

TIPS FOR LANDING A FULL-TIME TEACHING JOB

Andy Bechtel, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Michael Deas, Northwestern

ACES 2009/Minneapolis

GETTING READY

- Get involved in ACES and similar organizations.
- Get teaching experience: adjunct work, workshops, etc.
- Teach part time at several colleges to create competition for your services.
- Establish a niche — what do you do especially well that makes you stand out from other editors?
- Consider getting an advanced degree.
- Become conversant with new technology.

FINDING THE JOB

- Check the professional sites (journalismjobs.org, Poynter) and the academic ones (aejmc.org, chronicle.com/jobs).
- Network. It really works.
- Identify prospective universities and contact department heads about full-time teaching opportunities.

APPLYING FOR THE JOB

- Revise your resumé to make it academic — the CV, the “director’s cut” of resumé writing.
- Write your cover letter in a way that explains how you would fit into the department.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Research the university (administration, faculty, students, etc.).
- Research interviewers beforehand — if you can find out their names.

INTERVIEWING FOR THE JOB

- Ask questions about everything: campus atmosphere, the students, tenure expectations, etc.
- Be prepared to answer questions about what you would do for research or creative activity.
- Offer constructive criticism; most j-schools know they need to change, especially now, and they are looking for professionals to help them do that.

Working as an adjunct

How to get started:

- Determine what colleges, universities and community colleges are in your area.
- Determine what they offer in terms of journalism/communications/writing courses.
- What can you offer them? Think about what you'd *like to* teach, and what you *can* teach (these two categories will probably not overlap entirely).
- Be flexible at first. If you accept a course you're only lukewarm about and do well, you're likely to get re-hired. As you build a reputation, you may get better courses and even be able to propose new courses.
- Who do you know? Can you talk to acquaintances connected to colleges and let them know you're interested in adjunct work?
- Nightside schedules often allow for more flexibility for teaching.

Tips for success:

- Know your limits: Balancing a full-time job, family and a class with heavy grading – or two classes – is tough.
- Be prepared for a lot of prep work with new classes, even if you're given a syllabus.
- Get your textbook as early as you can, so you can familiarize yourself with it and see where you might need to supplement. Also, at some places you may be able to look at several books and choose the one you want to use.
- Let your professional experience work for you – you know so much more than any book. Students appreciate real-world advice, especially as it pertains to finding and keeping a job.
- Make friends with the department administrative assistant. This is the person who will help you through red tape and glitches, and tell you who to call or where to go to get things done, like having copies made of your mid-term, or getting your account password.
- If possible, merge your e-mail into one account with labels (such as Gmail) to keep everything in one place.
- Have fun – teaching is rewarding on multiple levels!