissertation is the stumbling block which causes so much panic and distress among graduate students, and many are the students who have completed All (requirements) But the Dissertation (ABD), and find themselves incapable of completing that final step.

What is this dissertation, and why is it so difficult?

A doctoral dissertation is a book-length manuscript typically about 200 pages, though rarely exceeding 500. In a few disciplines, such as mathematics, it may be much shorter, and in others it may consist of a simple bundling of three or four research papers already published by the student in professional refereed journals. These exceptions aside, though, a dissertation typically begins with a statement of a particular, well-defined problem within the area and a review of how the problem has been treated in the literature. This prepares the ground for the statement of a new approach to the problem, followed by the development and exploration of this proposal over the course of two or three more chapters.[11]

Before the dissertation itself is actually written, and usually before the bulk of research is accomplished, the student must set down in writing a proposal concerning what she intends to carry out during the research period and what she intends to accomplish in the dissertation. In most cases this proposal may only be submitted after all the other requirements for the PhD have been satisfied. The dissertation proposal is not another requirement like the others, however. When a department approves a dissertation proposal, it is in effect entering into an implicit contract with the student. It recognizes that the research project that the student proposes to undertake is clear and well-defined enough to be evaluated when it is finished,

and that it addresses an issue of sufficient importance and scope to merit a PhD. If a student submits a dissertation which conforms to the guidelines laid down in the dissertation proposal, the department may refuse it only on the grounds that there is something wrong with the specific content -- it cannot turn around and say that the question it addresses is not important enough, or that another chapter needs to be added to cover another topic. In principle, at least, the submission and the acceptance of a dissertation proposal renders binding an agreement on the minimum required of the student for the completion of the dissertation.

Hasn't there been some discussion about eliminating the dissertation requirement from doctoral degrees?

[J.G.]: Indeed. It continues to surprise me how often I encounter the suggestion that a dissertation defense is something of an archaism,- just a rite of passage -- a suggestion even made by people who should know better.[12] Writing and defending a dissertation might be a rite of passage, but it is not *merely* that. Writing a dissertation, and carrying through the extended research that that requires, is a demanding task, and the person who accomplishes it has been changed by the undertaking. In our modern age, it is perhaps easy to lose sight of the fact that rites of passage in traditional cultures are just that: demanding exercises that leave one changed for having been through them. The student is not supposed to leave graduate school after five years with the same mind and habits that she entered; she is supposed to be changed, and the final accomplishment that consists of writing a thesis, an

achievement that presupposes all the other requirements of the PhD, and which is the most demanding of all.

How does one choose the right dissertation topic?

[J.K.]: With considerable care. Never lose sight of the fact that the dissertation will become the crowning achievement of your graduate education, and will remain a major determining factor of your career for many years to come. It will take years to write, and will require a couple of more years of polishing to make it publishable. Inasmuch as you are locking yourself into a project that will occupy a big chunk of your life, this decision should not be made lightly.

Some advisors are willing to offer a choice of two or three dissertation topics. This can be of great advantage, inasmuch as she has a better overview of the field, knows the sources, knows if the dissertation is doable within the allotted timeframe, and, in effect, you receive a crucial implicit promise that you will be closely guided along the way. To be sure, some professors are reluctant to suggest thesis topics, either out of a philosophical conviction that that is the student's responsibility, or out of a concern about the commitment and responsibility that goes with such advice, but professors can also use that strategy as a way to limit their involvement with students. Be aware that such a disposition might well be a signal that consciously, or unconsciously, she does not really want to work with you very closely, and it might be wise to look for alternatives.

It is safer to defer to your mentor's suggestion of topics, because it has the additional advantage of giving you time to develop skills in choosing research topics, which is difficult to acquire, but ultimately is an extremely important skill to possess. To be sure, there are those who argue for a swim or sink approach, namely that the student acquires such intuitive skills through the choice of a dissertation topic, and therefore should begin the practice as early as feasible. This point of view is surely reasonable, but my own experience leads me to prefer to err on the side of caution: the risk of sinking is not worth it at that stage. In any event, the choice is likely to be made in an iterative process, but the initiative best remain with the mentor.

If, however, you have good reason to be confident in doing research on the topic of your own choice, or if close guidance feels too restrictive to you, then proceed, but at least be forewarned that, the search for a suitable topic can easily take as long as a year, as it did for me. In fact, the reason why many students do not finish their dissertation, is because their topic turns out to be much too difficult for reasons that were not immediately obvious. In any case, do make sure you have your mentor's full support before embarking on the project.

It is imperative that both you and your advisor be interested in your thesis topic. It is important that your mentor be interested in it, because otherwise she might be much less motivated to help you, and it is crucial that you be excited about it, because otherwise you will have enormous difficulties mustering the momentum to succeed in completing the project. Original research is challenging, and even frustrating at times, in the sense that

hundreds of obstacles need to be overcome in the process. Unless you are truly fascinated by the topic, and you consider it intrinsically valuable in its own right, that is to say, independently from the degree that it will enable you to obtain, unless you find it rewarding to work on it, you can easily slip into becoming an ABD instead of a PhD!

Make sure that you do not start a dissertation on an unfamiliar topic. You should prepare some plans, even if tentative ones, well in advance, and have a good overview of the topic before you commence active research. Preliminary excursions into various related issues during the course of your graduate program are extremely useful. It is advisable to write one or two seminar papers on some aspects of the topic, in order to enter the dissertation stage already somewhat knowledgeable about the field. You would know most of the literature, some of the issues that have attracted attention lately, and you would find out who are the scholars writing in that field. It would help you to formulate issues, and to write up the thesis proposal in a convincing manner so that funding would more likely be forthcoming. Moreover, you would also gain insights on how truly interesting the topic actually is to you.

Once you have chosen your dissertation topic in collaboration with your adviser you should seek her active guidance to the utmost degree possible in order to master the relevant frontier. Because every topic has imperceptible pitfalls, dead ends, and no-win strategies, your advisor can help you over such hurdles. The closer your topic is to the expertise of your mentor, the more direction you can count on, and the easier should it be for you to avoid

major or minor mistakes, or getting stuck along the way. Ask her who is working in your area and check their respective home pages, and look for their working papers. Consult also the programs of the meetings of professional organizations in your field for people interested in related topics. Dissertations in progress are sometimes announced in the newsletter of a discipline's main professional association, or there is a centralized dissertation registry. Though incomplete, they are certainly useful. Check also the University of Michigan Microfilms of unpublished dissertations.

Because your access to your mentor might be limited, it is advisable to talk over your preliminary ideas with your peers. Your dissertation proposal should be read by a few of your classmates even before you give it to your mentor. You are not expected to strike out on your own into completely uncharted territory. That would be a mistake. Do minimize the scope of your topic to the utmost extent. You will be expected to work within a paradigm, i.e., one is hardly expected to resolve a major controversy between two competing schools of thought in the discipline within the narrow confines of a dissertation. But one can explore a pertinent aspect of the controversy in a case study. American dissertations are more like "masterpieces" medieval guilds required for full membership in a craft than the colloquial meaning of the term. Think of yourself as a journeyman who is required to demonstrate his ability as a craftsman to the members of the guild. In other words, the dissertation need not be an earth-shattering contribution, but, however modest, it must be original and well crafted. In addition, it must demonstrate your skill in research and argument. In fact, one of the

unstated purposes of the thesis requirement is to filter out people who will not be able to do original research in their subsequent career.

[J.G.]: I think there is considerable variation here across disciplines and across universities and departments as well. I can give a lot of reasons why I think a student should take on a topic that fits in very directly with what his advisor wants to be working on, and you've mentioned most of them already. But I would also say that the stronger a student's intellectual abilities and strength of will are, the more he or she should take seriously the notion of setting off in a radically new direction intellectually. But I mean that only for students who are intellectually mature enough to provide arguments that are cogent within the old paradigm for why the new approach is superior. That's a very tall order.

How long does all of this take?

[J.G.]: It might seem foolhardy to make a general comment about how long it takes to earn a doctoral degree, since observation seems to indicate that it can take from three years to twenty years, but there are one or two important points that don't obviously emerge from such statistics. Perhaps the most important is that speed of completion of the doctoral degree is quite important. I have shared notes with many of friends and colleagues, and there is quite generally a sense that the best students finish their degrees with alacrity. This doesn't mean that there aren't outstanding students who have taken rather longer than average to finish. Still, a person going on the job market would like to display characteristics that suggest he or she is as strong a candidate as possible. And why should the best candidates typical finish in

a shorter period of time? One can think of many reasons, not the least being raw intelligence, whatever *that* means. It may also indicate self-discipline and better organizational principles at work, or a strict taskmaster for a dissertation adviser.

In linguistics, it seems to me that four years, stretching to perhaps four and a half years, is the average time *actually* spent on completing the doctoral dissertation. Many students spend more time than that, of course, but more frequently than not, part of the time spent in excess of five years is time spent doing other things, whether those things be child-raising, money-earning, excessive-course-taking, or simply futzing around.

In my experience, there is an enormous disparity in the amount of time students give themselves to accomplish various tasks (and remember, once we start talking doctoral dissertation, most of the schedule-setting is ultimately the responsibility of the student and no-one else). Some will set themselves three years to accomplish what others expect to complete in nine months. As adviser, I can encourage the slower ones to work faster, but there's a real limit to what anyone can do to pick up a student's pace.

Do students often become disenchanted or discouraged with their dissertation topic?

[J.K.]: Do they! It may sound tragic, but be prepared: no matter what topic you pick, at some point the chances are that you will wish you had chosen another topic. The dissertation is, of course, original research, and all research is a creative process full of unavoidable contradictions, mistakes, and the frustration of obtaining information about important elements of your research slowly over time. You should realize that even the simplest topic

will hold plenty of surprises, and it helps if you have faced such challenges in the past. Moreover, there will be ebbs, and tides, and times when you will be stuck, and wished you had worked on another topic. Do not despair! Think about another chapter, or write about another issue; try your hand at writing parts of the introduction. You will catch your second wind, and you will find you have days when you accomplish more than you did in the previous month. If, however, you find yourself completely stuck for an extended period of time, consulting a mental health professional on campus might be useful. Most universities have excellent counselors who see many students coping with these kinds of issues. That might help you get over an extreme case of writer's cramp.

There is no cookbook recipe for original research. However, if you followed our advice up to this point, you should be positioned well to complete the dissertation. If you chose an exciting topic, one with which you had some preliminary familiarity, one which your mentor, and perhaps other members of the faculty support enthusiastically, and if your mentor is competent, you should not encounter insurmountable difficulties.[13]

Do not hold yourself to too high a standard. The profession expects you to be able to demonstrate within a couple of years that you have the prerequisite abilities not only as a recipient of information, but also as a creator of knowledge. This turns out to be a relatively efficient way to filter out those who might be intelligent as well as good students, but for whatever complex psychological reasons, are incapable of functioning (largely independently) at the frontiers of knowledge. You will find out, as you will later with publications,

that the writing of a dissertation requires much patience and perseverance. Intelligence is an important prerequisite to successful research, but just as crucial, if not more so, are your working habits. This is the case, because discovery - flashes of creative insight - are rewarding experiences, but they are infrequent. They will soon be overshadowed by the day-to-day doldrums of working out the intricate details of that insight in two dimensions (i.e., on paper). The excitement of waiting for the outcome of an experiment will be overtaken by the boring task of actually describing the kinds of equipment used. That is one of the reasons why the initial attraction to the topic, and reliable work habits are extremely important; otherwise the drudgery of such detail tasks can become overpowering and one can easily become frustrated. My advice is to increase your best estimate of your time (and money) requirements by 50 percent to give yourself a margin of comfort to complete the project.

[J.G.]: I don't think I've ever met anyone who didn't begin to hate his dissertation around the time it was being completed - a feeling that typically lasts a year or two after it has been submitted and accepted. This is such a widespread phenomenon that it would be wise to accept the notion that it will occur, and to discount those effects as much as possible. And this feeling is likely to hit in the final, critical months before completion of the dissertation. Beware!

[J.K.]: Yes, that is precisely what I had in mind: a kind of post-partum depression, one might say. On a more practical level, you may need financing for dissertation research, particularly if you need to do some of it abroad. The library should have many compilations of available

fellowships. Ask your mentor or departmental secretary; consult the graduate secretary, and the University's Research Office. Some national professional organizations have their own list of prospective funding agencies by discipline. In addition, the newsletter of many organizations also advertise such opportunities. You should plan ahead, start early, and write a convincing proposal. Apply for all the grants for which you might conceivably qualify, since it is easier to turn down an award received than to wait a year for the next cycle of competition if you are underfunded. You should be aware of the fact that some fellowships are not mutually exclusive, but allow you to hold other awards either simultaneously or consecutively. The goal, of course, is not to get rich, but to obtain enough support to complete the dissertation comfortably. Allot yourself enough time. Be generous in your estimates, since many have a tendency to be overly optimistic about the length of time required to complete a project. Do not forget that this is the first time you will be doing original research. You should anticipate unforeseen detours requiring additional time to bring the project to completion.

My final admonition is that you should adopt a "mini-max" strategy: pare down your topic to the extent possible, i.e., to the minimal level of complexity. If you are creative, and if you can generate a few interesting insights, that will shine through even in a narrow topic, and should suffice to gain you entry into academia. Your dissertation is not expected to be your life's work, your Magnum Opus, but simply, a demonstration of your ability to do

research. Yet, at the same time, try to get the most mileage from your topic, i.e., do the best job conceivable. within the allotted time.

Here's something else that may seem obvious, but often isn't: the student should consult the dissertation office of her university for the approved format and citation style for the dissertation before writing one sentence of the thesis. Redoing the format can be extremely time consuming; it is so much easier to do it correctly the first time. If you know in advance that certain information is needed in the bibliography, you will not have to waste time subsequently to look up the citations again. An example of such information might be the need to cite the month of publication of journal articles in the references. In other words, you should be well informed about the mechanics of writing the dissertation before you commence.

One of the most difficult challenges you will face is the temptation to work on ancillary issues during the course of your research. You must do your best to stick to the topic approved by your dissertation committee. However, any original research will bring to the surface dozens of peripheral issues that have not been explored in the past. You will have to consciously avoid being attracted by them. Just tell yourself that you will come back to those questions later, and of course, these are potential dissertation topics you can suggest to your future students. Avoid at any cost falling into the trap of thinking that these are preconditions of your completing the dissertation. More often than not this only appears to be the case, and a sign of your lack of research experience. Ask your mentor (and your support

group) on how to bridge the gap created by the missing information, without your having to spend months to fill that lacunae. And most of all, try your best not expand the focus of your thesis.

I think it is worth emphasizing again that the dissertation is not expected to solve all outstanding problems relevant to your topic. That would not be reasonable, and is not expected of you. Rather, you are expected to demonstrate that you can overcome the obstacles associated with original research and produce by no means a perfect, but a coherent piece of work. Your success will depend on your ability to bridge the chasms brought to the surface by your research. Do not fudge! Be forthright: "further research is needed on this issue; the possible effects on my results are as follows." Then spell out the possibilities, and how these might provide a more nuanced view of your conclusions. After you have thought it through in this manner, you might realize that regardless of the importance of the issue at hand, your results are not particularly sensitive to it. Suppose you do not know the size of a variable, but you do have some pretty good intuition about the minimum and maximum values it could take. Then use these values to ascertain the possible effects on your results. You might state, "I do not have the foreign trade figures for Liechtenstein, but they probably do not exceed on a per capita basis those of Switzerland, given the similarities in socio-economic structure of the two countries. Therefore, I increased the European totals by 0.5 percent in order to account for the absence of data for Liechtenstein." Period. You have provided an interim solution to the problem and gave an

intuitive way of dealing with the order of magnitude of your error. If, on the other hand, you impulsively take the next month to find the exact figures, in order to complete your dissertation on recent trends in European international trade, you will have made a serious mistake, and you might well jeopardize the timely completion of your thesis. Of course, the case would be different if your dissertation were on economic growth of the handful tiny countries in Europe. Thus, the goal is not to write a perfect dissertation. Such hardly exist. All dissertations have strengths and weaknesses, and yours need not be the exception; the profession will understand that. That is not the main issue. The most important factor is that it should be a genuine contribution to knowledge. The reason I emphasize this issue is that in my experience a perfectionist attitude can be a major career-impeding factor.

I grant that the above example is a rather trivial one, and choices confronting you are likely to be more complex. Yet my main point is that you need to develop skills that will enable you to avoid boxing yourself in on particular issues. Argue by analogy, argue by order of magnitude, or suggest that your conclusions are tentative and are subject to revision with further research. There is nothing to be ashamed about admitting the limitations of your work. On the contrary, it is wise to do so since it is hardly your fault that insufficient research has been done in your field. By framing your problem, you have already set limits on the horizon of your exploration, but these limits might be restricted further in the course of the research. Unless you can jump over the psychological hurdles posed by such difficulties, or if

you insist on writing the first perfect dissertation at your university, you will encounter real difficulties

The dissertation defense

Once the research is finished, written up, and approved by the committee informally, it still has to pass the final hurdle of a "dissertation defense." This is by and large *pro forma*; if the adviser (and the entire research committee) have agreed to set up a time and place for a dissertation defense, it is more or less agreed that there are no major objections to its acceptance. The defense consists of a statement by the candidate of the main findings of her research. At that point, all the members of the dissertation committee, and any other members of the department who wish to be present, will have the opportunity to ask questions of the student, at times to the point of challenging the student on her command of the scholarly literature or the complexities of the issues covered in the dissertation. While it is rare that a dissertation will be rejected at that stage, it is possible for a committee to require some additional work on it before it will be accepted. Typically it is left to the advisor to determine informally that these have been satisfied; it is most uncommon for a second dissertation defense to be held.

What else can a student do to ease the transition from graduate school into academia?

As your dissertation nears completion, you should think about ways to disseminate that information, and increase your visibility both on campus and beyond. That will ease your transition into the actual job-search phase. I tell my students that they should seek out every

possible opportunity to talk about their research formally even before completing their thesis. They will benefit from presenting preliminary ideas and findings to a wider audience. The scholarly world thrives on the exchange of ideas, and the sooner you begin to practice effective communication making formal presentations, the better. The feedback that you receive from your audience is always helpful in letting you know how others see the problems you discuss.

You could talk about your dissertation while you are still in the field doing research away from your institution. Locals are likely to have a different perspective on the issues you raise, and are also going to have more first hand knowledge of the sources than you, and possibly your mentor. You can certainly profit from that, but be aware of the fact that research styles can vary considerably from country to country. Your approach might not be appreciated outside of the U.S. as much as you would like, but you need to keep in mind that ultimately you are writing for an American audience: in the first instance you dissertation committee.

In addition, you should start attending conferences in order to mingle with like-minded people, and especially to meet other graduate students in the profession. You can begin to exchange views on your preliminary results, and learn more about the research currently done in the discipline. Such exposures help your socialization into the profession. You should also propose to make a presentation at a meeting of the professional organization in your field. You can start the ball rolling by writing to the chair of the committee charged with organizing

the next meeting in order to propose a paper derived from your dissertation.[14] A good mentor will help you to take such steps in order to make your transition from graduate school to the profession smoothly.

Finally, it would be extremely useful if you can start publishing while still in graduate school. There is no better way to impress upon the future readers of your curriculum vitae that you are serious about embarking on a life of scholarship, then to show written evidence to that effect. Obviously a chapter of your dissertation is a likely candidate to consider for early publication, but a submission could be even shorter than that. There is an economics journal, for example, called Economic Letters, which consists of publications only 4-6 pages in length which enables one to communicate a new result quickly to the profession. Such a publications is desirable because it begins to get you to thinking less in terms of research per se, and into the mode of communication. It also improves your self-confidence in the process of doing so, and signals to the profession that you are not only well-trained, and intelligent, but that you are also likely to be a productive scholar. With such a feather in your cap, your chances of landing a good job improves substantially.

CHAPTER 5: LANDING A JOB

How should the student nearing the completion of her dissertation be thinking about her career?

[J.K.]: As your graduate-school career is drawing to a close, and you are becoming an expert in a niche of the discipline, you need to begin letting the profession know of your impending arrival in other ways besides attending conferences. In order to enhance your visibility, you should start reviewing books in your field. Most of the main journals do not allow unsolicited book reviews, but you can still let them know of your willingness to be of service. They will keep your expertise on file and almost certainly contact you eventually. However, some of the lesser-known journals have more difficulty finding reviewers, and might be more open to specific suggestions. Write to the book-review editors informing them of your research,[15] and that you know of a book just published in your field that you would be willing to write about. This would give you valuable experience, and begin to let the profession begin to take notice know of your own work.

Think of other ways of informing the profession of your "coming of age". Most dissertations qualify for a prize, for example. Ask your advisor. Ask your librarian for compilations that list such information. Many professional organizations have dissertation sessions at annual meetings where the results of your thesis can be presented. Try your best to get on one of those sessions (your mentor might have to recommend you). Once your thesis is completed, send copies to major figures in the field, soliciting comments for revision

prior to publication. The point is that you ought not keep your work a secret. Information on your thesis is not transmitted instantaneously, and there is no stigma attached to trying to help the process along, as long as you do not overdo it.

How does the specific process of searching for a job begin?

[J.G.]: In a sense, the process starts long before the student was focused on getting a job, since the job search involves the dissertation topic, and conference presentations. But in a practical sense, the job search begins with the decision, made in consultation with the mentor, that the dissertation completion and defense is imminent, and that it's time to send out letters of application to universities that have announced job openings. The job search also typically involves going to the profession's large annual national meeting, such as the Modern Language Association, or the Linguistic Society of America.[16]

[J.K.]: The market starts with advertisements appearing in early Fall, most frequently in the newsletters of professional organizations. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* also lists job openings throughout the year in all disciplines, including some administrative openings for which you might qualify. In addition, you can write to, or call colleges in your vicinity, or in a location for which you have some preference.

In some universities, the standard procedure is to have a dossier at the employment office of your university, and you can request that your credentials be sent out to potential employers. This file is created as a general-purpose application dossier in order to save time and effort, but it does not suffice by itself. This dossier consists of a transcript, three letters

of recommendation, and a resume, which includes an abstract of your dissertation, all written on standard forms provided for the purpose. Such file saves your advisor the time of sending recommendation letters herself to each of the jobs you are applying. Instead she has to write but once, and the employment office does the rest. However, such recommendations tend to be a bit too generic, hence less effective in some cases, because they are not tailored to the specific needs of a particular opening. Hence, in cases where the match between your qualifications and the stated needs of the department in the job advertisement might benefit from an additional explanation, it would be to your benefit to ask your mentor to write a more personal letter on your behalf. The other two recommendations would come from the other readers of your dissertation unless you worked closer with some other members of the faculty, as a teaching assistant, for example. The better-known is the professor who recommends you, the more effective is likely to be the letter in getting you an interview, but the pre-condition is that she must be somewhat acquainted with your work or some other aspects of your graduate-school performance. A generic letter of superlatives from even the best-known scholar is not likely to be of much help in obtaining you the interview. Of course, after the interview the effect of the recommendation letters wears off very quickly. Thereafter you will have to stand on your own merits.

You need to send a letter of application to the person in charge of the search committee stating your interest in the announced opening, letting her know that your personal file is on its way. Your cover letter should be tailored to the specific application, in order to

accentuate that you are particularly qualified for the job, and you had better give it some serious thought. Highlight those aspects of your experience and achievements which make you especially suitable for the position, but which might not be immediately obvious from your dossier. You should again summarize your dissertation in a short paragraph, even though that is already included in your dossier, but more importantly do include some supplementary material that could support your application, such as teaching evaluations, or publications. If you feel it might be appropriate, do send the introduction to your dissertation, or include a statement about your philosophy of education. Moreover, try to find some connection to members of the faculty, and some reasons why you are specially suitable for the position. That means that you should familiarize yourself with the department to some extent, at least through its website. Your mentor might even contact persons she knows in that department by phone or email to stress the degree to which your qualifications meet the job description. You, however, should not call; instead, wait for them to contact you first.

[J.G.]: Some professors -- and I am one of them -- prefer not to use this standard procedure, however. Linguistics is small enough that it is customary to get letters that have been personalized at least a little bit for each institution to which the letter is being sent. I am likely to want to add something about a student's work that is specifically aimed at people that I know at a given institution, and of course my letter will change over the course of months (or years) as the student in question completes more work or reaches other goals. I would add that in my experience – in my field – the substance of the applicant’s letter is very

important. This is an open opportunity to shine, and to give some information about your interest, experience, and plans.

Letters of recommendation vary a great deal. I'm sure I've read many, many hundreds of these letters, and I continue to be struck by how much work goes into their writing by some of the busiest people in my profession. At some level, the detail of the letter is intended to give the impression that the candidate's papers have been so important to the letter writer (since the candidate was a lowly first year graduate student) that she remembers each and every one of them. And this can be very effective!

Let's not overlook the importance of a good C.V. – a good curriculum vita (or vitae). This is a short document that gathers together the essentials of your academic career, from your education (college and beyond) through your employment, your conference presentations, your publications, your grants and scholarships (if you have received any), and in many cases, the names of scholars who may be contacted for written evaluations.

Putting together a good C.V. is not an easy task, though having the right stuff to report in it is even harder! I can offer just two pieces of advice: get hold of at least a half a dozen examples (it's not too hard to find them on the Web these days, and you can ask people for copies, explaining your reason) to look at before you put yours together, and then show it to people (especially faculty members) when you're put together a draft. Find out if you've left anything out, or put in too much. If you have some experience with drafting a resume, do bear in mind that the task here is similar, but by no means the same. A C.V. tends to have

less text and explanation, and it may be longer (many suggest that a resume be no longer than two pages, or even one, while there is no limitation on how long a C.V. may be). Do be sure to highlight the most important items by placing them strategically.

[J.K.]: Your c.v. must be accurate and complete: there is absolutely no room for mistakes or a hiatus in your career without an explanation. It should be clearly formulated, concise, and coherent, and have an esthetic appeal. It should highlight all your achievements, and contain a short paragraph on your dissertation. Members of the search committee usually do not have more than 30 seconds (!) to read a c.v., so you do not have much time to introduce yourself, explain what your research is all about, and impress the reader that you are the one they are looking for. There is no room for error: contradictions, mistakes, and chronological gaps can cause your c.v. to land in the wrong pile. In addition to the obvious information, the c.v. might also include a heading, Under Review, under which one can list paper currently being refereed, and Research in Progress, under which one might mention papers not yet submitted to a journal, or research projects underway. Note also that the c.v. also needs to be attractive to the eye.

Because of the immense competition for positions a little extra help from your mentor can be extremely useful. Some advisors are actually willing to go to great lengths to "create a market" for their students, i.e., enhance their reputation. Others are less inclined to do so for philosophical or practical reasons. Some mentors are willing, on their own initiative, to send out a mass mailing to their friends announcing your impending entry into the job market.

Such extra efforts are extremely important, because they provide a kind of "guarantee" backed by your advisor's reputation. In effect, she is saying that she is willing to put her friendships and reputation on the line on your behalf, stating that you will not disappoint them. While you may not know if your mentor is willing to undertake such a function before you start to work with her, such factors obviously influence the success rate she has had in placing graduate students. Consequently, it does get incorporated into her "batting average" on which you should have some information very soon after you enter the program.

Professors interested in maintaining a steady stream of graduate students have an incentive to find employment for them, because that is one way to convince future generations of students to work with them. Your mentor might also ask colleagues to write on your behalf to persons they know at the institutions to which you are applying.

Some programs, such as the economics department at the University of Chicago, rate the students entering the job market in order to make it easier for prospective employees to sort out the applicants' qualifications. The rating, along with a brief description of the dissertation topics is mailed out to major departments. The top handful of departments will absolutely not interview students unless they are ranked at the very top of a graduating cohort.

Note that such efforts are influential in obtaining an interview for you. Selection of candidates is a complex and uncertain process, at times perhaps even chaotic. Dissertations have to be read (or at least looked at), letters of recommendation evaluated, and interviews taken before one has a basic impression of the candidate. Even with such a carefully

orchestrated process the possibility of misjudgment is not eliminated. One has to learn how to read between the lines. Letters of recommendation, for instance, are often exaggerated. Even for average students, they are sometimes quite laudatory: "Ms. Palmer is among the best two or three graduate students with whom I have had the pleasure to work since I came to the University." What that sentence really means is not at all obvious, because the author of that letter failed to note how many students she had in all. If she had only two or three students in total, the recommendation is not as laudatory as it sounds. Yet note that the statement is by no means false. In other words, letters of recommendations need to be read carefully to get a sense of the message between the lines. If there are any reservations on the part of the mentor, they are generally couched in such oblique language that they will not be apparent without supplementary information. I stretch the point, so that you can understand clearly how difficult the search committee’s task is to choose the handful of the most suitable candidates for a position. Insofar as it is an extremely time-consuming task to evaluate applications, special efforts of your advisor or department can help you to gain the benefit of the doubt.

How high should one set one’s aspirations?

I'd like to emphasize that it's important to ascertain if your mentor's assessment of your work coincide with your own. She must be an enthusiastic supporter, for otherwise your chances of landing a decent job are minimal. Others will think that if your mentor, who knows your scholarly qualifications the best at this time, does not support you enthusiastically, then what

sense does it make for them to invest the time and energy to obtain an independent judgment of your potential? It is much more cost effective to rely on your mentor's opinion in the first instance. In other words, your mentor's candid view of you should be considered as the upper bound of your current (as opposed to your future) aspirations.

Both the advisor and the student are obviously in a delicate position, and it is very important to listen carefully to what the mentor is actually saying, and implying between the lines, and what she is not saying; the mentor may be trying to communicate her assessment indirectly without hurting anyone’s feelings, and being blunt is not considered good form in our culture. Picking up on this is a difficult skill to develop for those who have devoted years of effort to honing their logical faculties, inasmuch as this skill requires intuitive thinking not necessarily within the realm of the rational. You should try to extract the deeper meaning underneath the obvious surface ones. It might not be easy for you to ascertain exactly how your mentor rates your abilities unless you are exceptional. Most professors (myself included) are not forthright enough to tell you if you are a B- scholar, say, because they do not want to hurt your feelings, even though this would be an extremely important piece of information for you to possess. Instead, she might discourage you from applying to a job at a top school by suggesting that she has "inside" information that they are really looking for another specialty. The subtext might really be that she does not think you have the necessary attributes to get that job. She is embarrassed to tell you outright, and would be also embarrassed recommending you to her colleagues there. Within the realm of polite

conversation, it remains for her only to intimate her evaluation of you, which gets her off the hook momentarily. You should be aware that there are multiple interpretations of such a suggestion. If you are open in this regard, you might be able to avoid sub-optimal strategies later, i.e., to apply to positions which are out of your reach.

The interview

[J.K.]: Once the application letters have been sent out, the ball is no longer in the applicant's court. In many fields, the standard practice is for the chair of the search committee to contact by phone those candidates who were "short listed" – who made the first cut, and ask them to meet with the committee at the annual meeting of the professional organization. You should keep a schedule to make sure you are not going to have conflicts or interviews too close to one another. Initial impressions are important at this stage; hence you need to avoid embarrassment at all cost. Self-confidence and an air of competence are crucial throughout the remainder of the process. If at all possible, you should avoid back-to-back interviews, because it would be good to have the opportunity to relax and think a bit about what just transpired before you proceed to the next venue. Because the meetings can be spread out over several hotels which are not always conveniently located, you should give yourself a minimum of twenty minutes to half an hour between interviews, if you want to be on the safe side.

How does a departmental committee choose a short list from an application pool that consists at times of as large as several hundred dossiers?

[J.K] That is invariably a challenging task for the committee. We are blessed with an oversupply of very smart people, and usually the committee has plenty of equally good candidates to choose from. In such cases reputation of the school and mentor matter a lot. In addition, the committee often look for small differences such as taste in research, that is, what kinds of issues do you find attractive? Will you be a good citizen of the department? Your social skills also will matter. In a pool of equally qualified candidates, the impact of slight differences are likely to be magnified. This is true at all scales of the academic hierarchy, although stellar performers will be at a disadvantage at a below average department. This is the case because equals generally attract equals. Colleagues very often do not want to be outperformed.

[J.G.]: The task of reading job ads has some subtleties that may deserve some consideration. Job ads tend to be short, and communicate relatively little information, and in many cases are worded sloppily, or by people who will play only a minority role in the final job selection. A job ad may specify some sub-areas as „desirable„, but it's impossible to divine from outside just what that means. It may mean that a few members of the faculty would really like someone with that specialization, but the rest of the faculty really doesn't care, or it may be a strong preference. You really can't tell. If you think you have a good chance even though your field is not the one that is apparently desirable, it would be prudent to apply.

Our department is going through the process of searching for a junior appointment right now, so a number of points are very much on my mind. I might mention how I read the

applications that come in. I use my computer, and make a chart for each application and letter of reference that arrives on my desk, and after I've seen all the material for a given candidate, I make an initial division into three categories: the truly outstanding, the ones not worth rereading, and everyone else. I think of these as categories A, B, and C. When I'm done, I reread all of the dossiers briefly, just to remind myself why I had categorized them into these three rough categories as I had. The sad fact of the matter is, then, that it's only the top category, Category A, that make *my* first cut. Now, I'm not the only one doing something like this; all the members of the search committee are doing something like it, and some of my Category B names are going to be top candidates for someone else, and that's fine with me. But if someone else pushes a name that is on my Category C list, I'll argue against it, giving reasons why I think that person is not worth our consideration.

I find I put around ten percent of the applicants into Category A. I'm actually trying all the time to make it smaller than that, but I keep finding people doing amazing work about whom I'd like to hear more. But if we have 100 candidates, that means there are about 10 people I'd like to interview, and perhaps have come visit us. Unfortunately, our dean has given us far too little money to bring in ten visitors; we can realistically only shoot for three or four. So other factors will come into play in settling on a short list. It's difficult to know ahead of time what those factors will be. But every applicant should know that even the details count in cases like these.

The professional meeting

[J.G.]: Let's consider first an interview at a professional meeting, such as the Modern Language Association. Here you may be meeting one person, or a committee of several people, who have just a brief period of time to speak with you, and possibly answer questions that you may have.

What is an interview about? Many things, and all at the same time. The first is to get a sense of your personality: as the expression goes, they want to see if you have two heads, or just one, like everybody else. About this, there's nothing you can do: you've come too far now to do anything about your personality other than wear it for all to see. But you will, surely, do your best to be charming, in your own particular and unique fashion.

Beyond personality, there are specific things that the interviewer will be looking for. The job will most likely have a number of specific qualifications attached to it, and the interviewer will want to have some sense that you fit that description. If an English Department feels they need someone who does Nineteenth Century English novel, then you should know something about Jane Eyre. Much of that will be on your c.v., but you can't assume that your interviewer knows what is there. It will be your job to acquaint the interviewer with your background.

Behind this transmission of simple information is a more important tacit message, though. When a department is hiring a professor, they are looking for someone who can function autonomously and responsibly to carry out the functions that the department needs carried

out: typically, preparing, organizing, and teaching certain courses, advising students, and -- last on the list, by far -- interacting with other faculty members of the department.

This is a point that is often completely missed by graduate students preparing for their first job, for quite understandable reasons. They may expect the major requirement be a fit between their research interests and those of the department they are about to join. This is important, no doubt about it -- but only in an indirect way, most of the time.

In an interview situation, most of the time, the message the candidate should attempt to get across is that she or she is capable of getting the job done without supervision and without extra input from the other members of the department. If a music department is hiring someone doing music theory, for example, they want to be convinced, first and foremost, that the candidate has mainstream music theory under her belt, and that she will be able to provide the appropriate kind of training to their students with no questions asked. It's all well and good that the candidate has revolutionary new ideas that will change the course of history; what the department needs to have taught are well-established courses, and it's that basic competence that the hiring department will want to be assured of. The revolutionary ideas will be important for establishing a publication record, certainly, and when longer on-site interviews come, these ideas will come more into focus. But the first impression must be one of general competence, plain and simple.

The daunting prospect of making a formal presentation

[J.K.]: Oral presentations have some things in common whether made in the context of an invited lecture, or a job talk, or at a meeting of a professional organization. The talk needs to be self contained. It can be a version of a completed chapter of your dissertation or part of your larger research project, but it must be self-contained, i.e., coherently explore a specific question and provide some results with a plausible conclusion, even if still somewhat tentative. The results need not be earth-shattering. However, there should be some effort to clearly pose a question, develop an idea, a thesis, resolve a controversy, while holding the audience's attention. It ought not be preliminary, a mere overview, or primarily biographical or anecdotal.[17]

It is important not to overwhelm your audience. Instead, do give an overarching conception of your thesis. In the introduction you should present the state of the debate relevant to the topic, and give a short overview of your thesis. Then proceed quickly on to your approach to the issues, the data, or methodology, and then your conclusion. In contrast to written work, you should repeat yourself occasionally in order to remind listeners of your main ideas. Effective speaking entails keeping in mind that the outline of the presentation should be simple enough to maintain the interest of your listeners. You have gone over your topic time and again, and as a consequence, ideas might appear to you clearer than to those who hear it for the first time. The effective use of visual aids will help the audience absorb your ideas and make your presentation more lively.

You should develop the habit of not reading your presentation. Everyone could do that. You want to impress and demonstrate that you will be a good lecturer and by implication a good teacher. Your presentation should not be taken verbatim from your written text, because effective oral communication differs significantly from its written counterpart. We can present a much more nuanced view in writing than can be effectively accomplished orally. Inasmuch as you would have worked on the topic of your presentation for an extended period of time, you ought to be able to talk about it with authority without resort to the written page. Some notes, or a brief outline to which you might refer on occasion are, however, perfectly acceptable. To make an effective presentation you should make it short, and never, never exceed the amount of time allotted to you. Attention spans are limited, and vary across cultures. In America, half an hour to forty minutes suffices in most cases for the presentation of a hypothesis, methodological considerations if applicable, a thesis and concluding remarks. You have a chance to impress your audience with your ability to synthesize material, but if you get bogged down in detail, you will not be a successful communicator. Leave ancillary issues to the question and answer period. Simplify. Leave out complicated data or information for the sake of brevity even if you have to stretch arguments a bit to do so. The complications will be in a footnote of the written version. If you touch upon them now, your presentation will suffer. Your goal is to communicate effectively. You are not expected to expound on all detail in a short talk, because the audience will lose sight of your main argument; it will have difficulties following your logical progression of ideas.

The presentation of numeric information is best left to visual medium, such as an overhead projector.[18]

During the discussion you will, of course, encounter some unfriendly-sounding counter-arguments. Make sure you keep your composure. You know the material better than anyone else in that room, so you have reason to retain your self-confidence. It is much better to respond even to critical questions diplomatically by saying something like "that sounds like a good idea, I'll have to think about it more," than to appear recalcitrant. Such a response is more likely to disarm your critique than a patently antagonistic one, or talking around the issue raised. Other suggestions: you might indicate politely that you also have thought about the issue, but have not had a chance to work on it. Alternatively, if it is appropriate, you might point out that you, in fact, explore that issue more extensively in the written version, available from you upon request.

[J.G.]: I have a talk with all graduate students who work with me before their first conference presentation in which I try to make them confront their worst enemy. They are always surprised to find out that everyone who's about to go public and make a presentation is challenged by a nasty voice inside their head that whispers, "Is that all you have to say? That's so obvious. People are going to think you are downright stupid if you stand up and read all of these obvious conclusions." That voice goes on to say that the program committee that accepted this paper obviously misunderstood your abstract, and confused it with a paper with real substance.

I haven't yet met a student who hasn't admitted that that's exactly what is going round inside his head. And the consequence of all this is that - in order to placate that voice - the student eliminates the material that is well worked out and well understood, only to focus on the part of the problem that they're currently struggling with, the part that they don't understand very well. Obviously this is a recipe for disaster! You must take very seriously the idea that you should *only* present material that you understand very, very well. I don't mean you can't drop a speculative note at the end, but that's after all the work has been done; it's the dessert. If you talk well and cogently about even an old topic, chances are you will have something new to add; if you talk about something you don't understand yet, be prepared to feel frustrated and disappointed when your presentation is over, because you will not have done your best to communicate something to your audience.

[J.K.]: Never give a talk cold! Before you make a formal presentation it is all but mandatory that you first give the talk to your colleagues and mentor as a test run in order to get some useful feedback. After making note of their suggestions, you should continue to practice your delivery, at home, with friends, on the airplane, or in your hotel room, that is to say, wherever possible, until you have perfected it. This training is extremely important in your interviewing process. Initially, you might even think about memorizing your talk, if it improves your self-confidence or it you feel that it will improve your talk substantially. In other words, do whatever you need to do to fine-tune your delivery.

[J.G.]: I've been giving talks for twenty-five years, but if I have a very formal presentation to give, or a very limited amount of time, I still give my talk aloud, in my office with the door shut - and I may do it twenty times. It's important for inexperienced speakers to grasp the simple fact that public speaking is work, and that it requires effort and preparation, and hours of it. I wish I could say this loud and long: good public presentation of difficult material requires as much training and preparation as professional athletics. It is an egregious *faux pas* not to prepare an oral presentation and to spend all the time that it requires.

Is it really as daunting as you make it sound?

[J.K.]: Unfortunately graduate school does not foster the aptitude for public speaking, and the educational system screens for knowledge, intelligence, and ability to communicate in writing. However, oral communication matters little, insofar as there are few oral examinations, and very few opportunities for improving one's ability to think out loud. So the responsibility to improve your oral communication skills rests with you.

Note also that there are many ways to be prepared - and just as many to be unprepared. Note that detail does matter: for example, do make sure you know how to operate the overhead projector before you begin your lecture. It can be embarrassing to fumble with switches and might make you nervous.

You should not rely exclusively on your mentor to pat you on the back, even if you wrote a good dissertation. You need to seek confidence-building experiences elsewhere. You should actively seek out opportunities to talk about your research at workshops in other

departments on campus, at other universities, wherever possible. With some successful talks behind you, your self-confidence will rise: and experience will translate into more coherent talks and very importantly, the ability to field questions. Nervousness makes a negative impression: it is not always interpreted as a sign of inexperience, but as a sign of not being an effective communicator, i.e., future teacher. Hence, being nervous can easily eliminate you from the list of candidates. If your problem with it persists, you might consider contacting a counselor to explore ways you can overcome it.

Talks at professional meetings tend to be shorter than job talks, i.e., about fifteen to twenty minutes long. Make absolutely sure you stay within the limit, if you do not want to alienate your fellow panelists, and risk annoying your audience. Do not forget that even the most complicated ideas can be simplified for presentation and your paper is no exception. A lecture need not go into great detail. Those can be found in the written version for those interested.

Could we get back to the big national meetings of the professional organizations?

[J.K.]: Right. They provide golden opportunities for the advanced graduate student to present their work. Practically all meet annually, providing opportunities for scholars to disseminate the results of recent research. In addition, these organizations also have regional affiliates with additional meetings. While a presentation at a regional meeting might provide only limited exposure, nonetheless it does provide valuable experience, and is more easily accessible. You should try to get on a panel at one of the meetings even before you have

finished your dissertation. Ask your advisor if a completed chapter or seminar paper is suitable for presentation. Write to the organization in order to find out who is in charge of next year's program. Inquire about deadlines. Make sure that you plan well in advance, because the lead time is always substantial. Proposals for a December meeting are usually due in February. Thus you need to start to make plans a year in advance to get on a program. Make your case by sending the organizers a synopsis of your proposed presentation. Many organizations encourage graduate student participation.

Of course, the degree to which this is the case varies. For example, it is generally easier to obtain a slot on the program of the annual meeting of the Eastern Economic Association than on that of the American Economics Association. If your topic is interdisciplinary, you might try an organization in one of the sister disciplines. You should also find out which associations are particularly receptive to younger scholars. For example, if your topic has a historical component, you might try the Cliometric Society, or the Social Science History Association.[19] Those organizations welcome younger scholars. In other words, if you keep on trying, you should be successful in finding a venue for a presentation, and it is important that you do so. Your job talk, and hence your job chances, will be much improved if you have availed yourself of every opportunity to make presentations and lecture at professional meetings.

[J.G.]: In my field, there are a number of regional meetings that have a higher professional profile than the national one. There is a certain homogenizing factor at the national meeting

that is typically not present at the smaller meetings, which in turn, can make the smaller meetings more theoretically high-powered. But I don't imagine that all fields are like that.

[J.K.]: Do bear in mind that you can improve your chances of getting on a program of a professional organization if you organize a complete panel consisting of a chairperson, three papers and one or two discussants. Organizers generally prefer to receive such a proposal, because that saves them the trouble of putting together the session themselves, a fairly time-consuming task. So if you know of others working in the same field, you might attempt to organize a panel on a theme. This is more time consuming than you might think. You have to contact potential presenters, obtain commitments, make sure they send you their proposals, find commentators and a chair for the session (who might be one of the discussants). Note that even after you have a commitment, presenters might change their mind. So you might have to scramble to find a replacement. In addition, the panel might not be accepted, so your efforts might be in vain, except for the experience that will be useful later. Initially it might be best to get on a panel organized by your mentor, or a colleague you've met at a previous meeting of the association.

The effort of organizing a panel or finding a suitable panel for your paper is well worth it, however. In addition to improving your self-confidence, and enabling you to make contacts, presenting a paper helps you to disseminate your ideas, thereby giving you the opportunity to subtly announce your entry into the profession. Of course, it also looks good on your resume. Just as importantly, it will also improve your thesis by affording you new

ideas and new perspectives on ideas you already have. I have never ever given a talk without benefiting from it in some way.

Is it really so important to make presentations at conferences?

[J.K.]: Absolutely, going to conferences is a good idea even if you are not yet ready to make a presentation yourself, because it will afford you an opportunity to exchange ideas, and to try out ideas on others. It is also a way to advertise your impending entry into the life of the organization. This is part of the process of your professionalization. You will meet scholars who were mere abstractions to you until then. You will exchange information with graduate students from other universities, and through them learn more about what others are doing in the field. You will sharpen your understanding of the intensity of convictions held by others on important unresolved questions in the discipline, and develop ideas on the likely direction the frontiers of knowledge will take, which should help you to extrapolate on the direction of movement in the near future. In which direction should your research continue, now that your dissertation is complete? By the way, these contacts will also enable you to begin loosening your umbilical cord to your mentor by listening to a wider range of opinions. Participation at a conference will also afford you an initial impression of the enthusiasm with which others are receiving your own work.

In addition, you will learn about the rules and techniques of a formal presentation. You will see first hand how others perform in a stressful situation, and what the unwritten etiquette of intellectual jousting is in practice. You will make acquaintances, and friends,

some of whom might become important contacts eventually. You might obtain invitations to make presentations at workshops around the country. You can talk to publishers about your work in order to ascertain how receptive they appear to your research, even in a preliminary fashion. You can talk to journal editors to learn about their expectations of a good submission. You will learn about the polite form of discourse, which may differ from conference to conference. You will have a chance to look at what awaits you when you go to a meeting as a full-fledged job seeker.

How should you read the job advertisements?

[J.G.]: Early and often. In many disciplines, most job announcements are well-advertised with fliers which have been mailed to graduate departments throughout the country. But it's your life, after all: make the extra effort to look for other job opportunities. Foreign job openings will typically not be advertised through fliers. You may have to plow through the job ads in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Those ads can also be found on the Web; it is, of course, a tremendous resource in this respect.

What advice do you give students going off to professional meetings for interviews?

[J.K.]: Needless to say, this is a critical moment in your career. Let's say that you have been contacted by one of the universities to which you've applied, and they want to interview you at the national meeting.

The higher your department and mentor has ranked you, the earlier you are likely to be contacted by search committees. Most of the preliminary arrangements will be made about a

month in advance, but in a few cases I have seen them being made at the last minute as well. You should sound professional and straightforward on the phone. No inflated claims or jokes are expected. By the way, the expenses of this preliminary interview are born by you. An unexpected major problem you may face is finding out the room number in the hotel where the interview is going to take place. While organizations have registers where this information could, in principle, be found, professors do not always take the trouble of registering. The hotels do not give out the room number of their guests, so you will have to call them well in advance in order to find out where the interview will take place. Do not leave this to the last minute! You must avoid being late for the interview, or arriving nervous on account of the problems you have encountered in locating the room number. First impressions can be important. Hotels have a limited number of phones, and they are often overburdened with hundreds of applicants seeking to contact their respective search committees. Some of the in-house phones can be out of order, in which case you will need to use pay phones. Hence, you should have some change with you, and give yourself plenty of time, because all sorts of things can go wrong. For instance, I remember one interviewer gave me the wrong name of the hotel where she was staying, and I had to scramble to find out where she actually was staying. Or there might be more than one search committee from a given university, and that might confuse matters. So the search for the venue might take longer than you expect. Hence, you should give yourself plenty of extra time to go to the

interviews! The price for appearing late is too high to take chances, and you will not be relaxed if you are rushing.[20]

Some graduate students entering the job market from top departments would like others to believe that they are really outstanding scholars by exhibiting a level of self confidence that often oversteps the bounds of cockiness and arrogance. They think this is a reasonable strategy in a competitive market in which information is very costly to acquire, and interviewers might use their own assessment of themselves as a kind of rule-of-thumb to evaluate their potential contribution to the profession (in the same way that some people use price as an indicator of the quality of a product). I do not know whether such a strategy does, in fact, pay off. Perhaps it does in the short run. Yet, I personally do not suggest resorting to such a strategy, because I believe that one can succeed without such “signaling” devices.

What should be avoided during an interview?

[J.K.]: No committee in the real world -- as opposed to the ideal one, the one in which none of us live -- can be run completely democratically. The chair of the search committee, as well as the committee itself, is usually determined by the chairperson of the department, and has not been decided by departmental vote. Wherever there is a group of people, there is a hierarchy. It is unavoidable on the search committee. Some people may be put on the committee because they are easily influenced by others. The distribution of influence within the committee will not be known to you, hence the only reasonable approach for you to take is to be open to signals to that effect, while being as cautious as possible.

Initially it is prudent not to commit yourself to extreme positions. You need to be diplomatic, without making too many assumptions about what is expected of you. Keep an open mind about the wording of the advertisement and try to have the committee members interpret it for you. Try to ascertain what is really wanted by the department. Do not think that what ought to be actually is. In our academic culture, political convictions, for instance, ought not be one of the open grounds on which hiring decisions are made. But there is no reason to think that the committee you are actually facing will live up to that ideal perfectly. People might well be "snookered" on the basis of their ideological position as well as on some personal attributes or eccentricity that theoretically ought not have been taken into consideration as part of the decision making process.

Try your best to avoid giving anyone an issue which can be used as an ostensible reason to eliminate you from competition. The real reason why someone might want to do so might be entirely different from the one claimed. Yet in the absence of a valid alternative, people resort to the use of any possible publicly acceptable reason to argue against you. While some individuals on the search committee might not be able to exert sufficient influence to put you on the short list, it is considerably easier to find an objection to eliminate you from further competition.

You should realize that the committee members are interested not only in your scholarly attributes. They will judge you as a potential colleague and teacher as well, and this aspect is usually as important as your intelligence and accomplishments. Thus, your self-confidence

and ability to express yourself clearly are also crucial factors. Your potential colleagues would like to have some idea how pleasant (or confrontational) you will be in department meetings, and how effective a teacher you will be. These issues will surface again and again, if and when you obtain an on-campus interview, as well as much later when you are considered for promotion. Therefore, these considerations should not be taken lightly. On the contrary, they need to become second nature to you.

Remember that you are not making a firm commitment to anything during the initial conversation. The interviewers just want to probe your mind a bit, in order to get a sense of how you think on your feet about certain issues. How responsive are you to questions? How open are you to criticism? Do you have any unusual desires, hidden agendas, extreme political positions? Someone might ask you, for instance, if you are willing to teach at night, not necessarily because there is a real need for it, but because she might want to see how flexible you respond to such minor impositions. Thus even if this might not be most desirable as far you are concerned, unless you come across as someone who is genuinely willing to do so without reservations, you are diminishing your chances. I have seen people be eliminated on similarly trivial points, inasmuch as people can use such responses as a proxy for more fundamental attributes in your personality. A response such as: "I have not thought about that," might unnecessarily lead some people wondering how much time you will need to think about minor decisions before you can make up your mind. Note, that an affirmative, even enthusiastic, answer does not mean that you will be asked to teach at night once you actually

obtain the job. In addition, you can always change your mind, anyhow. So your response at that point ought not be considered as a firm commitment, but rather as a test of your flexibility.

Even though it is hard under such circumstances, try to relax as much as possible. Keep in mind that this interview is preliminary; hence your responses should also be preliminary. A too enthusiastic response, such as "yes, I'd love to teach at night" perhaps sounds insincere, even if it were true, since most people's preferences are different (but even that exaggerated answer might be rescued by adding quickly: "I am a night person anyway.") Note, however, that from that answer the interviewers learned a lot about your personality, which is what they really had in mind.

It is my experience, that generally you will be given the benefit of the doubt that your teaching will be adequate, particularly if your job talk warrants it. Finally, search committees are much more likely to be interested in the quality of your overall program than by teaching experiences during graduate school. Universities are much more conscious of the need to advise and train graduate students to become effective active teachers.[21]

Invariably you will be asked about your dissertation. You should anticipate such questions by preparing a three minute summary in advance. You can expect plenty of discussion, and experience in fielding questions will come in handy at that point. The interviewing committee might be reluctant to ask personal questions (many of which are inappropriate or even illegal), but they would like to know if you have any outstanding

commitments which would make it difficult for you to accept the job if it were offered. You might hint that you are flexible as to your place of residence, or that your spouse's profession gives him/her sufficient flexibility in employment to allow her to relocate.

Scholars are always looking for colleagues to whom they can talk about their work, because that helps them in their own research. For example, if you have similar interests, you are likely to be plugged into the same scholarly network so that you can reinforce each other by increasing the department's visibility in that niche of the discipline. You will also be able to serve as second reader on dissertation committees chaired by the more senior colleague. In other words, the implication is that by bringing you on board, the department is not only getting, say, a labor economist as it sought, but by reaching a critical mass in that field, is getting an additional benefit as well. The presence of a single labor economist might not suffice to develop a reputation and attract graduate students in that field to the program. It is much easier to accomplish that with two or more specialists in the same field.

Note that your diversification in your studies could very well start paying dividends now. There might be someone on the committee, for example, who is interested in demography, so it could help you immensely if you had developed that sub-specialty in addition to you being a labor economist. At the same time, you need to be careful how much you stress this skill. If you ask innocuously, "may I teach a course in demography?" might be taken as implying that you are more interested in demography than might actually be the case. Departments allow faculty to teach many courses of their own choosing, and the more

senior you become the more that will be true, but at this stage of the interviewing process such a straightforward question is a bit risky, even if all you wanted to do is to bring attention to the usefulness of your subspecialty. It is too risky, because it provides an opportunity for potential detractors to interpret it as your really saying, "I am not that interested in teaching labor economics, I am really a demographer." It might also give the impression, even if false, that the future course of your research will take a detour from mainstream labor economics toward demography. Such willful misinterpretations are possible, particularly if the person does not want you to get the offer for some opaque reason, but does not know how else to question your credibility or qualifications. In addition, such a question could also be interpreted as offering competition to the senior scholar in that field. She might want to continue to teach the introductory course in demography, because she has invested considerable energy into developing the course, and would like you to take the back seat for a while at least. In short, you are entering risky territory even with such a seemingly benign question, once you begin to attempt to set the agenda during the interview. Do not forget that the advertisement did not mention demography. The department is seeking a labor economist. Hence, those qualities are the ones that you should stress. Your subspecialty has the potential to help you with some members of the committee, but by no means will everyone see it the same way. Caution is required to gain maximum advantage from your diversification.

[J.G.]: One of the most important words of advice that I can give to someone who has applied to a particular university is to develop a real interest in what they do there. Suppose

you're a graduate student in linguistics and there's an opening at the University of Oregon, and you've been invited to an interview at the Linguistics Society meeting. Fire up your computer, get on the Web, and, first off, learn the names of everyone in the department, and find out what they do. In the best cases, you'll already know many of the professors there by reputation, and will have read papers by some of them. Take time to study these people and their work. If you can make some connections between your work or interests and that of professors or students at the University of Oregon during your interview, then do so. It will help you immensely. There's nothing phony about this; quite the contrary. You're taking your job seriously. It astonishes me how few students actually do this. If you can say something intelligent (sympathetic *or* critical -- it doesn't much matter) about one of their publications to everyone you meet – well, I've never seen it happen, but it would make a very good impression, to say the least!

Let's talk a little about teaching experience as well. Most searches will care very much about undergraduate teaching. My feeling is that any job at a four-year college, or at virtually any large public university, will place an extremely high value on undergraduate teaching. You can expect to have some leading questions thrown at you about this subject. It is your job to see this as an opening to express interest in undergraduate teaching (and I would hope that this interest is genuine). I would advise you to discuss this topic during the interview in as much detail as the interviewer seems to want. The student obviously knows less about

teaching than she does about his research topic, but the interviewer wants to know about teaching: so talk about teaching.

I remember one professional meeting where a student of mine had an interview with the committee from a large state university. The next morning, one of the interviewers (who I knew personally) came up to me and said that she regretted that Candidate X had so little to say about teaching introductory linguistics. Now, I knew for a fact that the student, in fact, had in her briefcase some very nice handouts she had prepared for an undergraduate course she was teaching that semester, but apparently she never took them out. In the end, she hadn't put her best foot forward, and she didn't make the next cut.

What's the next step in the process?

[J.K.]: The search committee will meet within a week or two after the initial interviews are completed in order to shorten the list to a handful of candidates, usually three, who will be invited to campus for a more thorough discussion. If you do not hear from a university within a three weeks of your initial interview, you can be pretty certain that you did not make the next cut. Unfortunately- - and I say unfortunately, because I do find it uncollegial -- the department is not likely to notify you officially for months to come, of the negative result.

What if I do not make the next cut?

[J.K.]: Do not despair, and there is no need to call the chair of the department. There will certainly be other opportunities. The fact that you did not interest that search committee need not have had anything to do with any of your attributes or qualifications. Search committees

have all sorts of unexpressed objectives. The department might have given them the charge to look for a labor economist, but the chair of the committee is intent on finding a person who specializes in third-world labor markets, because she was unable to get authorization to hire a development economist, her first choice. Seeing that this valuable colleague was disappointed, the chair of the department put her in charge of the committee in order to placate her. She does not have the authorization to advertise for a labor economist of the Third World, because the department did not go along with that, but she now has a chance, nonetheless, to obtain a result satisfactory to her. There could have been no way for you to know that some of the questions directed at you were aimed at ascertaining your willingness to develop your specialty closer to the lines of a developmental economist. But you should be open minded enough to pick up such intimations during the interview.

Another factor outside of your control is that people are usually attracted to like-minded people. Academics can be envious of, and at times do not prefer colleagues, who might outperform them. So, if you are interviewing with a department for which scholarly excellence is not at the top of the agenda, do not give them the impression of being on the fast lane to the Ivy League. It will not impress them. On the contrary, it could work against you. They have made the legitimate decision to be educators rather than creators of knowledge, and they perform an extremely important function as interpreters of the humanities or of the natural or social sciences at regional campuses of state universities, or at liberal arts colleges. Perhaps this is your goal as well. You might not want to do much

writing or research after you have completed your dissertation. That is OK, too. You should let the search committee know that you are interested primarily in teaching and not in publishing. If you are desperate for the job, you might decide to stress teaching even more than your preferences would otherwise warrant, in order to appeal more to your interviewers. While, you are not likely to be very happy being in a place where your aspirations differ considerably from the rest of your colleagues, your aspirations might well change over time, and even a temporary job would enable you to keep a foot in the academic world until you can find an institution more suitable for you.

Ideally, there should be a match between your goals and that of the department in which you are interviewing. Necessity will force second-best options on you as well as on a department, if the ideal is out of reach. Do not assume by any means that the department will obviously choose someone with your aspirations. Its sights might be set differently from you. It is as possible to be over-qualified for the position, as it is possible to be under-qualified. [J.G.]: This is a good place to mention one general law about academic departments: somehow or other, departments almost always succeed in reproducing themselves. When seeking new members, they find people who fit their mold and will continue their traditions. You may think I mean this in a purely intellectual sense, and that certainly is true, but I mean it in other ways as well. Style, personality, and theoretical outlook all tend to be reproduced. At some level, the job candidate is going to be tested for how well she will reproduce what is already there. The job candidate typically doesn't know too much about these more subtle

aspects of the personality profile of the department as a whole, and there's little that one can do to appear to fit in better or worse, though here I'd repeat what I said earlier: research the department you are visiting, and use actively your knowledge of what goes on there.

[J.K.]: That's true. I am convinced that universities (as well as departments) have a traditional standard, which tends to reproduce itself. One might think that a department is a small enough social unit for one person to bring about change, but this is misleading. The standards and departmental culture are kept in equilibrium by dozens of interlocking structural factors. It is embedded in the social interactions within the community, and is reinforced by the selection process of new entrants. It is part of the politics of the place, and people have accommodated themselves to it. They have made investments of time and effort based on the assumption that things will remain as they are. Academic departments are as resistant to institutional change as any other social unit.

In a different vein, I alluded earlier to the division of the intellectual community along various ideological dimensions, political as well as intellectual. If you believe strongly that the free market is a highly efficient institution of economic organization, it hardly pays for you to apply to departments which prefer to accentuate market imperfections and failures. If you are on the left of the political spectrum, you may not become a prime candidate in a conservative department, or vice versa.

There are numerous other reasons why you might not have advanced beyond the first interview. There might be an "inside" candidate, and you appeared to be too good, and

therefore would pose too much competition. To be sure, the search committee is obligated to bring at least a couple of credible candidates to campus, because otherwise the competition would not appear acceptable to the dean. However, it is just possible that you will not be invited, because the search committee prefers someone who is less likely to impress their colleagues. So there is no need to despair; the U.S. has a large and rather well functioning academic job market. The advantages of size are such that the chances are excellent that you will find a niche for yourself in due course. It might not be immediately, however. Hence, you need patience, a realistic assessment of your own talents and aspirations, and a little knowledge of how this market functions.

In short, you should *not* automatically think it was your own fault that you failed to advance in the competition; but because you will not be privy to this inside information, it is important for you to go over the interview in your own mind. You should discuss the interview with a confidant and your mentor in order to have another opinion on strategically unwise answers during the discussion, so you can avoid them in the future. There is no need to spend excessive time theorizing, however, because ultimately you may not be able to second-guess the decision; you have much too little information at your disposal for that. Yet, it might still be possible for you to learn something from rethinking the conversation you had with the members of the search committee, inasmuch as people sometimes give you subtle hints whose significance is not immediately apparent, but might become so subsequently. While I strongly urge you not to blame yourself for not advancing in a

competition, it is true that the more frequently you fail to do so, the more likely it is that you should seek the cause in the divergence between your abilities/achievements and your aspirations.

Note that while you should apply to every job that you can imagine yourself accepting, you should also keep in mind that an application is costly in both time and effort: it might take as long as a half to a full day per application. Thus, it pays to do some research about the departments you are considering even before you apply in order to find out if there might be a suitable match between you and the department.

What about the candidates who advance to the next stage. What can they expect?

[J.K.]: They will receive an invitation to visit the campus, either from the chair of the search committee or from the chair of the department. That will come within a couple of weeks of the initial interview, and this second step is at the university's expense. The second interview is a full day affair, but under special circumstances, can stretch into a second day. You will be asked to give a lecture on the topic of your choice, and it should be about the most significant aspects of your dissertation. The talk should not be about your next project or your most recent paper, even if it has been quite some time since you finished your dissertation, and it feels like old hat to you -- unless, of course, you are an already established scholar. Do not discuss extensively how you came to choose your topic, do not gossip about your department, or talk about your advisor during the formal talk. Leave such chit-chat for dinner conversation. I have seen job talks fail needlessly on such grounds. Even

though it was clear that the person was well qualified for the job, she simply did not keep sufficiently in mind what a formal job talk should be.

[J.G.]: Most graduate departments now have established semi-formal venues for students to prepare their presentations. In our department, there are talks most Wednesday afternoons at 4 o'clock, and if a student is going for an interview, she will usually go through a dry run at one of these sessions.

It goes without saying that you will be nervous. Nobody will hold that against you. As a general rule, I'd encourage young candidates to err, if necessary, on the side of conservatism in such traditional matters as attire. In this day and age, relatively few academics go so far as to wear a tie during their normal work week, and jeans are normal at many universities. But I think it is a mistake for a job candidate to opt for comfortable casual wear; by and large, it is the professional image that you want to project, not the casual one. Incidentally, though I myself am not particularly conscious of styles of attire -- I need someone else's judgment as to whether a pair of pants goes with a particular sports jacket -- I have been surprised by the sloppy dress of a couple of candidates. Obviously, this isn't going to be make-or-break factor for any candidate, but why not put your best foot forward? This matter is undoubtedly a good deal more complex for women.

[J.K.]: You will be expected to deliver a formal talk about your thesis, even if it is on an esoteric topic. People will be interested in seeing if you can generate enthusiasm even on a topic completely unfamiliar to them. Your performance as an effective communicator can be

gauged anyhow, regardless of the topic, and that is one of your qualities the department will be assessing. It will be used in various ways, including as a proxy for your ability to teach.

[J.G.]: I'd like to mention something very unusual that occurred to me at one interview, and that has been reported to me two or three times since. I was invited to a Canadian university for an interview, and I was told that I would just be interviewed, that no talk was expected. When I got there, I was informed that it would be very convenient for me to make a little presentation at a department get-together. So I had to prepare something on the spot. I'll never know whether this was a diabolical strategy on their part, or a hopeless lack of organization, but I pass it on for what it's worth. Always expect to give a talk, and prepare for it.

[J.K.]: Needless to say, all sorts of unexpected things might happen, but it is not possible to prepare for them in advance. I remember, for instance, that at the beginning of one of my job talks the lights simply went out, and there were no windows in the room in which I was going to speak! A dim hallway was found where we at least could see one another and I gave my talk without the use of an overhead projector upon which I was planning to rely on extensively. Because I did not let that bother me, I did receive an offer. No wonder, my normal talk was turned into an extraordinary performance by the unanticipated turn of events because I did not panic.

Before, as well as after your talk, you will meet with numerous people for about half an hour at a time, and be invited to breakfast, lunch or dinner with some members of the faculty.

You will have to tune your social skills for the occasion, if it does not come automatically to you, but be prepared. Topics of conversation will vary enormously. One question often asked is where else you are interviewing. I do not know of a good answer, particularly if you do not have many other interviews lined up. Whatever you say might sound negative. Of course, if you have lots of other interviews, it is easy to create a bandwagon effect: they should want you, because everyone else is about to give you an offer. However, I always interpreted such a question as a sign of intellectual laziness on their part, and was too inhibited to provide an adequate response. In such cases, you should think of an answer with which you, yourself, are be comfortable.[22]

You may be given your approximate salary by the chair of the department before the interview is concluded. Do not make any commitments at this point. Just nod. You do not yet have any leverage, but you will have a little later. Needless to say, you should conduct yourself throughout the process with the same caution as during your first interview. The most important aspect of your visit will be your lecture. Most of the members of the faculty who will decide on your case will not take the time to read your manuscript, and will make up their mind mostly, if not entirely, on the basis of your lecture and the impression you make with during your interaction with them.

There is no reason in the world why your lecture should not be impeccable. You have been working on the topic for a couple of years, you should know more about it than anyone else. Your major task is to be able to summarize the salient features of the dissertation in a

short talk. Ask yourself what is essential to your thesis. What issues have you raised? How did you frame your question, and why? What is novel about your approach? Why should people pay attention to it? Be concise and leave the nuances for the question and answer segment. It is important that your self-confidence shine through without being cocky. Again, your audience will want to ascertain what kind of a colleague you will be. If you give evidence that you will be difficult to get along with, there could be real problems in all but the best departments, where colleagues are used to dealing with and are willing to put up with even the most difficult personalities.

[J.G.]: The perceptive candidate should feel, in preparing this talk, a conflict between wanting to appear up-to-the-minute in her own work and wanting to communicate maximally with the entire audience. Here a graduate student's training in their home department is likely to be treacherous. There are many views that can be presumed in conversation with one's teachers and fellow students that are not shared across the profession. The successful candidate will have taken some steps to figure out what views fall into that category, and will not assume them in the job talk. If there is a new vocabulary in the field in which you work, be sure to have at your fingertips an equivalent phrase from a more traditional vocabulary, and be sure to use both in your talk.

[J.K.]: Moreover, try your best to answer every question, without being evasive, if at all possible. There is no shame in saying, "You know, I thought about that, but I cannot answer the question at this point. It will require further work. However, I did think about a related

issue, because...." That is much better than responding with a terse, "I don't know," or by trying to pretend that you actually do know the answer. Your audience will surely know you are bluffing. More importantly, you should be generous whenever appropriate: "Thanks for bringing this issue to my attention," should be seen as a conciliatory response. Do not humiliate members of the audience by responding to a dull question from a junior scholar by, "I thought I had already spoken about that issue." People who paid attention will know that, and will appreciate your not embarrassing one of their colleagues. Do not point out inconsistencies in the questions being asked. Be polite to a fault. Though the degree to which scholarly bluntness is accepted varies considerably from campus to campus, you should assume that diplomatic answers are expected of you until you are convinced of the contrary.

Be aware that power of decision making is seldom distributed evenly within a department, and those exercising the most influence do not necessarily want to be threatened by upstarts. Hence, it would be useful for you to signal subtly that you are a team player, and it is the farthest from your mind to question the political status quo. They just might let even a good scholar go elsewhere, if you seem to think too highly of yourself.

How should a candidate think about an offer?

[J.G.]: First of all, congratulations are in order! This is the moment you've been waiting for. This may be one of the defining moments of your life, and it's one you've been working for for many years.

[J.K.]: The offer is usually made within two to four weeks of your trip to the campus, and you will be contacted by phone by the chair of the department. She will reiterate in more detail than during your campus interview the conditions of your employment, such as your salary, benefits, how many courses you will teach, tenure stream status, sabbaticals, etc. All of these parameters vary enormously from institution to institution. You need to know that the verbal offer needs to be put into writing before it has much legal validity, and a letter from the dean or provost is usually preferred to one from the chair. Mistakes have been known to happen in the past at this stage, when the chair thought that more money was available for salary than was actually the case, but this happens rarely. A letter from the chair usually suffices.

[J.G.]: I'm sorry to say that there are more cases of foul-ups here than one would expect - cases where verbal offers did not materialize as written offers, though most of these cases involve more senior appointments, an area we will turn to in a later chapter. So bear in mind that a verbal offer is almost certainly real, but don't sell the farm till you see it in writing on letterhead stationery.

But there are some possible hitches to consider before going any further. In a surprising number of cases, the candidate is subject to some unusual questions just before the actual offer comes, and we should talk about what to do if this happens. This is a moment just before a real offer comes.

Consider this scenario. It's four weeks after your visit to Indiana University, let's say, and you know they have interviewed two other candidates for the same position. One morning the telephone rings, and it's the chairman calling. She seemed very enthusiastic about your candidacy, and you had the strong feeling that she backed you all the way. But then again, she hadn't seen the other candidates at that point. And she has news for you: the department is undecided. You're the leading candidate, but they need to know if you'll accept the job before they can settle on you. She asks you, point blank, if you'll accept. What should you say?

Well, under the circumstances, what can you say? Your first inclination is to say, "Of course! You want me? Great! I'm yours!" But your second reaction, a split-second later, is likely to be, "How dare you ask me if I'll accept? Offer me the job, and you'll darn well find out if I'll accept!" And you can't say either of those things.

Still, of the two reactions, the second is more reasonable. They have no business asking you whether you'll accept until they make a legitimate offer. And so you have no choice but to politely and graciously offer a platitudinous response -- something along the lines of: "You know how impressed I was during my visit last month. I can't imagine a department I would rather be a member of." Or, "Your department is exactly the kind of department I would like to join, and if I were made the kind of offer we discussed last month, I could hardly imagine not accepting it."

Your job is, indeed, to make them feel loved and cherished, just as they should be trying to make you feel valued. But despite the fact that this kind of odd questioning from the would-be future employer happens surprisingly often, please bear in mind that it is not appropriate for anyone to ask you if you'd accept something until they actually offer it.

But finally the real thing, an offer, has come. It will almost certainly come by telephone. In this business, good news comes by telephone, and bad news comes in the mail. The chairman calls you up, and offers you a job. Do you accept? Answer: not right off, no. The negotiation has only just begun.

[J.K.]: You will have about two weeks to make up your mind. If you need more time, in case you are waiting for other offers, you should say so after the two weeks have elapsed, not before. An extension is usually granted. You are now in a good position to bargain, even if this is your first appointment. Although your leverage is limited, you should use it to your best advantage. You have gone through a grueling competition, and the chances are you deserved coming out as the winner. Departments do not want to miss their first choice for a small amount of extra money. They do not want to call another department meeting, or another balloting. It is much simpler for the chair to make a quick deal with you now directly. If, for example, you would like a year off to do some post-doctoral work, most departments will have no problem giving you a year's leave of absence without pay. Your starting to teach a year later even provides some advantages, usually not for the department, but for the dean,

because your salary then comes under a different line in his budget, and the dean then has more flexibility in its use.

Do ask for a slightly higher salary than you have been offered, or for a supplementary allowance -- for a computer, for example, or for both. Note that once you have agreed to the offer you have locked yourself into a salary for some time to come. That has become your 'market value.' Substantial further increases in your salary will not be forthcoming until you are able to generate outside offers, once you become better known. Until then you will have to rely on tiny annual increments of automatic cost-of-living adjustments and even smaller merit pay increases. In other words, you have a little bargaining power now. Make use of it to your best advantage, without going overboard. A request of a salary one to two thousand dollars higher than the one being offered will not be held against you. The chair will try to accommodate you to the extent possible, but she has to convince the dean that your request is reasonable. At the same time, chairs are aware that faculty compare salaries and people would be unhappy if your salary as a beginner were too close to others with more seniority in the department (though salary disparities of this sort can arise, especially in state universities). The chair does have some leeway, but not much. In any event, do not accept the offer immediately. There would be no benefit in doing so. Wait and think about it at least the minimum time allotted to you. Talk it over with others before you commit yourself permanently.

[J.G.]: There are many sides to an offer; there are many things that can be offered. Let's consider an abbreviated list:

1. salary

2. moving expenses

3. a job for a spouse

4. tuition for children's schooling

5. help in buying or renting a home

6. size or type of office

7. an office computer and/or other computer resources

8. summer financial support

9. time off for research during the first year or two

10. laboratory space, in some disciplines

11. rank -- assistant, associate, or full professor

12. years to go until consideration for tenure

13. money to buy books for the library or your office

14. travel funds

15. research assistant expenses

16. xeroxing funds

17. teaching load

18. course schedule, courses to be taught and number of preparations

19. secretarial assistance

20. starting date

Yes, there are that many, and more. And remember the following rule: You can negotiate about anything until you have accepted the offer. Then your chance to negotiate quickly fades into a distant memory.

And don't forget another rule, while we're on the subject: You are likely to feel guilty about asking for things for yourself. Don't. Remember: when you get these things, you are not taking things away from anyone else: you are strengthening the department that you are joining.

You may be negotiating now with your chairman-to-be, or it may be the dean, above the chair. It is more likely to be the chairman. The chair may or may not be a skilled administrator, and may or may not be a people person.

I think that opinions are mixed with regard to one more rule that I'd like to offer. We will come back to it in the context of other negotiations that you will have over the course of your academic career. It is a very tough one to learn, and most academics never learn it -- indeed, may challenge its very propriety here! Here it is:

If you conclude a negotiation and you receive everything you asked for, then you undersold your position.

At first blush, this may sound like a very strange maxim. It seems to be saying that if you get what you asked for, you did something wrong. But it is to be taken in a more nuanced

fashion. The principle does entail that you should not expect to get everything you ask for, and it also implies that if the university does not give you everything you ask for, this doesn't mean that they don't think highly of you. In fact, you will have gotten a good reality check – you'll have learned a lesson -- on how the university distributes its resources. Some, but only some, go to "outside hires," like you - people joining the university from outside.

That same rule also entails that you should ask for what you'd like, and you should give the appearance of being flexible. If some conditions that you are aiming for are not really flexible, then specify that in the course of the negotiation.

But this maxim should not be taken as carte blanche to task for unreasonable things: you won't get them, and you'll look like (indeed, will be acting like) a prima donna, and no-one likes that. I just mean to drive home the point that there is a considerable margin for negotiation in an area where the candidate's requests are entirely reasonable.

Of all the areas of negotiation, the hardest by far is the issue of employment for a spouse - what's come to be known as "the two-body problem" (with apologies to the physicists). A few enlightened universities have taken serious steps towards establishing a realistic policy in this area. One large Midwestern state university has a special fund set up for this purpose, and tries to broker a spousal job by breaking the cost of the second job into three equal pieces: one-third is covered by the department making the original offer, one-third by the department that would become the home of the spouse, and one-third is covered by the general fund. But few universities have established any such plans.[23]

There are two other areas to think about relating to offers. First, what do you do when you've been made an offer by one university (let’s say it’s Harvard, where assistant professors can count on *not* getting tenure) that is not your top choice among the places that you are interviewing? You must get back to the chairman of other school – let’s say it’s the University of Chicago -- immediately, and explain the situation. Tell them that you would prefer to accept an offer from the University of Chicago, but that you have only two weeks to respond to Harvard. Chicago will tell you where you stand in their process, and if you're their top candidate, there's a very good chance that they'll speed up their process to meet your deadline. Certainly the chairman will give you very strong indications that you're their top candidate if you are, and she should also tell you if you're not.

If this goes down to the wire, it's usually possible for Harvard to wait a little bit longer than they'd prefer to. If you need an extra week, they're not likely to take back their offer because of that. After all, they really do want you.

This brings up a much trickier subject on which nobody has good advice. What if you've accepted a position at (let's say) the University of Iowa, when out of the blue, for some reason, comes an offer from Stanford University? (The situation is more general; one of the offers may not be from a university, but from something else, like a post-doctoral fellowship.) This happens more often than one might expect. It can happen if Stanford simply couldn't get its act together to make an offer early enough in the year to beat out an offer made by Iowa, which wanted a reply within two or three weeks. Iowa may have thought that

they had been smart to grab a candidate early in the season, but what if Stanford comes along and makes an offer to that a candidate who has already signed on at Iowa? My personal feeling is that, after due meditation, the candidate should go with his heart, and risk leaving Iowa in the lurch. After all, how much will she enjoy being a professor at Iowa if she knows she would really rather have gone to Stanford? And there's an enormous difference between the relative losses. The folks at Iowa will have to scramble to make a quick (and probably temporary) hire and have their courses covered next year, and that's a pain in the neck for them; but for the candidate in question, it's a big part of his career that's on the line. But the issue is not at all clear, in my view. It’s easy to feel that one has made a commitment to Iowa by accepting their early offer, and that’s true; backing out of the commitment is not something that should be done at all lightly, by any means. But it’s also important to bear in mind the enormous difference between the impact on the candidate and the impact on the university, and make a decision based on all the factors.[24] (If academics had sign-on bonuses like star athletes, the bonuses would have to be returned, of course, but there are none; the differences between these two professions is worth meditating on.)

What about the candidate who ends the season with no offers at all?

[J.K.]: If you did not receive an offer at this stage you should not despair: there are still local "aftermarkets" to consider. These include smaller colleges and universities which tend to find faculty after the national market is over. In addition, many non-tenure-track jobs open up at the last minute, because fellowships are announced in the spring, and faculty members can

notify their chairs only at this late date that they will not be teaching next year. This forces chairs to scramble to find credible temporary replacements, lasting from one semester to as long as two years. Although these are usually dead-end jobs, they can, nonetheless, have many advantages, such as the absence of committee responsibilities. You ought to be in a good position to find one of these positions if you are willing, and your family circumstances allow you, to become an itinerant academic, and pick up and move across the country at a moment's notice. Such a job will give you valuable teaching experience and an opportunity to join the academic world even if on disadvantageous initial terms. On a more positive note, you will develop courses that you can use later on in your career, and even a temporary job can turn into a regular tenure stream position. In that case you could become an "inside" candidate and enjoy comparative advantages, inasmuch as you would already be known to the department, and you will make friends whom you can ask to provide you letters of recommendations later on. Most importantly, you are most likely going to be treated as a guest: you will not be asked to serve on committees, or even go to departmental meetings. This is an enormous advantage, for it leaves you much more time for scholarship than if you had a tenure-track position. Plus you retain a foothold in the academic world, and have more time to wait until a full-fledged job opens up in your field.

However, just as in case of a full-time job, such a visiting position will also tag you with a particular market value. This will be taken as your revealed value much as for a baseball player who signs a contract for a particular price. Just as your school affiliation is used by

many as an indication of your scholarly potential, the affiliation with an employer is used by the market as a determinant, and at this stage of your career, as an important determinant, of your "value", that is to say, your potential. It is a signal that overrides the quality of your graduate department. After this initial determination it will not be possible for you to move up easily in the hierarchy of academic institutions. Upward mobility will be exponentially more difficult the further you would like to move from your initial position. This, by the way, is the case whether you have a temporary or a tenure track position. Consequently, it might make sense for you to sit out a year rather than accept a position that you think might make it much more difficult for you to increase your market value next year.[25]

How long should I keep my hopes up?

[J.K.]: I would certainly consider two cycles to be appropriate. No more and no less. If you were unsuccessful in the first year in both the national and local markets, it would be too radical to withdraw from academia immediately, unless – of course – you were unsure about the degree of your commitment in the first place. Perhaps you have skills that you can market successfully in the business world. Perhaps you can find a job in government, or in academic administration. Do give it a try, and see how it feels. But it would be completely understandable to try to obtain an academic job again the following year. After all, you have already invested a number of years and you should not give up on your goal immediately. Do keep in close touch with your mentor and discuss what might have gone wrong. What can be learned from your lack of success, and how different might your experience be next year?

Perhaps your lack of success the first time around was caused by the idiosyncrasies of the job market that particular year. Perhaps you did not pursue certain segments of the market with sufficient vigor. You will be more informed and with more experience under your belt. During the second cycle it would be wise if you did not believe that you were unsuccessful the first time around. Tell yourself that you were just testing the waters. But if you begin to think of yourself as a failure, you would have a much more difficult time to succeed the second time around, because others would also stigmatize you as a failure. You might argue that you were not quite completed with your dissertation to be taken seriously the previous year. Perhaps your mentor can find you a post as a teaching assistant, perhaps you qualify for a grant or post-doctoral scholarship. And most of all, do retain a positive attitude. If you are negative about yourself, why should others be otherwise? Your self-perception will be contagious. After all, you have more information available to you about yourself than they do. Hence, their evaluation of you is not going to be higher than your own.

I have also known people who have undertaken job hunting as a traveling salesmen sells encyclopaedias: during the late season they simply go door to door (in an area where they wanted to live), and say here I am, do you need a mathematician? If a department's chairperson just happens to have an unexpected opening, it can be advantageous to be right there in front of her at just the right moment. Face to face contact is superior to contact through a resume. People have found jobs this way, and in some cases the match was sufficiently satisfactory for both sides, so that it turned out to be a permanent arrangement! I

grant that this is an idiosyncratic way of seeking employment, but you should keep it in mind, nonetheless. The timing obviously has to be right to be successful in locating such a position.

This is also the time to contact again those local institutions to which you might have sent applications earlier in the season. Your c.v. might already be on file, but a renewed expression of interest can be helpful. Given all their other responsibilities, chairs want to minimize effort, and if they know that you are still available they would be much more likely to give you the job than to contact the dozen other applicants on file with them, for whom this information is unknown. Hence, a phone call to the chair of a local college periodically beginning in March can be quite useful.

Another possibility with much more advantages than temporary employment is a post-doctoral scholarship. There are a large number of such programs available in all disciplines, and in some sense, they are even preferable to a full-time job, even at a lower income. They are valuable, because they afford you one or two years to concentrate on research without any teaching obligations or administrative duties. You will be able to get an immense amount of work done compared to full-time employment with teaching obligations, office hours, course preparations, committee meetings, departmental meetings, and so forth. As a consequence, your publication record would increase substantially. In addition, obtaining such a fellowship will increase your market value, inasmuch as you would have proven to potential employers that you were successful in winning at a national competition.

[J.G.]: In some disciplines, especially the laboratory sciences with their heavy support by research grants, the post-doc phase of an academic's development is thoroughly obligatory: one goes to work as a post-doc in someone's lab after receiving the PhD, no ifs, ands or buts. In other areas, such as the social sciences or the humanities, this is by no means a certain thing (though it is quite common in fields like psychology). Be that as it may, it is very much worth checking out in your own discipline. And bear in mind that many post-docs can be obtained even when one has landed a regular job; it's possible to take off one's third or fourth year in a tenure-track appointment and hold a post-doc appointment somewhere else, using the time to strengthen one's research and publication record. (I did that, spending a productive year as a Mellon fellow at Harvard during what would have been my fourth year at Indiana.)

[J.K.]: But back to job seeking. The major factor in succeeding in obtaining a job is your own belief in yourself! If you continue to maintain your confidence, and persevere you will be successful, provided, of course, that your goals are matched reasonably to your aptitudes. It is therefore, important to keep on updating your own information set about yourself, in order to make sure you are not aiming too high, or too low. To have a valid evaluation of yourself you need to remain observant, keep an open mind, and discuss your future with people who know you, and whom you trust.

CHAPTER 6: HIT THE GROUND RUNNING:

STARTING (LIFE) AS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

[J.G.]: Of all the transitions that we have occasion to discuss in this book -- and there are many -- the transition from being a graduate student to being an assistant professor is the most difficult. This is truly the moment when one becomes an adult in the academic world, and fully responsible for one's actions. The assistant professor is at the bottom of the totem pole, without a very good road map.

Some of the problems the assistant professor is likely to face are normal by-products of a move, a change of locale, which is likely how anyone leaving one city and one job for another will feel. She is likely to need to find a new home to live in, become oriented to a new city and region of the country, and to find new friends.

[J.K.]: Yes. Your new life will definitely be challenging, even daunting at times. This is independent of the kind of institution you've joined. By the way, you should take comfort in your demonstrated ability to persevere and succeed. After all, you do have an academic job, and not everyone can boast of that. Graduate school was undoubtedly a major challenge, even a grueling experience, but you had the inner strength to persevere and the talent to complete the program. That automatically puts you into the top few percentiles of the intellectual community. Even though you have joined this elite group, you should not expect your salary to reflect this fact. You need to obtain your satisfaction not from your money income, but from your teaching, research, and the esteem you will be held by your peers. In

addition, you have much more time for vacations and freedom to dispose of your time than your cohort in the corporate world. While it can, and usually does provide, a truly rewarding experience, academia ought not be idealized: it has plenty challenges and surprises, and many similarities with how other bureaucratic systems function.

[J.G.]: Many graduate students will have had some experience teaching undergraduate courses -- expository writing courses, or introductory courses in their particular area. Most of the time, this experience will have been under the direct tutelage of an overseeing professor, and the student will have had little experience putting together a syllabus from scratch. By and large, the first year or two of teaching for an assistant professor will be limited to courses for which syllabi already exist in one form or other, but it is by no means always easy at the start to find helpful new colleagues who are gracious enough to share the materials that they have -- materials such as syllabi, handouts, problem sets, and sample examinations.[26]

There are two especially severe problems facing junior faculty members which deserve our special attention. First, how should she deal with the transition from being a researcher under someone's direct supervision to an independent researcher? And second, how should she determine the best way to distribute her time and energy among the competing demands that she faces in job, demands for involving in teaching, in research, and in service? We will take these up in turn.

How does one juggle the various responsibilities: teaching research and service?

The Juggling problem is the single most difficult problem that a junior academic has to face. If all has gone well in graduate school, she has already learned how to do research, but now she has to learn how to do research while being an assistant professor. That's like learning how to balance a stick on your nose, and then learning how to do it while riding a bicycle. [Cartoon, please!]

Each person has to decide for themselves, of course, how they want to develop their lives and their careers. There is no particular recipe regarding how one ought to balance teaching, research, and service. Each course offers certain rewards and demands varying sorts of involvement and activities. Teaching can be a very social activity, in which there is much interaction with young people; service is social as well, though perhaps a bit less; while research tends to be a good deal less social.

But while each person has to make their own decisions based on their own strengths and personal values, there are a number of traps and potential difficulties that it is worthwhile pointing out. Behind any discussion lies the following fact: the years as an assistant professor lead inexorably to a decision which will be passed regarding one's professorial activities, the tenure decision. In most cases, assistant professors believe that they are working in a fashion designed to help them pass this critical examination. But in far too many cases, assistant professors make choices -- not randomly, but in a consistent pattern -- that make it difficult or even impossible for them to get tenure.

The biggest issue is one that is simple and well-known, and which goes by the name:

publish or perish! Which means, spelled out in full, that at most universities, if your publication record is not satisfactory, nothing else will save you when it comes time for evaluation for tenure. Tenure and evaluation for tenure is the subject of the next chapter; for now, we may just take our problem to be what an assistant professor should (and shouldn't) do in order to produce a satisfactory record in research, teaching, and service so as to not have a rude shock at tenure time.

I can be a good scholar or scientist without publishing, can't I?

[J.K.]: Of course, but being a good scholar does not suffice. You have to also demonstrate it to the satisfaction of neutral observers. Until you do that, you are alone in your conviction of your own excellence. There are many institutions which concentrate exclusively on undergraduate education where publications are not a prerequisite for promotion.[27] Hence, if you do not want to subject yourself to the pressures associated with publishing, - and these can be substantial, - you should aspire to a position at one of these colleges and universities. You will be happier there.

[J.G.]: In all fairness to those institutions, I'd like to add that they're looking for a different kind of scholarship and research. Everyone knows the old joke that copying from one person is plagiarism, while copying from five is scholarship. All joking aside, that remark does suggest a truth, which is that one part of research is reading a lot, and basically keeping up with what's happening in one's field. That's a *lot* of work, though it's less work (by a long shot) than reaching beyond the limits of the known to develop new ideas, formulate and test

them, and publish them. Teaching universities are willing, by and large, to have scholars who keep up with what's happening in their fields, and they expect their faculty to produce the kinds of publications that demonstrate an on-going familiarity with the current literature.

What other issues must one pay particular attention to?

[J.G.]: The first three laws of academia are that:

1. You must be in your classroom at the hours when yours classes meet.
2. Your participation in various service activities will often be sought.
3. No one will ask you to do your research until it's too late.

I hope that most people would think these rules so natural as to not need saying. But I am amazed to discover that many people think that even these simple rules do not apply to them. They do. It should be *unthinkable* to be five minutes late to class on a regular basis (and students will consider it a "regular basis" if it happens three times running). When I'm occasionally late, I apologize to the class, and I truly mean the apology. Being late because you're talking to students from one class is not an acceptable reason to be late for your next class.

It's often necessary simply to say "no" in the face of requests and demands on junior faculty members' time. The burdensome requests all too frequently take up time and energy for functions that are of relatively low priority in the larger scheme of things at the university, and all too frequently those long-term projects will suffer that are, indeed, high on the university's scale: to wit, research and publishing. Remember: just because you're asked to do

something doesn't mean it has to be done, or done by you. The world might just get along without you. If there's a job that no-one has been willing to take on, it just might be for a good reason; the job might not be worth taking on.

Though I can't speak from direct personal experience on this, it is also the case that if you're from a group that is traditionally underrepresented in the profession – if you are a woman or Afro-American, for example – you will be disproportionately subject to this circumstance, and the opportunities for involvement in truly worthy causes may well be quite significant. A Black faculty member at an institute with few Black colleagues will understandably feel a responsibility to spend time mentoring Black graduate students in his department, or even in other departments, when a white colleague would most likely feel no parallel responsibility. In the best sense of the term, the young Black assistant professor is now a role model, and there's a lot of pressure (internal and external) to live up to the burden of that responsibility. Each person must follow his conscience in cases like this, but it would be an enormous loss all the way around if she were to let those short-term opportunities have a serious negative effect on his early research program. I in no way want to send the message that these opportunities to help others should be passed by, but simply bear this in mind: don't count on anyone looking over your shoulder to tell you that you are or aren't doing enough research; you've got to take that responsibility on *yourself*, and you'd better listen to what your internal voice says on that score.

[J.K.]: We're getting down to the nitty-gritty reality of the academic life as a career. Bear in mind that the more realistic your expectations are, the more rewarding your career will be. That entails your trying to reach your potential - and your developing skills at assessing what that potential is in actuality. This is most difficult, because it means thinking about yourself in possibly new ways. You should ask how others see you, and how their view fits in with yours. If the two views agree, then you can use that as a basis of further action. If, however, they do not, then you need to ask why, and how you can bring the two views in congruity. Will you change your own mind, or will you try to change the views of others? In the long run, the two views should converge.

And remember, too, that your future depends essentially on you. While it is true that a myriad of external factors influence how successful anyone will be (in any occupation), it is also the case that a realistic assessment of both your aptitudes and of the workings of academia will improve your chances of success, especially if you are able to tune your aspirations to these factors. Academia is just as competitive as any other profession; in some respects it is unfortunately more so. Scholars are not moved exclusively by ideas and altruism. Prestige, respect, power, and yes, money all play a role in their motivation as well to varying degrees. Remember that the academic world has its own challenges. How you face those challenges -- to which ones you respond, and which ones are best left to others -- depends on you alone.

In any event, you do not have much time, and you need to think about viable strategies to get tenure from the outset. You no doubt have the solid foundation of a good education, but you are not alone. One strength of the American system is the tendency to overproduce. There is an excess supply of cars as well as of excellent academics. I know of no other educational system with either the depth or of the excellence of the American community. We can be proud of that fact. Of course, the other side of the coin is that everyone is not guaranteed a position, which leads to the competition for good jobs, and the selection of the best from the best. Yet, landing a job is only the beginning of your academic career. You still need to face further competition, and meet the stated (and unstated) requirements of permanent membership in the community as interpreted by those of your colleagues who already enjoy that privileged status: tenure.

You should have already broached the topic during the interview, even if in passing, but you should now discuss it again, so that you have a better idea what the actual departmental expectations are about promotion to tenure.[28] The chair is not likely to give you a firm commitment, because there are so many variables involved that it impossible to specify a complete contract (verbal or written). Standards are always ambiguous and flexibly applied, and quite different across disciplines. You might be told that you have to write a book in history departments, but how long it has to be, or where it has to be published, and just how good reviews it is expected to get, will remain unclear. In an economics department, in contrast, you would likely to be doomed if you write a book; they expect assistant professors

to write only articles. Because of the extreme variability in the criteria for tenure, most components of which will be neither clearly formulated, nor written down for easy access, you will need to develop an awareness and sensitivity to interpret the standards to which you will be held. My experience is that these standards evolve out of the institution's history, and criteria established at other institutions are not a good guide to local circumstances.

Though expectations vary among institutions, they generally entail meeting local criteria for scholarship, teaching, and good citizenship, generally in that order, though at liberal arts colleges teaching is taken more seriously than research. You need to sort out what each of these means in the context of your college or university. Some of these criteria are not written for everyone to ponder, so you need to be aware of the fact that the contract you signed is incomplete. You can only ascertain the true expectations by being observant, and realizing the actual meaning of intimations, openly stated expectations, as well as trade-offs between the various criteria.[29] You can nonetheless probe a bit without seeming intrusive. How many articles are expected of you? In what kinds of journals are they expected to appear? Is a book mandatory? These questions at the outset can give you some guidance, though without any guarantees.

[J.G.]: I am reminded of one difficult case, where a linguist was hired by a computer science department on the basis of his strong background in computational linguistics and a PhD in linguistics. While the university in question was primarily a teaching university, the chairman of the department wanted to develop a strong core of researchers who would teach less and

publish more. A number of young scholars were hired under the banner of more research, less teaching, but when these scholars began to come up for tenure decisions, the scholarship issue was so downplayed compared to teaching load and ratings that tenure became a difficult matter for the researchers.

What about politics within the institution?

[J.K.]: It is important for you to accept the institutional framework exactly as it is! You have become a part of a bureaucratic social and institutional structure, similar to that in the corporate world. You need to know how the various parts fit together in order to begin to understand how it works before you can begin to feel comfortable in it, or before you can begin to manipulate your environment for your own purposes. The fewer preconceived notions with which you enter this world, the better it will be for your career. It is to your advantage to base your actions on experience acquired directly on the job, rather than on presumptions of how the system seemed to work while you were in graduate school. The social dynamics might be quite different, partly because the people are different, and partly because the ranking of the institutions is different; hence the interaction of the faculty members is going to be different. Formal deductive logic is not very helpful either, because local custom is not based on it. After all, institutions have their own identity. So you must simply avoid jumping to conclusions! In short, be an experimentalist rather than a theoretician as you approach your first appointment. Note that this is not the time to be

thinking about changing those aspects of the institution that might not appeal to you. You have much too many other issues to worry about.

You have entered the profession near the bottom of the academic hierarchy. Your colleagues have the advantage of considerable experience and are likely to know the intricacies of how things work in practice, not in theory. Who makes the decisions in particular cases? How much power do people actually wield? How is influence distributed among the colleagues. Who is part of which network and how do these networks work? Who talks to whom and who listens to whom? How openly do your colleagues communicate with one another? How strongly are people connected to various networks? What is the relationship between the spouses of your colleagues? How are coalitions built? These are all questions that determine small group dynamics, and you are not likely to know much about them at the beginning.

Assume a wait and see attitude. Do not presume that people are guided exclusively by moral or legal principles. Such principles can be quietly disregarded at times, when self-interest so dictates: all social groups have their folkways, - peculiar unwritten rules of conduct. Although the facade of propriety is often maintained: nonetheless people act differently than expected within a bureaucracy, particularly if responsibility can be passed along easily to someone else, and if the risks associated with doing or not doing something are asymmetric. Be prepared for such surprises along the way.

The best advice I can give you is to avoid becoming genuinely interested for the time being in what is going on around you in the institution. You will have plenty of new responsibilities to get accustomed to anyhow. Concentrate on getting tenure, by teaching, by publishing, and by gaining a foothold in this unfamiliar, and hence in many ways mysterious world. It is crucial that you not try to influence major decisions. The institution is bigger than you; it is bigger than any single individual. There are myriad of reasons why things are done as inefficiently, or illogically as they seem. Accept them as given, and if you do not particularly like it, simply do your utmost to leave on your own terms as soon as possible. It takes an immense amount of effort to reform an institution consisting of thousands of people with disparate needs and interests. If you attempt to do so, you would be taking excessive risks that you might be caught in a bureaucratic squeeze. You are most likely to encounter insurmountable obstacles anyhow. Leave that for later: once you have tenure, or even further down the road, or never at all.

Be skeptical of appearances. You have essentially three tasks ahead of you as regards your professional career: to obtain tenure, to maintain or increase your market value, by publishing and participating in conferences, and to survive in the organization without creating any adversaries. It is possible to succeed in all three goals by developing effective strategies to publish, to teach and to get along with your colleagues and administrators. Though by no means an easy task, if you pay attention to how your department functions,

you can learn on the job, upgrade your information set in the process, and adjust your actions accordingly.

One reasonable strategy to avoid becoming too entangled in institutional politics is to assert forthrightly that you are not interested in such matters. Your primary goal is to obtain tenure. Such a strategy can get you off the hook to some degree, particularly in the beginning. However, that does not mean that you will not have to at least attend departmental meetings. They will to be interesting for you, anyhow, because you can get to know your colleagues much better in this way. Caution is, however, warranted. Do not jump to conclusions. People often argue obliquely, or do not mean what they say, or what they say has various interpretations that are not immediately obvious.[30]

Do not establish strong political ties before you realize what such commitments might mean for you subsequently. Consider the credibility of claims before you act on them, and do not accept plausible declarations of principles as *prima facia* evidence of them being binding. Do seek independent confirmation of rumor. After all, your colleagues try to advance their own goals, and your actions should be based on the best information available. Try to stay out of departmental politics by remaining uncommitted to the utmost extent possible.

Be ready to interpret subtle signs about who are the opinion makers. For example, I received letters from several of the senior faculty members of the department, once I accepted the offer, and these were the same people who subsequently turned out to have most influence on major decisions. Note the seating arrangements. Who is sitting in the front

besides the chairperson? People sitting close to one another are likely to feel comfortable with one another. People who come late or leave early are not likely to have strong commitments to the politics of the organization. You should be open to such signals. Each department has its own idiosyncratic way to channel differences and arrive at a decision. It might have a lot of conflict, in which case you will have difficulties staying out of the fray. On the other hand, the absence of overt discord does not necessarily mean that decisions are made harmoniously. It could also be an outcome of strong and successful leadership by the chair. This may not be too bad in a small group, inasmuch as a truly democratic process might very well be too time consuming, leaving insufficient time for the real purposes of the institution, namely teaching and research. An opinion-making group, who gets along well with one another, and who can run the department in a reasonable manner, without excessive authoritarianism, is a reasonable solution, even if not perfect. Democratic principles might be compromised to some extent for gains in efficiency. In sum, your first task ought to be to work toward obtaining tenure by concentrating on the immediate responsibilities ahead, to the utter neglect of departmental politics.

Err on the side of caution. Your relationship with the senior colleagues will undoubtedly influence how departmental standards are applied in your case. Usually the chairperson has considerable flexibility in this regard. For instance, if you are well liked, co-authored publications might be treated as though you had written them alone. If you are popular among tenured members of the faculty, the issue of whether your publications appeared in

refereed journals could be overlooked at the discretion of some of the more influential members. The publication of your dissertation by Arno Press might be viewed as though it had been published by Cambridge University Press. Consequently, your major task as an untenured assistant professor is to avoid alienating colleagues. Keep to your own business. Take your time in finding out how decisions are actually made in the department.

Once you've been in the department for a while the outlines of factions might become apparent to you. Remain non-committal. "It sure sounds plausible, but you would like to find out more about the issue." You can always nod while saying maybe. "It is acceptable to you to hire another econometrician." "It seems perfectly reasonable to you to...." You have no strong opinions on who the next chair should be. In other words, you should be aloof about the internal politics, which is usually one of the most unexpected and unsavory expects of academic life anyhow. The point is that if you alienate enough of the opinion makers in the department, your chances of getting tenure might diminish even if you generate a substantial list of publications.

This advice does not imply that you need to remain completely silent on committees or at departmental meetings. But you should not say much and certainly choose non-controversial issues on which to express an opinion. Do not repeat yourself, if you were disregarded. The chances are that it was not accidental. It is usually safe to talk about the inadequacies of the department's or of the library's budget. If you do not speak at all, people could hold that against you as well. You might convey the impression that you do not care at

all about the department, and you should avoid that as well, but you will need to learn what the limits are and what the safe topics are. In short, you need to demonstrate willingness to be a good citizen without committing yourself to any political program or faction.

Don't forget that you are at the low end of the totem pole. You are going to be among the least influential members of the department. There is no reason to take this to heart. In actuality, there are many people who would be glad to take your place, particularly if you have a tenure-track position. Though there might be many who envy you because they have only a one year contract, or lecture on a part-time basis, teaching a course from time to time for small financial rewards, you might not fully appreciate your own status. You have much to learn about teaching, publishing, and grant-writing as well as about the organization itself. Your best strategy for success is to accept the reality that you are an assistant professor without tenure, and that your influence will remain very limited for the time being. Your task is to conceive of a short-term and a long-term strategy to achieve your goals. The former has to do with the immediate demands imposed upon you by your current obligations of teaching. You need to reserve your energy for your lecture notes for the new courses you need to teach. Then you need to think clearly about your long-range publishing goals. All these issues will require careful consideration, always in consultation with someone whose judgment you trust.

Your longer range plans depend obviously on the degree to which you are committed to your current institution. It is possible that the offer you accepted is one which matches your

aspirations and those of the department. You wanted to teach at a small liberal arts college, for example, and you finally have an opportunity to do so. Great! You can consider yourself among the lucky ones who are „in equilibrium“ from the very beginning. Since you are then not concerned with job mobility, your main task will be to keep your job by fulfilling the expectations of your colleagues with your teaching and publications. In such a case you would devote relatively more of your time to your immediate responsibilities than to your longer term ones.

Insofar as you have put departmental politics on the back burner, you can turn to the more important tasks of thinking about getting tenure. In contrast to your earlier experiences, your intelligence will not be a binding constraint on your success. Instead, other attributes become more important, such as your perseverance in face of uncertainty or adversity, your ability to develop a convincing research program, and your willingness to get along with others. Now that you have a job, you will have to demonstrate within a few years that you can teach satisfactorily and that you have the potential to make a contribution to scholarship.

Even small colleges expect you to do more than teach, such as doing some community service, or talking to local newspapers about current events pertaining to your discipline, so that the college will gain some valuable publicity. They would also welcome your delivering a paper at professional conferences. The better ones, in league with Swarthmore or Oberlin, will also require publications for tenure, though as a rule they do not make the distinction between original research and synthetic works. A textbook, for example, even if a good one,

would not get you tenure at the University of Chicago, but would very well in a college setting.

How do I prepare myself to be a good teacher?

[J.K.]: I make these observations purely from the point of view of the career of the assistant professor. Allocation of time is absolutely the most difficult decision one faces at the outset of one's career. The basic problem is that there are no hard and fast rules, and no one to stand behind your shoulders upon whose guidance you could rely. You are in charge of your own time, and you have to seek and find the right combination that is satisfying to you, and at the same time meets the expectations of your students and colleagues. Actually, there is no limit to the amount of time you could theoretically devote to teaching: you could devote all your time to it. So there is a direct trade-off between the time for research, service, social activities, and the time you devote to teaching. It is a real juggling act in which your desire to communicate knowledge to the next generation is likely to come into some conflict with your desire to find more knowledge for the profession at large, with only your conscience as the arbiter.

While the right combination is not easy to find by any means, a practical advice is to establish at the outset the standards that you will expect from your students. It is important to be flexible in order not to insist on your own preconceived notions of what these ought to be. It is best not to deviate significantly from the average standards prevailing at your institution. The main reason is that, if your course requirements are far below the average set by others

in the department, your teaching will be considered inadequate, and as a consequence, you just might experience difficulties at the time of your evaluation for promotion. It hardly worth the risk. Analogously, standards well above the prevailing custom at the department will have two immediate unwelcome consequences: students will tend to avoid your courses to the extent possible, and they will start complaining about your teaching and grading to the chair. While initially you might not consider this much of a problem, it can easily become one if your standards impose a heavier work load on your colleagues, or if a decline in enrollment in your courses worries the chair, who might be anxious to show to the dean that there is a substantial demand for the courses taught in the department in order to justify the number of faculty on the staff. Thus, you may be seen as not pulling your share of the load in the department. Moreover, you might well expect, that academic freedom would isolate you fully from student complaints, it will not do so, if it becomes a sufficient nuisance for your colleagues. It is well known, that students almost never complain if courses are too easy, or if they received a higher grade than they deserved, there are always a few in a class who are prone to complain if your expectations are higher, or if the grade they received lower, than they anticipated, based on their encounter with other members of the faculty. Actually, students might even complain about a “B”, if they expected to receive an “A”. Note, that even if only one or two students per course were to complain about you to the chair, that could add up to as many as six to twelve students in a year. You can easily see that even at such an insignificant rate, the accumulation of complaints by the time of your review for

tenure would put unacceptable burdens on the chair. Spare her these unpleasant moments, if you do not care to jeopardize your promotion.

To be sure, it is most difficult to disregard the standards set at your graduate school. You might well wonder why you bothered to go through a rigorous graduate program, if I am now urging you to be flexible in setting standards, adjusting them to the ones prevailing at your current institution. The answer is, however, less baffling than you might think, given that you are likely to end up in an institution with lower standards than that which prevailed in your graduate school. After all, it makes sense not to expect identical achievement from students with a combined SAT score of 1000, as you would from those with a test score 50 percent higher. Actually, it would be an impossibility. Hence, in most institutions of higher education, good teaching is not conceived of (in fact, could not be conceived of) as teaching the most. Rather, good teaching has to take into account the capabilities of the students. The key concept, I think, is good-enough teaching, and usually, that is defined as meeting the current standard of the department. Striving to achieve more will be self-defeating, in the sense that it will encounter substantial student resistance, thereby nullifying the satisfaction that you seek in teaching.

Note that students have a large incentive to invest heavily into lobbying for a higher grade. Their potential pay-off is much higher than it is for you, if you get your way. You are defending your own values for non-pecuniary gain, and often at a direct cost to your research. They, on the other hand, are fighting to stay off probation, and therefore to continue

to work toward a diploma, or to qualify for a scholarship, or go to law school. At better universities even a "B" or "C" can be very damaging to the student's future career and can trigger as much resistance as a "D" or an “F” elsewhere. Therefore, the asymmetric nature of the incentives means that you are at a disadvantage from the start if a conflict were to arise. If you disregard to incentive structure, you will not be happy about having done so. For this reason even plagiarism is often let slip by professors, because it becomes an excessive burden to press charges through the university bureaucracy.

This reasoning can also explain grade inflation: the main factor behind it is that the average standard is actually not easily ascertainable. Consequently, in an environment of uncertainty with asymmetric payoffs, it is better to err on the side of caution and set standards slightly below average. The outcome is that the average standard declines over time in the absence of countervailing forces. And there is no institutional structure that could exert an offsetting influence. Note, that the higher are your standards above the average, the greater is the probability that students will be dissatisfied with your performance. In contrast, most of the time outstanding performance in teaching is neither appreciated outwardly by students or rewarded by colleagues. Infrequently a student or two might compliment your devotion to your profession, but they will almost never tell the chair about it and, hence there is hardly a mechanism in place to reward you for your efforts. Because good teaching is so difficult to ascertain, it counts for little at tenure-decision time – except at smaller liberal arts campuses - or in terms of academic mobility. Hence, there will be few rewards to teaching

except those that come from within you. To be sure, these are substantial in their own right: we know in the bottom of our hearts that we are making substantial contributions to the formation of the next generation's welfare and worldview. Nonetheless, it is not at obvious that that feeling suffices to keep us going through the years without substantial external acknowledgment or outside rewards. Because of the complexity of the problem, and the uncertainties involved, it is possible only to make vague generalizations about the way an assistant professor should allocate time. The main point should perhaps be, that ultimately you, yourself, should be comfortable with it, but do make sure that the sum of the demands on your time do not exceed twenty-four hours. And do keep the tenure clock always in the back of your mind. The rule is that years will always fly by quicker than you anticipate. In other words, you cannot afford to put your research agenda on the back burner. Of course, the degree to which teaching matters varies across institutions, but note that only at a handful of colleges and universities does teaching actually count. These are usually the ones that have found their niche by developing a reputation for good teaching and attract their students through it.

Admittedly, one might ideally aim to set standards just a little bit above average for pedagogical reasons, so that students need to stretch a bit to attain your expectations, but even that is likely not to be frictionless. Remember, that in our academic culture, education is seen, in the main, as a "consumption good", being purchased in much the same way as anything product in the market place. You deliver this service, and, in a sense, you are

responsible for customer satisfaction. In turn, the customer pays the tuition and expects to be well served by the expenditure. Moreover, the parents of the customers control the political power in case of state universities, and they expect something for their tax dollars, namely a diploma for their children, even if its worth is deflated over time. Note that because there is a lag between the deflation of value of a diploma and its realization by the outside world, it does not meet as much public resistance as it would otherwise.

[J.G.]: My experience has been different than yours. I do have the impression that what people call „grade inflation“ is a real phenomenon: that over the last several decades, the average grade has risen. Just what to make of that is not so obvious, and it forces us to think about some basic questions, like what the point of education is in a society such as ours, whether a major function that university educators play is to evaluate their students for other downstream institutions (such as medical and law school), and whether students, on the whole and in the long run, get more from the educational process if their short-term motivation can be whetted and honed by the opportunity to do well on next Friday’s exam. I myself am not a strong partisan of grading in courses, being convinced neither of the importance of doing the evaluation for professional schools nor of the educational value of threats from regular examinations at the university level. I want to be careful of what I say: I know that *in fact*, the amount of time that students put into studying is enormously affected by exams and grades, and I also believe strongly that part of my job is to motivate my students to study and to learn; I would be denying reality if I overlooked the use of exams as

a means to encourage students to study and learn. A teacher should learn how to use both the carrot and the stick side of grade assigning, and there's surely not just one unique optimal way to do that. So it seems to me that grade inflation is a problem, from that point of view, only if it marks a decrease in the effectiveness of teaching in the long run.

In my experience, young teachers have not been penalized for having especially rigorous grading standards, whether this is in their manner of giving course grades, exam grades, or amounts of work expected of the students in a course. To be sure, the tougher the grading, the more complaints there may be, all other things being equal, but I think that the assistant professor who lowers his natural expectation of what his students should achieve is likely to suffer other sorts of problems that may well be worse in the long run – the chief of these being a kind of disillusionment with the education biz. But I can see that there is a range of opinion on this question, John – regarding what I think of as the *Realpolitik*, or rather, *Realpedagogik* of our profession.

How should the new assistant professor view his career from a long-term perspective?

[J.K.]: As a member of the academic community, you have three kinds of basic responsibilities. Teaching, research, and the administrative tasks assigned to you by your chair. Inasmuch as all of them are time-consuming, there will be obvious tradeoffs in your effectiveness in these three dimensions. Your preferred strategy will depend on your aspirations, and on such other factors as how far away you find yourself from your ultimate

goal, your degree of commitment to reaching it, and how much time you are willing to give yourself to reach it.

Your expectations ought to be updated periodically in order to reassess how realistic are the goals you have set for yourself. In the academic world, known for its mobility, it is rather exceptional that a professor retires from the institution in which she started her career. For many, but not for all, mobility is in an upwardly direction. One could debate whether it is harder to work one's way up or to start high up in the hierarchy and worry about sliding down. I suspect that it hardly matters. Both have their own problems and challenges. I have seen people succeed and fail in both situations. I believe that the most important factor is self-confidence. In the long run, competition usually works in such a way that people will reach their own level of excellence at the college or university where they will do the most good for themselves, their institution, and the scholarly community. I know of only very few exceptions to this ambitious generalization.

[J.G.]: One of my teachers reminded me, in just this context, of what Danton is reputed to have said when Paris was being attacked: *il nous faut de l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace, et la France est sauvée!* He agreed with you very much.

[J.K.]: Although it might seem as though it is easier to start near the top of the academic hierarchy, I have my doubts about it. In fact, it is easy to become overly confident, and not work with sufficient intensity to maintain the position. I have seen a fair number of incredibly intelligent scholars fail just for this reason. The problem is that they see their slide down the

institutional hierarchy as a failure, rather than as a new beginning with lots of new opportunities after a pleasant sojourn at the top, and the slide can then turn into a free-fall. To be sure, it is also possible to find the initial conditions so daunting that one despairs and either gives up or sets one's sights lower than reasonable. So I urge you to stay calm if you are below your long term goals, and try your best to avoid being too confident if you are at or above your long-range goals.

You should formulate your goals at first independently of your starting position, i.e. before you have received your first job offer. You have some inside information that is not available to the market. As long as you do not engage in wishful thinking, your own evaluation of your own potential ought to take priority over the market's evaluation. Needless to say, you should consult with your advisors, as well as with your confidants as with all important decisions. Admittedly, the market will provide an initial evaluation, based on your job talk, your interviews, your mentor’s recommendation, and your dissertation, but there is much more to success in the academic world than that. These are hidden factors that will not become common knowledge for some time, such as your ability to get along with colleagues, your perseverance, and your ability to publish. That is not to say that the market's evaluation is to be disregarded. Not at all: indeed, the market can be right, but it can also err. Hence, you should incorporate the information provided by the market into your own self-assessment, and think about how they are related to one another. Your long-range goals ought to be continuously updated on the basis of the new information. Your accomplishments

during the first couple of years on the job will provide further valuable information to refine and reconcile your own and the market's evaluation of your long run scholarly potential.

Admittedly, the market will interpret your initial position as a signal of your potential. That might work for or against you. If you started at a first rate institution you will be immediately tagged as a promising scholar, and that alone will open doors for you that otherwise would have remained shut. However, there are also disadvantages of being thought of in such a way. You will have to deliver on that promise in haste, i.e., from the very beginning. Otherwise, the market valuation will be quickly revised and not in your favor. This, of course, could easily develop into a stressful situation, even if you are a very competent scholar, for creative insights are not produced continuously, but rather in fits and spurts. In addition, keep in mind that research directions do not always pay off and even the best of minds can find themselves in a dead-end project on occasion. Hence, starting at the top can be as challenging as beginning at the bottom.

Starting lower on the totem pole does have the disadvantage that initially the profession will have lower expectations of your abilities. As a consequence, doors will not open automatically for you. However, this handicap can turn into an advantage, because you can take your own time to develop your own agenda, i.e., to get your research revved up, and if your own assessment about yourself is correct, there will be plenty of opportunities to prove the market wrong. Another advantage of starting below your long run equilibrium is that you do not have to produce brilliant ideas immediately, as long as you are making honest

contributions to the discipline. In addition, you can be more relaxed about the uncertainty of your research working out immediately. Your colleagues do have sufficient acuity to spot someone's potential for upward mobility. Over time, they will pay attention to your achievements, and the market will revise its judgment of your academic worth. I do remember that one of the referees of my first grant application to the National Science Foundation, which was turned down, did point out that she noticed that I was trying diligently to "write my way out" of the institution where I was at the time. I admit that it did impress me considerably that there was someone who noticed, and confirmed my strategy to do just that. In short, regardless of where you start you will have to work pretty hard to end up in the top 100 colleges or universities.

What makes the academic career difficult is that the four responsibilities I mentioned earlier are all labor-intensive and all impose their own demands on one's time. We will not have much to say about how to arrange your personal life, except to mention the obvious, namely that you should keep in mind that your optimal academic strategy ought not overlook the constraints imposed by your private life. Children, for example, are extremely time consuming, and there are not many opportunities to cut corners without psychological consequences. Thus, when you are formulating your aspirations you will need to keep your private commitments in mind: your personal obligations should not conflict with your professional ones, and vice versa. (If I sound like an economist, it is because I am an economist.) Obviously, the less stressful and complicated your social and family circum-

stances, the more you can concentrate on your professional endeavors. You should avoid at all costs over-committing yourself. That would only become a self-defeating trap.

It is also imperative that you consider the problem of optimization over your lifetime. I have seen academics neglect their health, let their eating and sleeping habits deteriorate in order to increase their current productivity. While in the short run such a strategy may be necessary to meet certain deadlines, for example, it is equally self-defeating to practice such self-exploitation over the long term. It can eventually lead to adverse health consequences.[31]

Because you will most certainly feel over-committed at the beginning, it is absolutely imperative for you to make your obligations as easy on yourself as possible. As far as teaching is concerned, you will have a lot of decisions to make, and experience to acquire before you will find the best set of options for your own preferences. This will take time, but in the beginning try to avoid locking yourself into a set of obligations until you know more about the details of teaching at a college or university. You will need to choose courses to teach in cooperation with your chair. At the time you were hired the department probably expressed its preferences, and some of those courses are probably not renegotiable. Yet, rarely is it the case that you have no leeway at all at this point. To the extent possible, I suggest that you try to arrange your teaching obligations in such a way as to minimize your start-up costs. In other words, if your are free to choose, try to teach courses that are a natural outgrowth of your own graduate education, including, of course, your thesis. Try your best to avoid extra preparations, and, instead, to teach multiple sections of the same course:

perhaps one during the day and one in the evening, for instance. It is also a good idea to repeat courses from one semester to the next. This will give you some opportunity to set aside some time for scholarship. Of course, if you are at a teaching institution and you are satisfied with your current position, the pressure on you will be much less to do research and publish.[32]

[J.G.]: A friend of mine gave me some good advice once: Never teach a course for the first time. She meant that, obviously, with tongue in cheek. The first time you give a course can be quite a nightmare, with an enormous amount of work involved, far more than could be reasonably expected of one (that's how it seems, at least)! In the best of cases, that creates an atmosphere of excitement, and it can make for a very good course and a very stressed teacher. It's ironic that one of the few conventional criticisms of college professors is that they can trot out the same old tired course notes, year after year after year, using the same jokes at the same places. While that is undoubtedly a problem in some cases, this is just an example, taken to extremes, of a strategy that makes sense all the way around: a person who knows well how to teach second semester phonology (let's say) is the person who should teach it, and the way to know how to teach that course well is to have taught it several times.

A few years ago, I became a sudden partisan of using transparencies and an overhead projector in many of my classes, and more recently I've transferred this allegiance to using computer presentation software (such as Microsoft's Powerpoint) for all my classes. I find that it takes no more time to prepare my notes for class the first time I put them into

Powerpoint, the classroom presentation is better organized (or at least easier for the students to follow), the slides are always available to be used again in this course or another future course, and I can put the whole thing up on my web site for the students afterwards.

Teaching graduate students

[J.K.]: Graduate students require a greater personal from you than do undergraduates, even if they are fewer in number. The general rule, to maintain average standards, applies to the graduate program as well. The chances are that you will not be expected to become involved in graduate teaching at the beginning of your career, and it is good so. You should become involved in the graduate program only to the extent your senior colleagues desire you to do so. Your main goal is to get a few publications under your belt, and too much time devoted to graduate students will distract from your ability to do that. Mentoring takes much time, for which you will not be rewarded at tenure-decision time. So you should avoid becoming too involved in the graduate program until you become more senior. In addition, if you begin to attract graduate students too early, the senior colleagues might become concerned that your involvement might be premature or might be at their expense. Better to maintain a low profile at the beginning, but still be helpful to the extent your help is specifically requested. Graduate teaching often carries more prestige, and your colleagues might feel that they are willing to share it with you immediately.

[J.G.]: My experience has been different. Especially in a fields where a new fashion is changing (or seeming to change) the complexion of the field, the junior faculty member will

be likely to be sought out by graduate students. Imagine a field where gender studies, or chaos theory, is a really hot topic, and the faculty is open enough to it to decide they want to hire someone in this field. It's likely that the students are every bit as aware that this is an area where hiring is going to continue to be done – or better yet, they may be fired up and enthusiastic about it for intellectual reasons!

You've mentioned the business of fighting among faculty members for graduate students. Clearly this happens in some departments, but I'm able to report that I've never been in a department in which that occurred. It would be interesting to try to get some data on how widespread a phenomenon that is.

[J.K.]: Don't forget that graduate students generate positive externalities for you since they often complement your own research agenda, and join your network of scholars thereby spreading and supporting ideas in congruence with your research program. In short, they can be a valuable asset in propagating ideas you advocate. Graduate students also confer some prestige, insofar as their having chosen you is seen by the profession as your having one in a sort of contest. In addition they at times can serve as the foot soldiers in the contest for ideas. Advisors can offer thesis topics to students which have a potential to undermine their adversaries positions in a controversy. This is a legitimate strategy as long as the student is expected to gain from the experience, but becomes illegitimate if the advisory capacity is misused to advance the career of the advisor at the expense of that of the graduate student.

Be forewarned that the best graduate students have enough sense to enroll in the top graduate programs in the country. If you are at a second or third tier institution, the chances are that the overwhelming majority of students are not talented enough to go beyond the MA, and usually a lot of disappointment is associated with students' attempts at cashing in on the implicit contract they have with the institution to obtain a Ph.D. degree. It takes an immense effort to help average students to write a thesis. As a consequence, many students at the ABD stage at such institutions have difficulty finding someone to work with them. Yet, even such programs provides a certain amount of prestige for the faculty, because Ph.D. granting institution generally have a higher relative standing in academia. Moreover, graduate students are needed as teaching assistants for the recitation sections of the large lecture courses. Without them these courses, which are often the backbone of the programs at large state universities, would not be possible. In other words, the system of mass education is predicated to a some extent on the services rendered by teaching assistants whose future in the academic community is rather dubious, and who often harbor false expectations as to the probability of their success. Under such circumstances graduate students obviously cannot provide much support for your research, and it is to your distinct advantage to keep a low profile in the graduate program.

You need to keep in mind that if you are able to attract some graduate students your prestige will increase within the department as well as outside of it. It is interpreted as an indication that your ideas are being propagated, and that your research program is attractive

to students. As a consequence, there is an informal competition to attract graduate students among some members of the department, but you need not be too successful immediately, because the costs will outweigh the benefits during the early stages of your career. Such involvement would take too much time away from your own tenure-related research agenda, and moreover, it would generate excessive concern on the part of your senior colleagues that you are infringing on their traditional areas of involvement.

In sum, my advice for success to newly minted Ph.D.s in a tenure-track academic position is to be extremely careful in allocating time, to do a good-enough job teaching, to keep the tenure clock in mind by starting immediately with a research agenda based on the dissertation research, to maintain friendly but non-committal relationships with all the colleagues, and to maintain a low profile in the graduate program.

Chapter 7: The Administrative Structure of a University

[J.G.]: Now that you have a position at a college or university, you should know something about its basic institutional structure. While the details and the terminology will vary from one institution to another, there are general principles regarding how they are set up, and it will be helpful to outline them briefly.

First of all, at the top there is a president and a board of trustees. These people make the final decisions on all hard questions, many of which may affect the average professor's life only indirectly. The president is the chief executive officer, and as such may be less involved in the details of everyday academic decisions than others ranked below him on the hierarchy. At Harvard, for example, the president personally decides over the tenure decision for every single faculty member, but that is relatively unusual, certainly for a large university. Most presidents are heavily involved in the external aspects of the life of the university, of which the most important considerations are financial. Ultimately, they must make sure that their universities will continue to receive sufficient financial support, and they must make large scale decisions like whether to expand the student body on campus, to turn their college co-ed, to establish a law school, or to shut down the library school. But the day-to-day life of the university is more likely to be in the hands of the next person down in this hierarchy.

There is no single name for the office of this person just below the president. It may be the provost, it may be the vice president in charge of academic affairs, or it may be the dean of faculties. This person is most likely, though, to make the final decision on faculty matters,

like difficult tenure cases, or what to do when a senior professor gets an outside offer and is sorely tempted to leave -- or whether a department should be allowed (or encouraged) to make an offer to an outstanding professor from a rival university. For our purposes and to be concrete, let's suppose that this person is called the provost.

Below the provost on the academic hierarchy will typically come a raft of more or less co-equal deans, and how these deans relate to one another varies considerably from one campus to another. There may be one dean in charge of undergraduate instruction, typically called the dean of the college; there will certainly be separate deans in charge of each professional school (law, business, medicine). There may be separate deans for various subparts of traditional teaching and research, such as arts and sciences, or humanities, or physical or biological sciences.

Of course, not all deans are necessarily equal in terms of their privileges and resources. Some will have the final say in hiring decisions in their units; others may not. At some institutions, the graduate dean or deans have no say in the matter; in others, it is the dean of the college who plays at best an advisory role in hiring. Deans of this sort are often called "academic deans," and they are themselves typically tenured professors in a department of the university. An important decanal appointment may require an appointment from outside of the particular university, though more often the dean is chosen from within the university. The dean will typically have some administrative experience, often as chairman of a department, or perhaps as associate dean.

The status of deans in the larger administrative system of the university is a difficult, and downright touchy, question, one which has recently even made it into the court system. If we carry over the "management/labor" distinction from the capitalist business world into the world of academia, where do we find the managers? The students might claim that the labor is performed by them, and that the faculty as a whole are managers, but that view can hardly hold water. The only other sensible cut lies in calling the administration -- deans and associate deans, together with the provost and the president -- "management", and letting the rest of the faculty be "labor". Is this an accurate picture?

While it is an unfortunate fact of academic life that in some universities there is some truth to that picture, it does not hold in the healthy and well-functioning research university. The academic administration is composed of men and women whose values have been formed during their years as professors teaching and doing research; when they are done with their tenure in office as dean, after three, five or ten years, they will return to being a professor, in most cases. If for no other reason, they will therefore have to continue their research (and, to some extent, teaching) during their term as dean, so that they may fit back in to life as a professor.

There are other administrators at most universities, however, that are called "deans", though they are not academic deans. These positions are often filled by people with doctoral degrees, but without regular academic appointments, and typically the non-academic dean

has no job to return to, if and when she is relieved of his duties in that position. The various positions of dean of students (graduate and undergraduate) are often of this sort.

The most vexing question is whether deans (and their associated administrators) ultimately have a different set of interests than mere professors do. In general, the answer is no, though when a dean finds his interests do diverge from those of his faculty, that is often a sign of a serious problem. Perhaps the single most striking difference between a decanal position and that of teaching professors is that the dean must constantly be seeking to balance conflicting claims on a limited amount of resources, financial or otherwise. Professors often find themselves in the position of asking for funds or other resources from deans or outside agencies, but it is relatively rare that they find themselves in the position of having a pool of resources which several groups are competing for, presenting strong and compelling cases to spend more money than is available. That, though, is the situation that a dean typically finds herself in. These tough choices require some considerable judgment in order to compare the relative value for the university as a whole that will flow from making one set of choices rather than another. To some extent, this means performing a task different in style from that expected of most professors, and to some extent this may require a sort of larger perspective not expected of professors. But if done properly, it does not require a different set of interests and values from those of the (may we say it?) rank and file professorate.

Reporting to the deans are the chairs of each department. The chair is generally chosen by the department, subject to the approval of the dean; in some cases, it is the dean who

directly appoints the chair, after consulting individually with the members of the department. In rare cases, if a consensus is difficult to reach within the faculty, she is brought in from the outside. How much power the chairman has depends on the department, on the university, and on his or her personality and style, but generally the chairs do wield considerable power. Even if the dean is in a position to reverse a decision made within the department (on tenure, for example), the dean's information generally comes from and through the chair, and that is considerable power right there.

At most universities, salaries for members of the department are determined by the dean in consultation with the chair. This system is certainly not universal. In some universities, the chair determines each year's raises, with the dean taking a more distant supervisory role; in others -- at Harvard, for example --it is the dean, and the dean alone, who determines the amount of the raise.[33] The chair of a department does many other things as well, involving budget allocations (who gets what discretionary money), writing of reports (what have the various faculty members been up to this year? how have the recent alumni fared in the job market? why does the student lounge require a new set of chairs?), direct involvement in hiring practices and perhaps student recruitment. At times she must also become confessor and confidante to faculty and students who have serious problems that are affecting their abilities to work productively in the department. The chair will get a course reduction, to perhaps half of the course load of the other faculty members, but chairing *well* is a job that demands full-time attention.

The heart of the university consists of the professors, who compose the faculty of the various departments. Faculty are generally divided into three ranks: (full) professors, associate professors, and assistant professors. In virtually all cases, full professors have tenure and assistant professors do not; at most universities, associate professors may or may not have tenure, because while tenure will always come with a promotion to associate professor status, it is not uncommon for promotion to that position (though without tenure) to come one, two, or three years earlier than the awarding of tenure.

Most universities hire assistant professors on what is called a "tenure track," meaning that they will be considered for an appointment with tenure at the end of a certain period, typically at the beginning of the sixth year. A few universities (of which Harvard and Yale are the most notorious in this respect) make their junior appointments with no presumption, and often with no possibility, of tenure. When a senior position becomes available, through retirement or departure, a search is typically conducted to find the best candidate available regardless of person's place of present employment.

There is not a great deal of difference, from an official or structural point of view, between a full professor and a tenured associate professor. In general, the salary of the full professor may be higher, but that will be due in large part to the fact that the full professor has been on the job longer. Nonetheless, promotion to full professor involves a detailed review of a candidate's dossier, and an evaluation based on research, service, and teaching. What questions govern evaluation behind promotion to full professor? In some respects, it is

a recognition that the person has continued to mature significantly beyond the work that was done at the time that tenure was offered.

We might take a stronger criterion for promotion to be this: that promotion to full professor is a recognition of the significant role that the person plays in *defining* the central questions which concern his field of research. We have observed that the award of tenure (typically going hand in hand with promotion to associate professor) is based on the judgment that the person has demonstrated his ongoing willingness and ability to contribute substantively to the central questions of his field, just as the award of a PhD shows that the student has demonstrated his capacity to make at least one significant contribution. There is thus an increasingly strong set of criteria for each passage: the PhD demonstrates the ability to make a single contribution; tenure marks an ability to continue to make similar contributions; and promotion to full professor marks the ability to contribute not only answers within the domain of research, but to succeed in the more difficult task of defining the questions.[34]

Many professors are simultaneously members of more than one department at many universities. These joint appointments, however, often mask the quite different nature of the appointments. More often than not, only one of the appointments plays any role in budgetary considerations, and it is virtually always the case that a person's teaching and service responsibilities to a given department are directly related to the proportion of his salary that comes from the budget of that department. If Smith has an appointment in the French

Department, the English Department, and the Psychology Department, but his salary comes 50% from French and 50% from English, then she may expect his teaching load to be evenly split between courses in French and courses in English. By virtue of his appointment in Psychology, she may participate in the affairs of that department, teach a course there on occasion, and work with students there; but the expectations are considerably lower for such an appointment.

A professor whose salary comes entirely from a single department is considered to be "1 Full Time Equivalent", or 1 FTE; a professor who is half in a given department is said to have only 0.5 FTE there, and a department which adds up its members will normally only add up its FTE, not everyone who has an appointment of one sort or another. In this way, a department may have 10 FTE or less (for example), and have 20 or more official members, members who may indeed participate and vote in important decisions of the department.

Committees

Committees by and large have a bad reputation on campus among professors. All too often they waste the time of the professors who have volunteered, or been chosen, or elected, to serve on it, discussing *ad nauseam* issues that might just as well be decided administratively. The call to serve on committees can be one of the worst time-wasters discussed above.

But this bad reputation is not entirely deserved, for several reasons. First of all, quite a few faculty committees serve good functions, and produce results that do matter -- results

that could not be produced in another, more administrative fashion. Secondly, the work is often quite instructive for the professor; it can open her eyes to sides of the university and its functioning that she had never seen before. And thirdly, it is an excellent opportunity to meet colleagues in other departments and divisions, which is both interesting in itself, and serves other important long-term goals, like getting to know colleagues from more distant parts of the college or university.

One important committee function involves overviewing tenure and promotion decisions. While these decisions are ultimately made by the dean, provost, and president, these decisions are made at virtually all universities with the advice of at least one committee composed of faculty outside the candidate's own department. In some universities, this committee serves throughout the academic year, reviewing all candidates for tenure and promotion in the given year, while at other university, *ad hoc* committees are set up for each promotion or tenure case.

Who are these administrators, anyway?

Academic administrators were once graduate students and junior faculty, too. From their point of view, they are not that different from the human beings they were at that point. Above all, remember that they are your colleagues, and they should be treated as such. If that is not clear enough, it may be worthwhile spelling it out: chairs, deans, and their administrative colleagues should not be conceived of as bosses, or as parents.

One point to bear in mind, as one gazes up the administrative tree, is that although the person a step or two above may seem to have a good deal of power (especially when one is asking him or her for something), the situation is a more complex. From their point of view, their power is greatly circumscribed by all those higher up the academic hierarchy; it is always salutary to remember that wherever one happens to be at the moment (i.e., holding the rank of graduate student, or assistant professor), one possesses considerably more freedom and privileges than others, in lower positions on the hierarchy; it is all too easy to take that for granted. In short, the person of whom one may need to ask things will -- surprise! -- most likely not feel like she is in a qualitatively different position, a qualitatively superior position.

There is another way to approach this same point. Consider the matter of tenure -- one of the most important issues, and one in which apparently a good deal of judgment and discretion is required on the part of the administrators (deans, provost, president) involved. Surprisingly, perhaps, rarely does one in such a position feel that personal privilege is involved in the decision. The decision procedure involves considerable reflection on the letters of recommendation that come from outside experts and from colleagues in the department. The case may be a clear one, and so be an occasion for little serious deliberation on the part of the dean; however, the case may be far from clear, with contradictory advice coming from different quarters. The administrator's task is then to attempt to see why different people have come to these different conclusions, and to see if inappropriate interests or background

factors have entered into the matter. But when that is done, the administrator is still looking for a rearrangement of the facts that makes the case decide itself -- to make the judgment be on the merits of the case rather than the dean's or provost's personal interests.

To pursue this point a bit. Tenure cases that end up being decided against the candidate are virtually never easy at all. We're talking about a person, after all, who has passed an outstanding number of difficult hurdles, from writing a doctoral dissertation to obtaining a tenure-track job to being re-appointed at the same institution after teaching there for three years. Yet somehow the decision is made in the sixth year to let the person go. How can that happen? In the best of circumstances (I'm not speaking ironically, though it is an odd sense of „best" that arises here) the problems in the case were identified explicitly and overtly at the time of the reappointment during the third year of the assistant professor appointment. If serious problems were observed at that point and identified (by the department or the dean, normally) and those problems were not satisfactorily addressed by the candidate in the following years, then the negative decision is often not a difficult one, though it is one that is typically reached with regret.

Salaries

Raises in a given year are generally based on a guideline percentage increase (3 or 4%, perhaps, or less) that will be given to all faculty members in the absence of specific reasons to go above or below this guideline. It may be up to the chair, then, to determine in each individual case whether the professor's work in the past year was especially good or

especially poor, and that guideline figure may then be adjusted in view of that decision. Other factors may be taken into consideration other than simply the quality of work in the past year. If a person's salary is inequitably low, the chair and the dean may undertake to give the person a raise based on that consideration alone. For example, if starting salaries (so-called "entry level salaries") in a specific field are rising at 6% a year, and raises over the past few years have averaged 4% a year, then a fourth year assistant professor may be making less than a first year assistant professor, or an associate professor may not make more than a few thousand more than a newly hired assistant professor. These are generally taken to be matters of equity, to be resolved by distributing the money for raises in a way that may give professors with lower salaries a higher percentage raise than the professors with higher salaries.

One large exception to the picture I have just sketched is the University of California system, in which salaries are fixed to a specific salary scale, with several particular salary grades established for each academic rank (assistant professor, associate professor, full professor). Everyone gets raises automatically as the entire scale shifts upward (a matter of state politics, or of inflation, depending on how you wish to look at it), and also as one is promoted from one salary grade to the next, a mini-promotion that may take place every two to four years.

Professors at public universities are employed by the state (or the city) government, and thus have a number of things in common with public servants -- such as discovering that their

salaries are matters of public record. Just as we can easily find out the salary of the governor or mayor, so too is the salary of a professor at Indiana University or at Rutgers a matter of public record. Finding out is typically a matter of going to the right office, either at the university or in the State House, but since the information is in principle public, it is typically reproduced and widely circulated, sometimes by the faculty union, if there is one. The salaries of professors at private universities, on the other hand, are by no means public knowledge, and are quite confidential. The prevailing ethos generally prohibits people from discussing their salaries with their colleagues, but that is one of those unwritten laws that not everyone recognizes.

By and large, the kinds of salary raises that we have discussed up to now are raises that keep up with inflation, but not a whole lot more. The most significant salary raises are the result of that most difficult of subjects -- the outside offer, which is the subject of Chapter [10].

Here are some recent statistics that give us a good sense of where salaries currently stand:[35]

Public universities:

Professor	$69,924
Associate professor	$50,186
Assistant professor	$42,335

All	$55,068

Other public 4-year institutions:

Professor	$61,076
Associate professor	$47,850
Assistant professor	$39,544
All	$48,566

Private universities:

Professor	$84,970
Associate professor	$56,517
Assistant professor	$47,387
All	$65,405

Other private 4-year institutions:

Professor	$57,089
Associate professor	$44,186
Assistant professor	$36,325
All	$44,504

2-year colleges:

Public	$43,295
Private	$31,915

CHAPTER 8: TEACHING AND RESEARCH

[J.G.]: Our own personal experiences have largely been at research universities, especially during our adult, job-holding years. It is important to bear in mind, however, that among universities, the research universities are in a small minority -- at least if we count names. There are only about sixty research universities, out of about four thousand institutions of higher education altogether. The most common, and practical, definition of a research university in the United States is given by the membership list of the American Association of Universities (see Appendix 1). These universities are the ones that gain most attention, though; the research universities include such private institutions as Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stanford, the University of Chicago and such large public universities as the University of California at Berkeley or Los Angeles, Indiana University, or the University of Michigan. Virtually all research universities have an important undergraduate teaching function in addition to their graduate and research units (the only exception being Rockefeller University in New York).

By and large, the other colleges and universities are teaching institutions, and require relatively little independent research on the part of the faculty, but correspondingly much greater teaching loads. By and large, too, these teaching institutions do not teach graduate students at the PhD level. They may or they may not offer master's degrees, but they do not generally provide the research environment for either the faculty member or the graduate student that is necessary for research at the doctoral level.

What is expected of the faculty member at a research university?

Quite simply this: at the research university, the professor is expected to undertake and to publish research throughout her career. This is, in our opinion, an eminently Good Thing. The development of knowledge is a very valuable and worthwhile project, too little undertaken in today's busy world. And it is extremely difficult. Alas, the world at large has blessed little understanding of how difficult it is to come up with new ideas that are worth anything. The amount of time spent reading, thinking, and writing to come up with just a small bit of worthwhile research is enormous. When we read criticisms of university professors and the system that they function in, we find that in case after case, the person responsible for the criticism thinks that the primary job of the university professor is to teach, and research is the pleasure-filled dollop of whipped cream thrown on top.

Not so! Research is the primary task of the professor at the research university, and it is a tough job. Do not be fooled by these advocates of what I call the Cabbage Patch Theory of Research. The Cabbage Patch Theory of Research is like the Cabbage Patch Theory of where babies come from: Research, served up in articles, monographs, and books, arrives -- like magic and with no labor -- one fine day, just under the cabbage patch nicely packaged in a neat ribbon. Don't ask who produces it, or when, or at what personal expense.

Was ever a theory so wrong! The truth is that research is like any major undertaking in life -- raising a child, starting a business, or writing a novel. It is guaranteed to be at times a miserable experience, demanding time and energy just when everything seems to be going

wrong. It requires confidence in the ultimate value of the enterprise, because without that, the researcher just has no reason to keep on going. And yet, of course, there are many of us who are willing to keep going on doing research and writing books and papers, because in the long run, the process is a rewarding and exciting one. But it certainly is not easy, and typically requires many of the personal characteristics of the entrepreneur. And one thing we must never lose sight of is that it (1) takes a lot of time, and (2) you must carve that time out for yourself, because no one will do it for you.

That is a theme that will come back again and again in this book: and it is worth putting it in neon letters: Research is the essential aspect of being a professor at a research university: it is the creative and entrepreneurial side of the job. By and large (and with some blessed exceptions), no one will help you with this side of the job: it is your job to find the time and energy to do it, and to do it well.

Is it fair to perish if I do not publish?

[J.K.]: My short answer is yes, because I think that research is a legitimate part of our job description. To be sure, there are many colleges and universities where one can find a comfortable niche concentrating on teaching, and if that is what one wants out of life, then that is the career path one should follow. Conflict arises only if you choose to be at a research institution, but do not want to hold yourself to the implicit and explicit standards of that institution. At such institutions one has the responsibility to communicate one's thoughts and ideas with other colleagues, because the profession benefits from that. Thus, even though

publishing is in one's own best interest, because one gains from it, it is at the same time an act of sharing, and therefore has an altruistic aspect to it. The sharing, of course, means that you are making some thoughts publicly accessible. You are opening yourself up to criticism, and that is so uncomfortable to many that they become catatonic, and unable to plunge into publishing. Fear of publishing is angst of being vulnerable. Be that as it may, I firmly believe that one ought to be expected to publish, otherwise research can become a narcissistic activity whose goal is self-gratification.

In other words, research ought not, suffice by itself. This statement might well appear odd, but I put it this way in order to emphasize that the belief that publication follows naturally and automatically from research is incorrect. There are many intervening steps that need to be considered carefully. Admittedly, research, even run-of-the-mill research, is difficult enough, but publishing as a separate step has its challenges in its own right.

How should I begin?

[J.K.]: Publication of articles from your dissertation should be your highest priority as soon as you have your Ph.D. in hand. You do not have time to start a new research project just yet. Yet, this presents a major challenge, because having just completed a major research project, many feel that they deserve to sit on their laurels for a while. There is really not much time for that, however, because the tenure clock is running. Others, will find that they are really anxious to go on to discover other things, and will find getting back to the dissertation too boring. You might have become addicted to doing research, which is a good

thing to a degree, but if you go overboard, and it begins to interfere with the next step, namely the publication of the research results, then it can become a daunting prospect. So taking the next step in your life-course might not come naturally, particularly since you have so many other new responsibilities, such as lecture notes to prepare and committee meetings. The point is that you should not allow yourself to become entrapped in the research phase of your scholarship. You must let others know about your research.

Nonetheless, this is your chance to profit from the years you've invested into your thesis, and you need to put your mind to doing just that. Otherwise, you will not be able to beat the clock. To maximize your advantage, you need to first extract chapters that you think ought to be disseminated to a wider audience. By and large, this should be the case for most of the chapters. Obviously, they will have to be rewritten to some degree, because the article will have to be self-contained, whereas a chapter of a dissertation can draw upon information presented in another chapter.

A standard article obviously varies across disciplines, but it is fair to say that an article develops a single theme, and does so by addressing itself to an unsolved problem or a controversy, to propose a new way of looking at an old problem, or opens new avenues to explore, proposes a new conceptualization, synthesize a fragmented literature, or analyses new data. Most articles will need an introduction, which gives an overview of the literature on the topic: what is the received wisdom on the issue you are discussing? What has been written about it lately? Why should people be interested in it? How does your approach differ

from that of others? Do you have new data, new materials, new sources, new ideas? You might continue by presenting the main issues to be considered. You next need to explain your methodology, the data upon which you are building an argument, followed by the main body of the paper. The conclusion sums up the argument and perhaps qualifies the findings, and can also point to future directions. It is appropriate to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your evidence, and possible alternative interpretations, if any. Why is your approach superior to that of others? Thus, an article usually has one strand of thought leading from the introduction to the conclusion. Because the dissertation is likely to be made up of a number of interlocking arguments, an article cannot be lifted straight out of the dissertation. In sum, an article must be self-contained, and has to be understandable by the specialist to whom it is aimed, without outside references.

How should I find the right journal?

[J.K.]: Given the complexity of the decision, and differences across the disciplines, we cannot propose many hard and fast rules on how to choose a journal. Advice from your mentor can be quite useful while in graduate school, but once you are on your own the umbilical cord needs to be loosened. I suggest that you ask yourself (after making sure that you know all the journals in the discipline: which journal(s) have published similar articles to the one you are writing? Weigh the alternatives by analogy: if a particular journal has published an article on such a theme, perhaps the editor(s) will be willing to do so again on a similar topic. Look at the frontispiece of the journal. Many journals have a statement of their

philosophy on what articles they are willing to consider. Then, of course, you need to think about the audience you want to reach, and not least of all, make as objective a determination as possible about the importance of your article to the profession at large. How good is it? Which segment the profession would be interested in it? Is it essential reading for all, or is it aimed at a niche of the discipline. How original is it? Is it path-braking or is it essentially derivative, that is to say, derive its inspiration from the work of others? What is the "political" reputation of the journal? What about its methodological orientation? These questions are by no means easy to determine, but over time you will develop a good sense of which are the appropriate articles for which journals. However, even experienced hands will make mistakes in thinking that there is a match between an article and a journal, while the editors and referees see it differently.

There is the issue of prestige to consider. Publications fall into various categories and have their own hierarchy. Generally, the higher the rejection rate of a press or journal, the more prestigious it is to publish with or in it. As far as books are concerned, the presses of the elite universities are considered a bigger feather in your cap than those of the minor ones. This is the case, not only because the manuscript goes through a more stringent screening process, but also because the press will devote more attention to editing and advertising the book. Moreover, more libraries have standing orders with those university presses, and consequently, they practically guarantee a larger circulation for their books. Hence, the publisher is similar to a warranty that influences the extent to which the book will be taken

seriously by the scholarly community, and the extent to which it will be read, reviewed, and cited.

There are similar considerations among journals, with the additional factor being that prestige often, though not always, also depends on their circulation. (Such information is not easily available for books.) Generally speaking, the more prestigious the journal, the more attention your article will get, and it is more likely to have a higher impact on future research, i.e., the more often will other scholars cite your work. Because such citation rates are available in all disciplines (through the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, the Social Science Citation Index, and the Science Citation Index), and because they just might influence your promotion through the ranks (and not only the granting of tenure) you will benefit more from a publication the greater the prestige of the journal in which it appeared. Some top journals have as high as a ninety percent rejection rate.

Publishing in refereed journals is almost always more valuable than publishing in an anthology, because standards of inclusion are less stringent than in journals, insofar as the editor often has difficulties finding enough submissions to complete the volume. Thus, essays in a collected volume seldom receive the attention that journal articles generate, and are cited less frequently. Publishing in a foreign language is considered to be another market, and is generally not taken seriously by American departments.

It is probably true in all disciplines that editors are extremely conscious of keeping articles to the absolute minimum length. Consequently, you should pear down your paper to

the bare essentials, given the argument you are making, and therefore you should justify to yourself the inclusion of every single sentence. That is a major difference with the publication of an article in an anthology, or with a book-length manuscript where you have much more leeway, and you can stray away from the main argument without facing much resistance from the editor.

Journals usually specify the length of the article they are willing to consider, and it is advisable to hold to that range precisely, even if the initial submission can be longer – and shortened later. The article would eventually have to conform to the specification. If you do not think that you can meet the length constraint, you better try another journal. Ultimately you will have to weigh all of the above-mentioned factors, and make a choice in spite of all the uncertainty. The presumed quality of the article should match your perception of the journal to which you are going to send the article.

You are entering a dangerous phase just as you are completing the article, when too many authors begin a self-defeating process of soul-searching procrastination. My advice is to avoid delay: avoid getting stuck, and submit the article forthwith. Do not think about which journal is the most suitable for the article more than a couple of days. If you are torn between various options, just make a random determination. You should not wait until you deem the article to be perfect, and its acceptance by the journal of your choice a certainty.[36] If you have reached that stage, you have no doubt already spent too much time on polishing the article. That will come, but the key now is not to delay.

Delay is not helpful because you are not likely to obtain additional useful information in the meantime. To be sure, you are very much in need of information, but only such a review process can realistically convey it to you. To be sure, you need to form (ex-ante) a subjective probability distribution for the acceptance of the article in the various journals, and weigh those against the desirability of having the paper appear in them. The referee reports will enable you to update your prior assessment, and your ability to form such subjective opinions will have improved immensely through the submission process. In other words, the first few set of referee reports you receive will be extremely important to your career, because the sooner you gain a realistic view of the editorial process, the more successful you will be throughout the course of your academic career.

The point is that your weighing the pros and cons of submitting the article to a particular journal for an additional few weeks is, in my experience, not going to increase the chances of its acceptance. The same is true about being pedantic about details before submission.[37] The excessive polishing on the article may make it more pleasing to you, but it is not likely to impress the referees, because they will have a different point of view, in any event. Hence, the winning strategy is to find out – as soon as possible – what a set of referees think about the article. After all, their opinion is the one that matters, and not yours. Because the turnaround time is usually about six months, you will have no feedback, besides a note acknowledging receipt, for a long time. If you reach that limit, you had better contact the editor to inquire about what is holding up the process. All sorts of unexpected things can

happen: editors can change and your manuscript could have gotten lost in the shuffle. Hence, it is advisable to make some informal inquiries after half a year has gone by.[38]

I presume that you had sent your dissertation out to all the colleagues in the field who would be directly interested in it, and that you have already incorporated their suggestions into the first version of the article. You should send the newly finished article to the same scholars, asking them for their comments and suggestions again, but you should not wait until those comments arrive. You should mail the article. Let it go. See what others think of it. As you receive these new comments, they should be continuously incorporated into your version 1, a copy of which you should keep so that you can make easy reference to it in conjunction with the referees' comments. In fact, you should always come back to the article in order to polish it while you are waiting for a response from the journal.

You should have two (occasionally three) (anonymous) referee reports on your desk alongside the editor's decision in light of the recommendations in about six months (with a standard deviation of approximately two months).[39] If the article was rejected outright, you still have gained important information about your subjective evaluation of the match between your article and the journal's editorial policy. Do not despair. There are other journals with other editors, and, possibly, a different set of referees. This is an idiosyncratic process. One journal's rejection is another's acceptance. Most importantly, you will profit immensely from the critical opinions of the referees (who in a sense are surrogates for the profession at large). These should be taken into very careful consideration, even if you will

be sending the article to another journal, because that can only improve your article, and because it might just lend on the desk of the same referee again. Though unfair to some degree, the referee is under no obligation to disqualify herself (and some do) just because she has already rejected the article for another journal! I know, because that has happened to me on several occasions.

Alternatively, your article might be accepted outright, which unfortunately happens very seldom. Then there is nothing more to be said. Congratulations on being on the way to becoming a published scholar! You can change the designation of the article in your c.v. from "under consideration" that you gave it upon submission, to "forthcoming". Another possibility is that the editor will ask you to make only some minor revisions, which is generally tantamount to an acceptance without explicitly stating so. In such cases the article will not be sent to the referees again for their consideration. Rather, the editor will peruse the article in order to assure that you have met her earlier suggestions. You are then very close to success. You only have to make those minor changes requested of you, and you're finished. The only danger in such cases is that you do not read the editor's letter carefully enough, and you misunderstand her intimations and do not see that the requested revisions are more-or-less pro-forma.

However, by far the most frequent editorial response is a request to revise and resubmit the manuscript. You (and the manuscript) have now reached a crucial juncture, because, in some sense, the article begins to take on a life of its own. Academic freedom

notwithstanding, its faith is no longer entirely under your control, as the referees and editor assume the important (and sometimes intrusive) function of seeing the article through to its final destination. It will take a little practice to get used to reading the referee reports and the editor's summary and opinion correctly. Their intentions can be easily misunderstood. Some people conflate a revise and resubmit with a letter of rejection: in fact, the editor actually might want to publish the article very much, without saying it outright, provided the author can respond in a positive fashion to the referee's remarks, but the letter is interpreted as a rejection. Others are so overwhelmed with the prospect of a lengthy revision that they are flustered, while still others feel their ego infringed with all the criticism. These are not helpful emotional responses. In order for you to understand the reasons why the referees almost always sound more critical than intended, and why you should not take their criticisms to heart, you should consider the process from the point of view of the referees and the editor for a moment.

Editors tend to be cautious about their decisions. If they reject an article and they are wrong in doing so, only a handful of colleagues will find out about it. In contrast, if they accept an article that turns out to be a dud, then everyone finds out about it. This asymmetric nature of the risks of editing induces the editors to be overly cautious. It also means that research which is more than couple of steps away from the received wisdom will have difficulties finding acceptance. There are plenty of examples of pathbreaking articles that were first rejected before finding acceptance.[40]

One of the weaknesses of the publishing process is that referees have little or no material incentive to respond quickly (or at all). Often the editor does not even inquire if they are willing to serve in that capacity, and suddenly an article lands on their desk for judgment. While she could return the envelope, it takes too much time out of the day's activities and is not considered good form. It is much easier to put it aside. Then a few weeks later it is still on the wrong side of the desk, and she realizes that she would lose face if she returned it to the editor at such a late date, and she owes her a favor anyhow, and the topic sounds interesting, so perhaps she should move it to a different pile. In the meantime, the author is anxiously hoping for a quick turnaround. Well, it is easy to see that it is a miracle that the refereeing process works as well as it does, and generally it does work pretty well.

After all, the only reward the referees receive is the satisfaction of knowing that they made an altruistic contribution to scholarship, and knowing that they have an opportunity to impress their views on others, and thereby exert an influence within the discipline, even if in a small way. These incentives suffice to make the system work relatively well. It is important for the novice author to understand the logic of the process from the point of view of the referee, because that will help immensely in reading their reports. First time authors sometime feel flustered with all the criticism, and do not respond to them appropriately. You will need to develop a sense of how the reports should be interpreted. At this stage, it is crucial not to become discouraged, and to consider every single one of the referees' comments. Generally their advice is very helpful in providing new perspectives. If you

disagree with some, make that clear to the editor in the letter accompanying the resubmission. To be sure, referee's do disagree with one another, and then the editor should give you some hints which of them you need to take more seriously. If the editor overlooks some aspects, or if it is not entirely clear to you, you need to contact her for further guidance. Do not hesitate to call if further clarification is required. As a matter of courtesy, you should certainly not let any suggestion from either the referees or the editor remain unanswered. If you disagree with a referee, and you are not able or willing to make the requested changes, you should let that be known to the editor as well, though it is in your best interest to try to be as flexible as possible in this respect. Admittedly, some referees will want you to write another article entirely, and that remains outside of the scope of your current possibilities, and you can let the editor guide you on how to respond to such critiques. In rare cases, the critiques will be unreasonable, and you should consider sending the article to another journal, instead of heeding the editor's advice and resubmitting the article. However, even in such cases it pays to consult with the editor first.[41]

In any event, the process will provide immensely important information for you about how others see your work, how important they deem it to be, and how realistic you were about your evaluation of the probability that your first choice was the right journal for the article. Two hints should be taken seriously: do not become discouraged by the intrusive and sometimes questionable nature of the criticisms, and moreover, do respond to every single critique or suggestion out of courtesy, either by making appropriate changes in the

manuscript or by explaining clearly to the editor why you are not doing so. Referees can make mistakes. You might explain that the referee misread a part of the paper, or that the interpretation was not fully accurate. If you think you received an unfair reading, you can ask the editor to appoint a new referee.

The editor will send the article to the (same or different) referees and the process will repeat itself. Hopefully your conception of the article and that of the referees will move closer to one another over time as the referees run out of objections. The need for one or two more such cycles is rather common, and if you are flexible, time is on your side. If, however, the editor is uncertain about your article, or not favorably disposed to it, she also has the option to send the article to a new referees. This makes your task much more difficult, inasmuch as you need to respond to an entirely new set of critiques the next round, and the process of asymptotically converging on an agreed version of the manuscript becomes more cumbersome. After a couple of such futile cycles, it might be well worth trying another journal. It should become clear from this description that publishing is a rather tedious process, without much intellectual satisfaction. Having a good paper is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for publication. You also need patience and perseverance to succeed. You need to be able to deal with the eccentricities of the editor and an occasional misreading by the referees. Thus, flashes of creative insights and the exhilaration of discovery will not suffice by themselves. Though complex in execution the principle is very simple: submit, revise, and resubmit.

Are there additional ways to bring attention to my research?

*[J.K.]: Self-promotion is relatively important, because there is no formal mechanism to advertise your ideas. So you yourself need to see to it that your ideas reach as wide an audience as possible. Bear in mind is that there are economies of scale in the dissemination of ideas. With interdisciplinary research, you automatically have several audiences worth addressing. Every time you can get your name in print you add to your visibility. More people see and read your work. It is analogous to advertising. The profession notices that you once again made it through a screening process. Although initially, your contribution might go unnoticed, after a while, as you develop a profile, people's propensity to read your writings is likely to increase. So it is useful to find multiple venues for an idea, and one way of reaching different audiences is to publish a book from a set of already published articles.

What about publishing a book?

[J.K.]: Scholarly discourse obviously varies by discipline. In economics publication of a book at the beginning of one’s career has become completely discredited; in fact, it has regrettably become taboo. Though very odd, only journal articles carry much weight at tenure time at the research universities. How such tribal habits come into being, is obviously not the subject of this volume, but they highlight the idiosyncratic nature of the scholarly endeavor. One should, obviously, have a clear idea of the expectations at the very beginning of one’s career, and adhere to them religiously, because exceptions with established custom will not be made as a general rule.

In contrast to economics, in many other disciplines – such as history – it is, almost mandatory, to publish your dissertation as a book. It is advantageous to first publish several articles, as many as possible, from it. Thereafter you can turn to the publication of the whole manuscript, revised, enlarged, and polished sufficiently so that it no longer reads like a dissertation. The publication of a book advances scholarly discourse, even though parts of it, as segmented ideas, have already appeared in journal articles, because it reaches a somewhat different audience, and because it conveniently collects them together so that their relationships can be revealed. Consequently, the arguments in a book-length manuscript is much more complex than in all the articles taken separately. It is also important, that books are automatically reviewed in journals. This implies that other scholars will go on record about your work, which (provided, of course, they are positive on balance) will become useful at you tenure review. Articles do not automatically elicit a similar public response. To be sure, articles are cited, and you should (years down the line) find out who is actually citing your work, because that will enable you to learn who uses your research, and which segment of your intended audience you have not succeeded in reaching. So, articles and books serve somewhat different purposes.

This brings me to the point that scholars are generally overwhelmed with commitments. But those busy people are exactly the opinion makers you would like to reach with your ideas. You cannot expect them to go to far out of their way to learn about your work. That is why publishing does not by itself guarantee that your ideas will be read. It will be read by a

few who are directly involved in the issues you raise, but you need to reach a wider audience in order to attract more attention to your research. Networking can help to develop a coterie of followers - friends and acquaintances - who read your publications regularly. Before publication you should present your papers at conferences and send them to people who might comment on it. After publication, too, you need to send off-prints to important people in the profession. That, too, is likely to increase the probability of it being read. In addition, if you come across an article close to your field, and you find no evidence that the author knows of your work, it can be useful to establish contact with her, by introducing yourself and by attaching an offprint of one of your articles.

[J.G.]: In some disciplines, such as mine, assistant professors have to consider whether they should try to publish a revised and expanded version of their dissertation as a book, or split the dissertation up into separate articles and publish them individually in journals. One can do only one of the two; which is better? There is no hard and fast answer, but I think that the advantage goes to the side of publishing the chapters as articles in journals, preferably the best journals possible. On one's CV, publishing a book with an excellent press looks very well, and perhaps even better than the separate articles; but one's work will be seen and read by far more of one's colleagues if it appears in serious, mainstream journals, and so I would recommend taking that route, all other things being equal.

[J.K.]:

What if I am unable to publish?

[J.K.]: You have at least three choices: teach in a liberal-arts college where you would be comfortable without publishing; leave academia: Ph.D.s are sought in all walks of life even outside of the particular discipline of your training; or you might try to find out why you have this mental blockage. Of course, there are many possibilities to consider. Most of the time research is not the problem, even if you are not completely satisfied with yourself, because if you were able to write a Ph.D. thesis, then you must have some results worthwhile to communicate to a larger audience. In almost all the cases, the inability to publish is somehow connected to either a perfectionism that prevents bringing the writing to a conclusion, inappropriate choice of journals, or unwillingness to pay careful attention to the referee reports. So if you have not been successful, you must ascertain as quickly as possible the source of the blockage.

CHAPTER 9: TENURE

First of all, what is tenure?

[J.G.]: Tenure is what separates the junior faculty -- the assistant professors, and some of the associate professors -- from the senior faculty. The tenured professors are guaranteed a job until they reach retirement, with only a rare exception losing a job because of violation of the ethical or legal standards required of a professor. But the division between the two parts of the faculty is often a good deal more, too, though this depends on the particular university. The junior faculty member is quite naturally in a dependent, and even defensive position, knowing that the work that she accomplishes in just a few short years -- generally five or six -- will serve as the basis for a very serious decision, a decision to either grant him a job for life or to let him go. The junior faculty member may often feel like she has little choice regarding teaching and service demands made of him; to say "no" may give the impression of not being a team player, or of not being sufficiently grateful for being at the University, or of simply being lazy.

The tenured faculty member, on the other hand, has a great deal of freedom, concerning what she chooses to teach and to do (or not do) research on. It's hard to imagine any other profession in which such freedom is offered to so many people for such a long period of time. It is a great opportunity.

It is often said that tenure exists largely to guarantee the professor a position from which she can explore unpopular positions, either political or intellectual -- positions that might be

so unpopular (and therefore risky) that without this guarantee, it would be foolhardy to undertake such an exploration. There is undoubtedly something to this, but I think it is a fairly small part of the whole story. Precious few among the professorate, in my experience, ever dream of using the security of their position to voice unpopular political positions, and in general tenure does not seem to be necessary to protect the vast majority of academics who choose to take unpopular positions. An unpopular position, defended well, is by and large to everyone's liking; a professor who publishes interesting work from an unpopular position is by and large thought well of, regardless of his tenure or lack thereof.

The question as to why there is tenure is like any question concerning a large social unit: it is pointless to ask why it is the way it is if we expect an explanation like one as to why we put on a particular shirt this morning. The only explanation as to why there is tenure will be either historical, or else it will be one that seeks to understand why the system as a whole functions better with tenure than without it. Tenure does not exist primarily to protect the individual (though that may be a salutary side-effect); it is rather part of a functioning system.

A recent experiment at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) illustrates this point. The provost decided to offer two types of employment options for new faculty members: either traditional tenure track lines, or else non-tenure track employment (with potentially indefinite employment, to be sure) at a higher salary. The difference between the two salaries? $5,000 a year, as of 1989.

One natural side-effect of the existence of tenure in the academic system is that it helps keep salaries down in the academic world. It only stands to reason (and to economic common sense) that people will be willing to work for a lower salary if their job is guaranteed: that is, the guarantee of employment is worth a hefty decrease in salary. To put the same point in a slightly different way, any system and any enterprise hopes and expects its artisans to be enterprising, original, and creative. In the business world, this hope is expressed most commonly in the enormous opportunities open to the entrepreneur who undertakes to provide a product or service better than anyone else. The rewards available to her are virtually without economic limit. Academia has no such means available to it with which to reward -- financially -- the enterprising intellectual; it can offer only a limited amount of reward along such lines. Instead, a different series of rewards and opportunities are available, of which tenure is the central and spotlighted element.

In a different way, tenure is a way that the academic system has of acknowledging that its ability to evaluate the research capacities and activities of each member comes to an end at a certain point. The system no longer needs to undertake that onerous burden for each and every faculty member. After a person receives tenure, the circumstances under which she is evaluated by his university are few in number. There will probably be the matter of promotion to full professor at some point down the road; there will be the matter of salary increments each year. Promotion to full professor is a serious matter, but nowhere near as serious as the tenure decision. Salary increments each year are a relatively easy matter, as we

have seen: there will be a default value (perhaps as much occasionally as 4 or 5 percent, but more often less, and very occasionally, the value has been known to be negative) set by the provost for all faculty members, and then there will be some modest adjustments above or below that line. The only other critical moment of readjusting the resources offered to a faculty member come when an offer has been made by a competing university (the subject of the next chapter) -- which is a moment of crisis created by a competitor attempting to encroach on a university's turf, a rather different matter, and one which is not typically going to occur for each and every faculty member.

How does the tenure review process begin?

[J.G.]: The simplest case to discuss is that of an assistant professor who takes a tenure-track position immediately after graduate school. The "tenure-track clock" (as the expression goes) starts for this person when she begins at the university, and typically runs without any delays. Towards the end of the fifth year, or the beginning of the sixth, a review procedure is undertaken about which I will have a good deal to say shortly. This procedure will typically take up to six months to complete, and at the end of this time, a decision will be reached by the university which will either be positive -- in which case the candidate will be awarded a position with "indefinite tenure" -- or negative, in which case the candidate will have somewhere between six and eighteen months to find a new job elsewhere.

If this case involves someone who has come to the university from another university, where she spent (let us say) three years, then the decision regarding tenure may or may not

wait for six years. The tenure clock, that is, may be started at three, or perhaps two, years, and when the clock hits the beginning of third or fourth year at the current university, the tenure procedure might begin. But whether this pushing of the tenure clock forwards is done or not must be negotiated by the new professor and the administration when she comes to the university, and it must be put on paper in black and white.

There are no definitive reasons why an assistant professor (or an untenured associate professor) should try to get a tenure decision made earlier rather than later. There are good reasons to have the decision made earlier; there are equally good reasons to delay the decision as long as possible. Most of the reasons are transparent. In favor of an early decision is the fact that it is more comfortable to be tenured, and a salary raise will come along with that landmark. On the other hand, the longer one waits before the tenure decision, the more time there is to write and to publish, thus strengthening the tenure dossier. Of course, if you have an overwhelmingly strong publication record, you may wish to come up for a tenure review as soon as possible. But any tenure reviews that are early -- that is, before the tenure clock has come to the sixth year -- are bound to be judged by somewhat stricter standards. It is a calculated risk. Failing to get tenure on an earlier-than-necessary review is not necessarily a sign that the case will be rejected again when submitted during the sixth year; but a rejected early tenure case is difficult for all parties to deal with comfortably.

The details of the tenure procedure differ from university to university, and to some extent even from department to department. The first step is generally for the chairman of the

department to collect a dossier containing all of the candidate's publications, and documentation concerning all of the candidate's professional activities that in one way or another bear on the tenure decision. The chairman and the candidate may then together construct a list of six to ten reasonably senior people in the candidate's field of specialty who should be in a position to offer an evaluation of that work. A common pattern is for the candidate to offer the names of four people she would like to see asked, and a list of about four names of people who she thinks might be unreasonably inclined against his work (rather like a lawyer's preemptive right to veto a potential juror). The chairman will then go on to pick another three or four, or more, senior scholars whose opinions will be obtained.

It is not uncommon for this procedure to begin early in fall semester of the candidate's sixth year. More often than not, the chairman will call the outside experts (or referees, as we may call them) on the phone to ask if they would be willing to write an evaluatory letter, explaining that the deadline for the letter would be, perhaps, October 10. If the referee says no, this is in no way prejudicial to the candidate's case; no-one but the chairman will know. If the person agrees to do it, she is honor-bound to provide the letter by the day of the deadline -- this is one of the most serious professional responsibilities a professor has.

The referee may be someone who has worked closely with the candidate; she may be someone who has followed the candidate's work closely over the past six years; or she may be someone who hardly knows the candidate's work at all, but is willing to put in some serious time and effort to read the materials that the candidate has published. In any case, the

chairman will typically send a large package of the candidate's publications (it may be the candidate's complete set of publications, or it may be some important selected items), and the referee will be expected to offer two kinds of evaluations. First, she will offer a judgment on the significance of the kind of work that the candidate is undertaking, and the success (or failure) of that research in accomplishing in goals. Second, she will offer a statement as to how the candidate's work stands when compared with others who have been in the field an equal length of time. It is the outside referee who can explain why certain invitations that the candidate has received actually signify an important international recognition of the candidate, and it is also the outside referee who can say that the candidate has no grasp of the big picture of the field in which she works. Most academic specialties are quite small, and a leading expert will likely know something about virtually everyone contributing to the area. The outside referee is likely to have encountered the candidate in her capacity as an editor, or as a speaker at a conference, or as part of an academic organization.

Oddly enough, the most helpful letters that a candidate gets are frequently from someone who holds reservations concerning the candidate's work. If the letter is nothing but two or three pages of elegiac praise, it is hard to avoid thinking that the minimal amount of critical thinking has not entered into the evaluation. However, there is hardly anything more impressive than a letter from a referee who says, first, that she thinks that the candidate's perspective is fundamentally misguided, and second, she nonetheless acknowledges that every paper (or most of the papers) that the candidate has published present strong and even

compelling cases for the position that she thinks is, in fact, wrong. Honest respect from an intellectual opponent is far harder to earn than copious praise from someone with whom one is in agreement, and the academics who have to read these letters are generally quite well aware of that fact.

These half-dozen or so letters from outside referees, collected by the chairman, form the most important core of the tenure dossier at a research university. At some time early in the fall -- most likely after most, but not all, of the outside letters have been received by the candidate's chairman -- the senior members of the department will gather to discuss and vote on the candidate. Each of the senior members will have (or should have, at least!) read the candidate's publications and all the available outside letters. Of course, most of the senior members will have a specialization removed from those of the candidate; how much of the publications they will be able to judge critically will vary greatly from person to person and from field to field.

The department will vote, then, on the candidate's case - more often than not with the advice of a smaller internal committee that has been set up to give an initial evaluation. The chairman will then report that vote, along with a description of the department's general view of the candidate's work, and complete the tenure dossier, which by this time will include all of the referees' letters, all of the candidate's publications, and a statement by the candidate as well concerning his teaching, research, and service activities. The chairman will also include

a brief academic biography of each of the referees, explaining why they were among the best people available to provide judgments of the candidate's work.

The dossier will then go, perhaps in early November, to the dean, though which dean receives the dossier will depend on the particular academic structure of the university in question. In many systems, it will then be read by a standing committee which has been elected by the entire faculty, and which serves in an advisory role to the dean. This committee will read the chairman's report, the referees' detailed evaluations, and consider all of the other material in the dossier. It is no longer a matter of directly evaluating the candidate's work -- the experts have already done that. Now it is more a matter of weighing the alternative judgments that comprise the dossier. In some cases, all of the judgments will concur, either for or against the candidate. She may be the best young scholar in the field, with a long publication list of important books and many grateful students; she may be someone incapable of serious academic research and teaching. Either way, the positive or negative vote from the department will be easy to support, and there will be little discussion in such a case.

The tough cases are those where there are conflicting judgments that are passed on to the dean and the committee from the department and from the outside experts. A department might vote 9 to 6 against a candidate; should that negative decision be taken seriously? Seriously, yes, though not as seriously as a 15 to 0 vote against another candidate from the same department. Or another department may vote in favor -- even strongly in favor -- of a

candidate whose research and publication record is weak, perhaps because the candidate fits in well and comfortably with a department which has become sleepy and less demanding in research. In a properly functioning academic scene, this will not happen, but when it does, questions may be raised at this first level that is above the department as to whether a sufficiently critical process has been undertaken to evaluate the candidate's work.

This discussion of the tenure decisions puts a different emphasis than many that are offered, especially in newspaper accounts of tenure decisions, a difference that is worth a bit of elaboration. Tenure decisions are often viewed as primarily decisions regarding an individual's continued employment, and of course that is an important aspect of the process. At the same time, the tenure process is the most important aspect of the university's attempt to form, model and better itself. Some of the (perhaps brutal) aspects of the business world are not present in the academic world, especially in light of the job security possessed by the tenured professor. But these benefits would bring down the system as a whole if their end result were to decrease the general degree of competition and activity in the academic professions.

What are the criteria used for tenure evaluation

[J.G.]: This is the big question: what criteria will be used by the university to determine whether an untenured professor will be granted permanent tenure. The traditional answer is: research, teaching, and service are the grounds for tenure. But at most research universities -- more or less, by definition -- research is by far the most important criterion.

"Research" generally does not mean research -- it means publication, for there is no other way that a legitimate and consistent system can be established to evaluate the quantity and quality of a person's research. Emphasizing publication as a measure of research also in effect recognizes the fact that knowledge is not an individual's private possession; the knowledge that one "has" is part of a larger social fabric of knowledge, and one does not add to knowledge in the larger, and more important, sense simply by adding to one's own personal fund.

What is a strong tenure case? That's like asking how long a piece of string is. It depends entirely on the standards of the university and of the field in which the candidate is working. In many areas, there is a simple rule of thumb: one must publish a book, and the condition is often added that the book not be a lightly revised version of the Ph.D. dissertation. In other fields (philosophy, for example, or mathematics or linguistics), writing books is quite unusual, and publishing in refereed journals is the normal way of demonstrating research activities.

[J.K.]: Requirements for tenure vary enormously. At the economics department of North Carolina State, for instance, one is expected to publish at least one article in one of the main journals of the discipline, and these journals are actually spelled out. A journal in your own sub-specialty would not suffice. In other words, if you are an economic historian, it is not sufficient to publish in the Journal of Economic History, but you need to place an article in a journal such as the Quarterly Journal of Economics. An awareness of these criteria – and

they are supposed to be purely academic, will be useful for you, even if there are always exceptions. Friendships and other extraneous issues can play a role occasionally, and grievance procedures are always available in case of unfair treatment, but these are generally not at all reliable. It is best to perform so as to have a solid case by review time.

What happens if I am not granted tenure?

[J.K:]: Life, of course, must go on, in or out of academia. You will have a year to find alternative employment. In many cases you will be able to move down the academic hierarchy, and possibly even with tenure. In some of the elite departments, it is understood from the outset that, even though you were hired in the tenure stream, your chances of actually being granted tenure are extremely slim. At such universities as Princeton, for instance, you need to "hit a home run," as one senior scholar put it, before you will be tenured, i.e., you need to make a unique contribution to scholarship, by doing path-breaking work. There is nothing wrong with that criterion, as long as you understand the implied terms of your initial contract from the outset. As compensation for the additional uncertainty you face, you will be working with some of the best scholars in the country. In such a case, you should think of your position as receiving further on-the-job-training, making you a better scholar in the process. As long as you accept the job with that attitude, (don't tell yourself that the rule doesn't apply to you) the experience will be rewarding. Thereafter, people usually obtain a good job lower down the academic totem pole, so your years at such a department will be an investment with dividends. It is in your best interest to put out feelers

about opportunities elsewhere well ahead of your tenure decision, because often departments need to plan well in advance of your actual availability.

There is no stigma attached to being denied tenure at such elite departments, because it is common knowledge that they are not willing to grant tenure even to good scholars. Such departments are interested mainly in recruiting senior faculty who have already acquired an international reputation, and whose research accomplishments have been amply demonstrated. After five or six years on the job you will not yet be in that position. The only way for the top departments to maintain their leading edge is to not take any chances at all, and grant tenure only to scholars who have become a household name in the profession. They are the ones who have already developed new directions of research, and thereby have become opinion makers in their niche of the discipline. These scholars are extremely important to the department, because they are going to attract the top graduate students in the country, and without them the reputation of the department cannot be maintained. Hence, the competition for top students is keen.

What about opportunities outside of academia?

[J.K.]: Once denied tenure, you cannot stay on in the institution at a lower rank. The system just does not work that way. You are expected to leave. Moreover, it is rather seldom that you will be able to make a lateral move within academia: from say, a Tier II institution to another Tier II institution. If you do have not received a very enticing alternative offer, you should think seriously about entering the outside world. Many skills that you have acquired

are very valuable outside of the narrow field to which you have applied those skills. Analytic thinking, clear writing skills, organizational talent, ability to communicate orally, experience in getting along with colleagues in a bureaucratic organization are as useful in government service, and in research organizations, as they are in the business world. You just need to persevere to find the right niche for your talents. And the fact that you have acquired a PhD, is an indication that you do have these talents, in spite of the tenure decision not having gone your way. Going to professional school is yet another opportunity to consider. I know of persons who, after having been denied tenure, went to law school (at 40), became corporate lawyers and had extremely successful careers. So there is life after a denial of tenure after all!

CHAPTER 10: COMPETITION IN THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM AND OUTSIDE OFFERS

Competition in the University System

[J.G.]: As we have already observed, academia is as it is because within it lie all sorts of separate forces: it is the home of scholarly research activity, of teaching activity, the tableau against which personalities come to grips with each other, and it is -- let us not forget -- a business. It is a business whose goal is to make knowledge, make students, and sometimes, even, make money. Part of the job of the good administrator is to make sure that his unit of the university is doing the best job possible in these areas. And, like it or not, the best system that anyone has come up with for keeping a large unit in top running shape is competition. Competition! This rings in free-market economics and all that the phrase entails.

American academics are quite unusual, on a global scale, with regard to the amount of moving around that they are willing to put up with, and which they even take for granted. French-Canadians by and large will not leave Québec. A Frenchman may get a job in the provinces, but the center of his academic life and point of orientation will remain Paris no matter what happens. Americans think nothing of moving from Brandeis to UCLA and then back east again to Johns Hopkins, moves on a scale that would be unthinkable in Europe, or anywhere else in the world, for that matter.

One of the major factors that has led to that situation, in addition to the relative homogeneity of our national culture, is the fact that our university system is not centralized.

There is no university system at the federal level [fn: Gallaudet University is chartered by Congress and has been since 19xx, but operates as an independent institution, with X members of its board of trustees coming from the Congress...]; a few of the biggest state universities are centralized to the extent that several important campuses respond to a single central administration, such as in California and in New York. But even in the case of the University of California system, the campuses maintain a high level of autonomy -- which is to say, of competition.

The notion that the university works by responding to the forces of competition is by no means either venal or amoral. To be sure, it is not the only force at work within the university system; if it were, the results would no doubt be both inappropriately volatile and, in a word, tragic. But anyone attempting to administer a large institution must set himself a set of goals, and in the case of a university, these goals will include academic goals (in addition to the more mundane goals of raising $50,000,000 for the endowment, or the building of a new athletic or biology building). How can academic goals be set at an administrative level above a department? How can the number of theorems proven in the mathematics department be compared with the number of new grammars published in the linguistics department, or with the number of new editions of Blake poetry from the English department? A way must be found, because one thing is certain: if we leave a department to its own devices, and offer it limitless resources on demand, it will sink into a torpor of self-satisfaction, an intellectual

drowsiness in which everything and everyone that is produced by the department will seem to be of highest quality and without imperfection.

The upshot is that criteria must be established for determining how well a unit is faring. It almost doesn't matter what the criteria are, as long as they are established in advance, and not as a way of recognizing what has already been accomplished. There should not be just one single criterion. No single criterion expresses more than a portion of the value that a unit brings to the university, whether it be total number of students enrolled, number of books published per year, or the dollars brought in by federally-sponsored grants. A healthy university recognizes that a raft of such criteria will enable it to pinpoint those units and departments which are intellectually alive and healthy, as well as those that are moribund or in poor health. These criteria may include:

Teaching: -number of undergraduates enrolled (normalized per faculty member)

-teaching awards to faculty in the department

-number of graduate students enrolled, in total and per year

-number of undergraduate majors (again, per faculty member)

-number of masters and doctoral degrees awarded per year

-types of jobs offered to recent graduates from the department

Research: -number of articles and books published per year, with some consideration to the degree of selectivity of the publisher or journal involved;

-number of invitations to faculty members to participate in conferences, workshops, and so forth;

-number and size of grants and faculty fellowships (such as Guggenheim fellowships)

Considering jobs elsewhere, and applying for jobs

[J.G.]: It is my impression that of all the tasks undertaken by young faculty members, the one that is resisted the most falls not under the category of research, nor of service, nor of teaching. It is the unpleasant task of considering the possibility of applying for a job at another university.

There are all sorts of reasons why it is unpleasant. First of all, looking for jobs, deciding which ones one could realistically apply for, sending in applications and asking for letters of recommendation -- it's a big job that consumes a lot of time and a lot of psychological energy. It's not made any easier -- to put it mildly -- by the knowledge that as far as any single job is concerned, the chance of getting it is pretty small. Of course, all these considerations hold for the unemployed job seeker as well, but she at least has more of an economic gun to their head -- she needs a job. The lucky professor who has a job already can't rely on that bit of motivation.

Other, perhaps darker, reasons lurk behind one's unwillingness to apply for a job elsewhere. If Jones is lucky enough to have found a job that she really likes, then it may seem to her that applying for a job elsewhere is a sign of disloyalty, and that there may

therefore be a price to pay if his chairman, or his dean, discovers that has applied for a job at Arizona Tech. In a word, Jones may feel guilt: the guilt of disloyalty.

Another reason that some people avoid applying for other jobs is that they do not want to have to face the possibility of making a choice, if they're made a serious and attractive offer. After all, if Smith is happy where she is -- or at least, reasonably happy -- it is likely to be quite a difficult matter to choose between familiar Heeriyam State College and Knotnoan University.

But the fact is, as we have noted, most successful academics make at least one major move in their academic careers, and many make several. And -- perhaps more to the point -- part of the business of academic administrators is to deal with professors who are considering moving. They themselves are very likely to be professionals who have at one point or other considered an offer from a different university, and very likely accepted it. Putting it simply: it is easy -- but wrong! -- to think of an administrator as a surrogate parent, who might react like a guardian scorned if faced with the possibility of a faculty member thinking about moving on. That is the wrong metaphor to use!

We all like to think that if we do our work well and carefully, we will be noticed and appreciated by those who make decisions concerning our well-being: our salaries, our positions, and so forth. This is, I think, largely an infantile wish -- in effect, a regression to a stage of childhood in which we took it for granted that our parents would see what we were doing, appreciate it, and give us not only what we needed but what we wanted. As a model

for how academia actually works, it is remarkably poor, and yet despite all evidence to the contrary, surprisingly many academics both young and old cling to the perhaps comforting outlines of this view. If that view were accurate, there would be no need for this book, and you would certainly not have read this far. If you're with us up to here, it's because you recognize that that's not the right picture.

My remarks should not be taken in any sense either to overlook or to demean a sense of loyalty to one's institution. A person who has found a good place to work is almost certain to develop that warm sense of identification which we call loyalty. If the time comes when a professor has an offer from another university, this sense of belonging should certainly be a major consideration in determining whether to accept it or not. But it is a mistake to think that loyalty means not considering the possibility of being somewhere else.

Junior versus senior job searches, from the searcher's point of view

From the point of view of the university trying to fill a position, a decision has generally been made ahead of time whether a junior (i.e., untenured) offer will be made, or a senior position with tenure. These two procedures are very different, so different as virtually to deserve different names. The search for someone in a junior position is virtually certain to finish by finding someone; the senior search is just as likely to end without a successful catch, for reasons we will come back to in a moment. The junior search is more of a stab in the dark, and if the candidate chosen doesn't work out to the department's liking at the end of six years (and in worse cases, after three years), she can be let go. A senior, tenured professor in the

department may be a colleague for life, and is likely to have a serious impact on the complexion of the department. Such a decision is made with a good deal more exploration and circumspection.

The junior academic is less likely to consider applying for jobs when she already has a tenure-track position, and for good reason: unless the offer comes with tenure (which is unlikely), the process of moving will use up valuable time while the clock ticks toward the time of the tenure decision. Similarly, if she has, say, four years invested at the University of Washington, and Michigan is considering hiring her, Michigan will most likely be expected to consider her tenure case after two years, which is in many cases just a bit too soon to get a clear sense of how well the person is doing in a new department. If after such a move an assistant professor shows an unimpressive record, should Michigan take that as the side-effect of moving and a new set of teaching responsibilities, or is it a sign of a lack of energy at this crucial time in a young person's career? It is a hard call to make, and for this reason, many universities will hesitate to make junior appointments at such a point unless the assistant professor's record is already so strong as to virtually warrant tenure.

A senior appointment is entirely different. A professor hired with tenure is a known quantity, with a considerable record of research, and perhaps administrative experience, under her belt. The recruiting university will have persuaded itself that the chance to recruit Professor Apple is a chance too attractive to pass up, one that in no way could be matched by hiring, say, two assistant professors for the same price. Apple's presence on campus will

make a real difference, perhaps because of the reputation she has established as a path-breaking researcher, or the important connections she will make between her department and another, or for any other of a host of reasons. She will have been invited to give a lecture or two on campus, and to meet the chairman and the dean, and a number of faculty members. If she continues to express serious interest about the possibility of moving to the university, the administration will make discreet inquiries in the field to gather frank judgments on the quality and the future of her work. Questions will be asked as to why she might consider leaving her present position. Often a senior appointment is contemplated by the administration (that is, outside of the appointing department) because there are no acceptable candidates within the department to replace the current chairman (or, in more serious circumstances, to replace the former chairman). In such a case, it will be important to figure out if Professor Apple's abilities extend to the realm of administration as well.

Chapter 11: The Human Side

How has the choice of the academic profession affected your family life?

[J.G.]: This is a very complicated matter. My case is a bit unusual, but then most cases are, at least viewed from close-up. I'm married, and have been for sixteen years. We have three kids, one from a prior marriage. Both my wife and I were junior academics – assistant professors, both of us in linguistics – when we got married. We made one major geographical move not too long after we were married, and the upshot of the move was that I had a job at a better university, and my wife did not. Several years later, she obtained an academic job in a related but different area, computer science, and found after a couple of years that she did not like the job enough to want to keep it. A few years after that, she was offered an extraordinarily attractive position as a researcher in private industry which required that we relocate to the Pacific Northwest. For the last few years, we've been back and forth between the Pacific Northwest and the Midwest. Most of the backing and forthing has been mine; I've racked up enormous numbers of airplane miles, and jointly we've spent a lot of money on maintaining two homes in two cities.

But we're both very attached to our jobs, and there has so far seemed to be no way that either of us could obtain anything approaching an equivalent job close to where the other one of us works. It's been hard, but for the most part, all of us (kids and adults) have had a very good time of it, and as far as this peripatetic life-style goes, I don't think any of us regret any

of the decisions we've made. We are, to the contrary, grateful that our salaries have been generous enough to permit us to do this.

And our employers (a university in my case, a software company in my wife's) have shown considerable flexibility in making unusual arrangements. But the arrangements have often meant the one or the other of us being a single parent for days, and sometimes for weeks, at a stretch. None of us like that, and since neither my wife nor I has mastered the skill of being in two places at the same time, the one of us that's the single parent at any given time feels a good deal more torn between the calls of work and kids than we'd like to, or than we ought to, frankly.

We have not gone in for large amounts of baby-sitting or in-house child-care. I know a number of academics, and I read in the papers about a lot of two-career couples, who employ full-time nannies at home, who can arrive early in the morning and be available through supper-time. For various reasons that approach has not appealed to us (nor even been a viable option, most of the time). So we've simply struggled over the years, and things do tend to get easier over time.

Has it been worth it? I hardly know how to think about answering the question. One of the very worst sides of academia is how difficult it is – virtually impossible, really – to find a job in one's discipline in a specific geographical area. You have to be willing to take a job wherever it may turn out to be. Viewed from up close, that's just a fact of life, but when you compare academia to other job tracks available to a talented young person – become a

doctor, a lawyer, a computer programmer – this is most definitely a down-side. I mentioned earlier that a few far-sighted universities have made special provisions for hiring pairs of married academics, locked into the so-called two-body problem. This is a start, but it's just a drop in the bucket, and I frankly don't see a solution in sight at the moment. In my own case, I suspect that if I had taken the non-academic route in life, I would have always regretted it and missed the intellectual freedom of exploration that I have had in the career that I actually chose. But another career would have made most job-related issues a lot easier, I also suspect.

Let's turn to some other issues. What is your experience with the ethical nature of the profession.

[J.K..]: The academy has a very special place in society. It is, as it were, the caretaker of our civilization, that is to say, our values, and our intellectual treasures. At the same time, by producing the next generation of intellectual leaders it influences profoundly the evolution of society. It would be desirable if the people attracted to it were cognizant of this responsibility and had the spiritual foundation to uphold and advance these traditions. In my opinion, the American system of higher education is the best in the world, partly because, in the main, we are fundamentally that kind of people. Though we tend to take this for granted, not all educational systems are capable of doing that. The outcome depends on a delicate balance of rewards and disincentives.[42]

That ideal, however, needs to be tempered by the reality that higher education is very big business, and in the case of state-financed institutions, open to political pressures. You are, in short, by no means entering an ivory tower, and you will need considerable spiritual resources to know when to uphold the ideal and when, and the extent to which, to compromise. This is incredibly difficult, and you should not expect ready-made recipes on how to approaches the challenges that lie ahead. Yet you need to be aware of the fact that moral dilemmas will be coming your way regularly. I have often debated what would Socrates or Galileo have done in certain circumstances, and tried to hold myself to such imaginary standards, but it was not always possible. The degree to which moral standards can be maintained in face of reality is a problem as old as humanity, and we have little choice but to grapple with the same issues as our ancestors in somewhat different guises. However, it is extremely important, it seems to me, that we do grapple with the issues, and do not automatically assume a pragmatic position.

What kinds of ethical problems are presented by the fact that education is a business enterprise?

J.K.: It is a commonplace that the bottom line matters at many institutions. To be sure, this is not the case at colleges with an oversupply of applications, but at most institutions administrators are anxious about enrollments, and financial considerations drive policy. Indeed, enrollments become in many cases of paramount importance. One should absolutely not ignore that consideration in one's dealings in the classroom, particularly in setting

standards. Look, suppose you have high standards, and you hold the conviction on what you should expect from the students inflexibly. You might even consider it immoral to pass students who have not done as well as you think they should have. They are not doing college level work in your opinion. Now, if you begin to fail a significant proportion of your students, the administrators will begin to worry, and understandably so. In this respect the institution expects you to accept the abilities of the students as they are, and adjust your own criteria accordingly. You can make an ethical issue out of it, but it will not necessarily be the right thing to do. There is no reason why you should go on a crusade to reform the institutional structure of the academic world. By accepting a job at a particular institute, you have, in some sense, implicitly accepted the standards which the reputation of the institution reflects, and it would be you who acted improperly if you reneged on that agreement, if you insisted on raising those standards.

A similar case can be made about plagiarism. The problem has worsened ruing the last decade at many colleges and universities, and we are fooling ourselves if we do not admit it. It would be, again, very difficult to swim against the current, and decide single handedly to change the tide. It would be an uphill battle, and administrators have little understanding for quixotic crusades. What can one do? In some cases it might not make sense to assign term papers. The students are not well-enough prepared to write them, and you should ask students to do simpler assignments, like book reviews, that they are able to do. At other colleges, you can assign term papers, because the students are capable enough, but you need

to structure the topic in such a way that they are unable to easily purchase a ready-made paper in the open market. It is challenging task, but one that has to be faced with an open mind.

Have you seen any overt discrimination in academia?

[J.K.]: No, frankly, I have not along gender, racial, or ethnic lines. So far as I am concerned, these are non-issues in academia. I have, however, seen favoritism by which a president, for example, has a friend appointed to a faculty position without affirmative action.

[J.G].: I'd have to say that I have not seen any examples of overt discrimination myself either, but I recognize that both John and I are young (well, relatively young: post-war baby boomers), white, and male. We've both made an effort to limit the advice and opinions we offer to those areas where we have some personal experience; this is not a research essay on the status and structure of academia, after all.

But my experience does include hearing some hair-raising stories, of which I'll share one. A very senior academic of my acquaintance, by now much-lauded and widely recognized in her field, has told me of an experience she had when she was a young academic, at a very well-known college where one would have thought the following experience to be impossible. I'll refer to her as Professor X. The time was nearly thirty years ago.

The college was small enough to have a number of plenary faculty meetings during the year, and at one final spring meeting, two questions were brought to the faculty's attention.

They were both petitions from graduating seniors. One involved extending a deadline by several months for a student who had been extremely ill during her junior year; the other was a matter of waiving the foreign language requirement for seniors who had failed their elementary languages courses several times. (Of course the issues were more complicated than I'm describing, but the actual questions at hand only set the stage for the comment to come.) Professor X had been at the college for no more than a year or two, and she spoke in favor of extending the deadline for the first student on simple humanitarian grounds; nonetheless, the motion to extend was voted down. On the matter of the language requirement, the faculty (to Professor X's surprise) voted to waive it entirely for several undergraduates. Feeling an imbalance between these two decisions, Professor X – a very junior and (inside, at least) nervous young professor – stood up and made a plea for equity by also treating the first student humanely. The president of the college listened to her statement, and then dismissed it with what she undoubtedly meant to be taken as a bit of light-hearted humor: „Well, I guess that's what we get for letting women onto the faculty," he said.

A remark like that would be unimaginable today, I think. American society has changed and continues to change. And that anecdote doesn't even prove discrimination as such existed at the college in question; Professor X *had* been hired there, after all. But empirical studies do show that academia still has a good distance to go before it can feel satisfied with itself. It was only this year[43] that an internal report at MIT came out – it was widely publicized in the

press – in which MIT acknowledged that there had been, and continued to be, significant differences in the way male and female faculty were treated there. To its credit, MIT has published much of this material on the Web site; one can read there, for example, in the introductory paragraph of the faculty report on the status of women faculty in science at MIT: *In contrast to junior women, many tenured women faculty feel marginalized and excluded from a significant role in their departments. Marginalization increases as women progress through their careers at MIT. Examination of data revealed that marginalization was often accompanied by differences in salary, space, awards, resources, and response to outside offers between men and women faculty with women receiving less despite professional accomplishments equal to those of their male colleagues. An important finding was that this pattern repeats itself in successive generations of women faculty.*[44]

Families and academia

There are a number of ways in which academic life puts more strains on family life than other professions do, and while everybody's life is different, a lot of patterns emerge when I think about the challenges that other people I know in academia have faced.

On several occasions, we've talked about both the flexibility of the academic schedule and the high pressure there is for -- well, for over-working. The flexibility of the academic schedule is wrapped around a core of inflexibility: that core is the hours during which your courses are scheduled. There are few reasons acceptable for canceling a class. If *you* are home sick in bed, that's one; but in general, having a child home sick in bed is not a valid

reason to cancel a class. Cancel an appointment, yes, or office hours, but if you are the parent on whom the responsibility falls for taking care of a sick child, you should have a back-up or emergency plan to make it possible to get to your class, in general and in most cases (and of course, every rule has its exceptions). So the good part is that much of your day is flexible, and you don't have a manager (in most cases) with whom you must check in or clear it; but several hours of the week you simply must be in class.

The flexibility doesn't end there, to be sure. You can bring a child to your office when you want without clearing it with anyone, and it's up to you and yours whether you get any work done under those circumstances – some people really do have babies who can sleep for hours in their mom's or dad's office. You've got time during the summer or at Christmas to spend with the family if you wish. You can arrange to stay home in the mornings, and work later at night, if that's necessary or works out better for you.

The flip-side of this is that *work* can become a limitless demand of the academic's life. The young academic may feel that she must work every night and all weekend: there's never enough time to get everything done. There are always other people who do better and do more, and maybe I'll be judged by their standards. All of these are rational and reasonable worries, alas, and under some circumstances, the young academic in a young family may feel obliged not to do his share of the necessary family work. Of course that may seem rational: the family may depend on his job for economic survival, and that job may require endless

work. Rational, perhaps, but equally well this may add up to a formula for a dysfunctional family and an unhappy life, if pushed to its outer limits.

One of the other major issues (which I've already mentioned, but which bears repeating in this context) is that the academics (both junior and senior) experience much less flexibility than the average American regarding where they may end up residing. Going to graduate school may require moving to some part of the country or world where one wouldn't choose to live, but graduate school is only temporary. When those few years are over, the necessities of going to where the jobs are may require both members of a couple to live where neither of them really want to be, and where only one of them has a good job as recompense for living *there*.

Sexual Harassment

[J.G.]: This is an enormous and difficult area, the topic of sexual harassment in academia. I would like to mention just a couple of points relating to subjects that have arisen over the course of this book.

When we discussed the subject of mentoring, I emphasized the guru/student nature of that relationship. I don't want to blow this completely out of proportion, but one must be prepared (both as a graduate student, and more importantly as an adviser) for the academic equivalent of oedipal conflicts and of something like the phenomenon of transference that psychoanalysts talk about. *Oedipal conflicts*, in the sense that there can be (on either side) occasional flashes of competition, jealousy, and even hostility between adviser and student;

and *transference* in the sense that (genders being appropriate) advisers and advisees may start to think that they have a very special, personal, and intimate human relationship going which may lead to something other than good research.

I'm not going to say much more about the *conflicts* that I've labeled oedipal between mentor and student, except to note that fortunately, most of this comes out after the student has completed the Ph.D. (and is, indeed, no longer a student). Former students need to prove that they are now able to stand on their own two intellectual feet, and they may well feel hyper-aware of the intellectual or personal limitations of their former mentor. I have no advice to give on this point, except to note that it is useful to know how common a sentiment this is, and how human it is as well.

The other phenomenon is more insidious in a sense, and is often addressed under the rubric of sexual harassment, since it can lead to strong emotional relationships between mentor and student, which in turn can lead to other things. It should be noted that many successful marriages have been the result of romances between mentor and student, but my strong impression is that this occurs in a remarkably small proportion of cases (of course, successful marriages arise in only a remarkably small proportion of *any* sort of social relationship). In my opinion, and I suspect that most academics agree with me on this point, serious emotional relationships can arise between adviser and student only at the cost of the student's research and professional development, and as a matter of general policy should be strictly avoided.

But it’s very important to have some grasp of the mechanisms at play. The professor is likely to be very intelligent, perhaps brilliant, and is someone that the student looks up to as a real role model. This kind of admiration can feed one’s ego, and of course attentions from one’s teacher and role model are flattering in turn from the student’s perspective. Student and professor may even go to the same conferences or research meetings, and have dinner together. But they better leave it at that!

Members Institutions and Years of Admission

Brandeis University (1985)

Brown University (1933)

California Institute of Technology (1934)

Carnegie Mellon University (1982)

Case Western Reserve University (1969)

The Catholic University of America (1900)

Clark University (1900)

Columbia University (1900)

Cornell University (1900)

Duke University (1938)

Emory University (1995)

Harvard University (1900)

Indiana University (1909)

Iowa State University (1958)

The Johns Hopkins University (1900)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1934)

McGill University (1926)

Michigan State University (1964)

New York University (1950)

Northwestern University (1917)

The Ohio State University (1916)

The Pennsylvania State University (1958)

Princeton University (1900)

Purdue University (1958)

Rice University (1985)

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey (1989)

Stanford University (1900)

Syracuse University (1966)

Tulane University (1958)

University of Arizona (1985)

University at Buffalo-State University of New York (1989)

University of California, Berkeley (1900)

University of California, Davis (1996)

University of California, Irvine (1996)

University of California, Los Angeles (1974)

University of California, San Diego (1982)

University of California, Santa Barbara (1995)

University of Chicago (1900)

University of Colorado, Boulder (1966)

University of Florida (1985)

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1908)

University of Iowa (1909)

University of Kansas (1909)

University of Maryland, College Park (1969)

University of Michigan (1900)

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (1908)

University of Missouri, Columbia (1908)

University of Nebraska, Lincoln (1909)

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1922)

University of Oregon (1969)

University of Pennsylvania (1900)

University of Pittsburgh (1974)

University of Rochester (1941)

University of Southern California (1969)

University of Texas, Austin (1929)

University of Toronto (1926)

University of Virginia (1904)

University of Washington (1950)

The University of Wisconsin, Madison (1900)

Vanderbilt University (1950)

Washington University in St. Louis (1923)

Yale University (1900)

References

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Council of Graduate Schools (http://www.cgsnet.org)

National Center for Education Statistics

Endnotes

[1] It is quite useful to read the newsletters of professional organizations in order learn about the discipline in general. See, for example, Perspectives (Newsletter of the American Historical Association http://www.theaha.org). Some organizations, however, such as the American Economic Association, does not publish a newsletter. A perusal of The Chronicle of Higher Education would also give you a sense of academic life.

[2]. By the way, the graduate school is a particularly Anglo-Saxon institution, and is the backbone of American excellence in scholarship. Continental European countries are just beginning to think seriously about emulating it.

[3] In technical terminology, your forecast errors about yourself should not be correlated with one another over time. If they are, that means you are probably not using some of the information available to you.

[4]. For historians this information is published by the American Historical Association in an annual compendium, Directory of History Departments, which lists pertinent information on more than 700 departments in North America, including the very valuable information on who completed the graduate program, title of their dissertation, and their employment.

[5] Ratios vary by field. In history departments the average ratio is between 25-30 percent, and if it falls much below that level, you should assume that entering the program is a very risky proposition.

[6]. In professional jargon this is know as "signaling" in a market with asymmetric information, i.e., in a market in which you know more about yourself than the interviewer, and there is not an immediate credible way to transmit this information. The interviewer might need to resort to extraneous information to interpret some of your attributes.

[7] The Newsletter of the Cliometric Society has published regular articles on the career of prominent economic historians.

[8] I prefer the analogy of "frontier" to that of the often used "cutting edge", because the latter implies that the boundary separating knowledge from ignorance is precisely defined. This is seldom the case. Rather, the boundary seems to me to be both fuzzy and multifaceted, and constantly changing direction, before it becomes well defined. Moreover, there is spontaneous creation of knowledge even in areas that were previously not thought of as being on the "cutting edge."

[9]. I remember how difficult it was to get an appointment with my mentor. He even frequently disregarded appointments. But I do recall vividly how much I benefited from our conversations, when I finally did catch up with him.

[10]. The dissertation committee consists usually four professors not all of which need be from the same department or even the same institution. The second, third etc. readers play a much smaller advisory role; their expertise is generally peripheral, but still crucial to your success. If you have an interdisciplinary emphasis in your research, it is advisable to have a representative of the other discipline sit on your committee.

[11]. We are not going to discuss the mechanics of writing a dissertation. See, for instance, Lawrence F. Locke, Waneen Wyrick Spirduso and Stephen J. Silverman, Proposals that Work. A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals (3rd ed., Sage Publications, 1993); Kjell Erik Rudestam and Rae R. Newton, Surviving Your Dissertation. A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process (Sage Publications, 1992); Soraya M. Coley and Cynthia A. Scheinberg, Proposal Writing (Sage Publications, 1990).

[12] See discussion in Chronicle of Higer Education around 1988.

[13] Unless you decided to graduate school for the wrong reasons or with the wrong preconceptions.

[14] A 2-3 page synopsis usually suffices as a proposal.

[15] You should not limit yourself to American journals.

[16] Natural scientists might have an on-site interview without an interview at the annual national meeting.

[17]. I remember a job applicant, a recent PhD, who assumed that her topic was so esoteric that the audience would not be interested in it, and talked instead about other things such as her life and her experience in the archives. She did not impressive the search committee, needless to say. The lesson is that you are expected to deliver a formal talk about your thesis, regardless of the topic. People will be interested in seeing if you can generate enthusiasm on a topic unfamiliar to them. Your performance as an effective communicator can be gauged anyhow, and that is one of your qualities the department will be assessing. It will be used as a proxy for your ability to teach.

[18] Diagrams are preferable to tables, because of the ease of comprehension.

[19]. I served as the coordinator of the economic history sessions for the Social Science History Association in 1993, and organized some twelve sessions with about fifty participants, but received only one request from a graduate student to be included in the program. I would have been quite willing to give others as well priority over established scholars in order to help them gain some experience.

[20]. As a rule, the interview takes place in a hotel room, which is usually a bedroom, hence was not designed for the purpose of conversation. As a consequence, there might be some awkward situations. Be prepared for that.

[21] The program "Preparing Future Faculty" at the University of Minnesota is but one indication of this tendency. See Perspectives (Newsletter of the American Historical Association) 37, no 1 (January, 1999), p. 1. See also: (http://www.preparing-faculty.org).

[22] . Even if I did have other interviews lined up, I personally felt it would be bragging to give them a list of the other departments. But that strategy is almost certainly suboptimal, and reflects the idiosyncrasies and inhibitions of my own personality. I felt that the query was too personal, and that they should not

need that kind of a evidence to decide whether they wanted me or not. I thought they should make an independent judgement on my abilities

23 In one history department the original positon was divided into two half-positions in order to be able to give a job to both spouses. This was an interim but useful solution. Subsequently, both positions were upgraded as soon as other positions became available in the department.

24 A variant of this scenario is receiving an invitation of an on-campus interview from Stanford university after having accepted the offer from Iowa State. It seems to me that in this case, it is easier to decline the invitation and stick with your commitment, because the improvement in your position is uncertain. In this case, One would have to weight the possible gains against the possibility that you do not receive the Stanford offer and alienate the future colleagues at Iowa for having considered reneging on your commitment to them.

25. If you teach at a local junior college as a graduate student, your affiliation with your university will override any stigma that might otherwise attach to such an employment. However, the situation changes if you accept a temporary position to teach statistics at the junior college after you have completed your graduate program. In that case, that affiliation dominates as the one setting your market value. Hence, if you do not aspire to teach at a junior college in the long run, you had better not accept such a position after you have received your Ph.D. and work, instead, in a non-academic position for a year. An alternative strategy might be to keep information on non-desirable employment that might stigmatize you from the market (that means also from your mentor).

26. Economics syllabi have been collected and published by Ed Tower of Duke University for all branches of the discipline.

[27]. Yet even at such institutions people do publish, for their own satisfaction. I do not have in mind here the well-known liberal arts colleges such as Swarthmore College or Oberlin College, where publications are, indeed, expected, even if not at the same rate as at a full-service university.

[28] The traditional institution of tenure is being questioned these days because, it is seen by many administrators as not cost-effective enough. The number of part-time faculty in history departments has increased by some 20 percent since 1986. Perspectives, 37, no. 1 (January 1999), p. 24.

[29] That is to say, how much better do you need to be on one criteria in order to compensate for being somewhat worse on another.

[30]. An example of why people behave this way is as follows: Suppose one wants to achieve A, but it is either too controversial, or contrary to local custom. But suppose that both A and C are subsets of B. Then people often find it easier to argue for C in order to accomplish their goals. Particularly if C is also a subset of D. One can then argue for C as in D, then at a future date one can switch the dialogue to C as in B. Once one has accomplished B, then it is possible to shift focus to another subset of B as A. If this sounds complicated on paper, it is even more so verbally during a controversial meeting when several such arguments might be floating around. Needless to say, real intentions are very difficult to ascertain under such circumstances.

[31]. Arcadius Kahan, my first dissertation advisor at the University of Chicago, was a workaholic who passed away from heart failure at the age of 62. Knut Borchardt, whom I replaced at the University of Munich, retired due to heart problems also at the age of 62.

[32] Some disciplines have journals devoted to teaching the subject matter that are worth consulting: see for example, the Journal of Economic Education.

[33] Some schools organize their departments with a „head“ rather than a director, and the head of a department is typically given stronger unilateral powers than a chairman. In some cases, the head may make appointment decisions without the majority support of the faculty of the department (a situation I find difficult to imagine, to be honest).

[34]. In addition to the professors, associate professors, and assistant professors, there may be lecturers, senior lecturers, research assistants, research associates, part-time, and adjunct appointments in the department. An adjunct appointment has merely a casual relationship with the department. She may have an appointment in another department, or may have a full-time position outside of the university.

[35] (from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* at *http://chronicle.com/free/almanac/1998/nation/nation.htm#colleges*

[36] In order to avoid misinterpretation, haste ought not be interpreted so as to violate the basic expectation of the scholarly code of ethic for accuracy, thoroughness, for being unbiased, and honest.
[37] Do not forget that you will have plenty of time to polish the article while it is under consideration. But even thereafter: it is possible to make minor changes after copyediting, and even at the time you are reading the page proofs. The process of publication often takes as long as a year after acceptance. So do not hold the initial submission of the article up for long.
[38] Refereeing is a time-consuming and thankless process, so it is a wonder that it does work as well as it does. I am somewhat reluctant to mention this, because it will give you an incorrect impression of the way the refereeing process works, but the longest it has taken me to receive a referee report was two years!
[39] While referees always remain anonymous, the author of the article is sometimes known to the referee. If that is not the case either, then the refereeing process is known as double blind. Some publications of national organizations devote a volume to report the proceedings of the annual meeting. These issues are often not refereed, but the screening occurs by having the paper accepted for presentation at the meeting.
[40]
[41] Editors have considerable discretion in choosing referees. Insofar as they know the referees for an extended period of time, they have a sense of what their opinions is likely to be. Hence, they can influence what kind of reading your article is likely to receive.
[42]. This is by no means the place to do a comparative analysis of educational systems. Suffice it to say, that too much pecuniary reward can be as detrimental as too little. While this is by no means obvious, the high reward systems attract more ambitious people with more real-life orientation. In the US such people would be more likely to go into the highly competitive segments of our business world ..

[43] See, for example, the front page article by Kate Zernike in the Boston *Globe* of March 21, 1999, available on the Web at xx.

[44] A Study on the Status of Women Faculty in Science at MIT: How a Committee on Women Faculty came to be established by the Dean of the School of Science, what the Committee and the Dean learned and accomplished, and recommendations for the future. web page: http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html