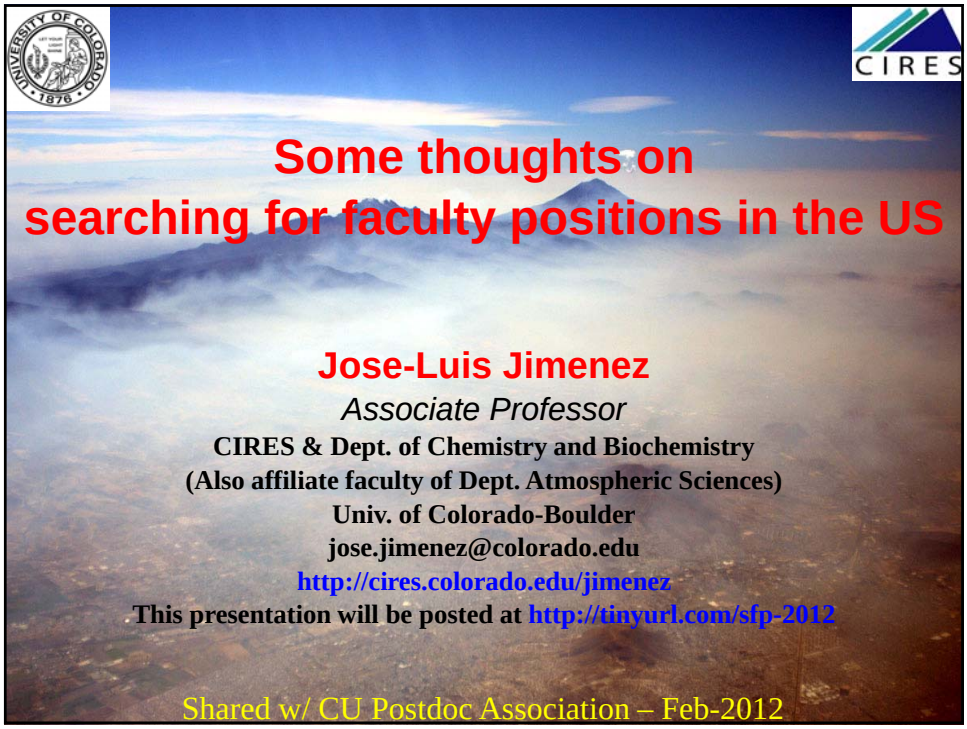


Faculty vs. Research Positions

- Academic Career
  - "Consequential decision"
    - 15 yrs from start to grad school to tenure
    - More PhDs and postdocs than academic positions
    - Oversupply of PhDs in all sectors
  - You really really really have to like the work
- Research Career
  - At a University
    - Under a tenured professor, soft-money
    - Can be looked down upon
    - Can be very rewarding and more flexible

National Labs

- Resources, but varies a lot between labs
  - DOE National Labs, NASA, NOAA, EPA
- Often route to permanent positions is through postdoc
- Don't have to teach
  - Problem if you like to teach
    - Often can teach part of a course at local univ.
  - Don't have two competing jobs
- Will be able to publish?
  - "Most material is classified not bc secret but bc embarassing"

Should I do a postdoc

- Standard in Science
  - One 2 yr postdoc in Chemistry
  - Several postdocs in Biology
  - More unusual, shorter in Engineering
- What people will ask you:
  - Where did you do your PhD?
  - Under whom did you postdoc?
- What you get out of a postdoc
  - Additional time to learn, get to be known
  - Learn new critical skills, explore new fields
    - Much harder as new faculty, chopped time

The Application Package

- What you have to send in
  - Cover letter
  - CV
  - Statements of research and teaching
  - Letters of recommendation / references
- What the committee will look at
  - Your cover letter
    - 1st thing they'll see, what you want to do
    - Some effort to connect to what they do
  - Quick glance at your CV
    - Institution, advisor, PUBLICATIONS (1st auth)
      - *"If it is not submitted, if doesn't exist"*
  - Letters of rec. (have them sent in even if they only ask for references)
  - Statements

The Application Package II

- Statement of Research
  - Start with area of research, its importance and promise
    - General audience
  - List a few problems, how you'd go about working on them
    - Move from your PhD / postdoc work
    - One easier, doable, quick publications, students
    - One harder, more ambitious, more important
- Statement of Teaching
  - Balance and emphasis dependent on institution
  - Suggest to send in even if not asked for

The Search Process

- Depends strongly on field
  - Chemistry: make offers before Christmas
  - Mech Eng: ask for letters after Christmas
- Form a search committee
  - May represent different groups, interests
  - Create ad and decide where to post
  - Evaluate application and create short list
  - Interview
    - Ask who is in the committee, work especially hard
    - Committee will ask others for input, less impact
  - Faculty vote, dean approval of offer
  - Offer and negotiation process

The Search Process: Universities I

- Applicant view
  - Your interests, some flexibility
- Department's view
  - Want to hire someone who
    - Can interact in research with current faculty
    - Will bring funding
    - Will help attract graduate students
    - Will be a good colleague
    - Can teach undergrad and graduate courses
      - More flexible than you may think

The Search Process

- Hiring a good person is a lot of work for the people doing the hire, not just you
  - Don't want you to leave or not get tenure, and have to do it all over again
  - Want your research to be fundable in the longer term
  - In some places: if you are too good, you won't stay long

The Search Process: Universities II

- Department's view (cont.)
  - There will almost certainly be internal politics
  - E.g. replacing someone who left
    - Area is specific
  - E.g. Search is to find a colleague for a faculty member who feels isolated in research and has threatened to leave
    - Committee will defer to that faculty member
  - E.g. there are competing interests in the dept. and the search committee
    - People will try to fight for their candidate, but you provide the arguments

The Interview

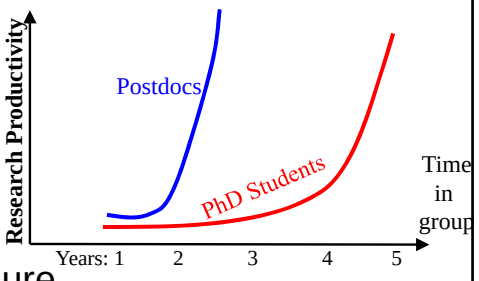
- Application materials got you the interview, now start again
- Very important decision has to be made with very little information
  - Everyone you talk to (even students) is interviewing you
  - Engage the interviewers
    - Do your homework, thoughtful questions
  - Knowledge of field, funding realities
  - Longer term view
- Importance of teaching
  - Harvard: “teaching is like going to bathroom”
  - Not the case now anywhere, more and more important
    - But get a feeling whether Dept. values it (diff. camps)

Once you have an Offer

- Complete power shift
  - They had it
  - Now you have it
    - They’ve invested a lot of time to find you
    - They’ll look bad to their colleagues, chair, dean if you don’t accept the offer
      - Especially if repeatedly
- Need to negotiate
  - But you’ll work with these people for 6-7 yrs, not too aggressive
  - Committee has to get resources from Dept, Dean, Provost
    - Competing offers is about best leverage you can provide them

Negotiating an Offer I

- Make sure you have an offer!
- Negotiation process 1-2 months
- Know what you need and want to be successful
  - This is the ONLY time you have leverage to get it. Very hard once you have accepted
- Clearly communicate what you want
  - Only to people with decision power
- Always use your work quality, productivity, promise, as the arguments
- Combine logic with emotion

Negotiating an Offer II

- Things to negotiate on
  - Your salary: as high as possible, but realistic
    - http://www.colorado.edu/pba/facstaff/facsal/
    - Can't create too unfair situation on their end
  - Start-up funds
    - Equipment
    - 1st postdoc, student
    - Summer salary
  - Minimize number of courses to teach till tenure
  - Anything important -> in writing in offer letter
    - Otherwise it doesn't exist, no matter what people tell you