

Sample Interview Questions for Faculty Positions

Introductory Questions

- Tell us a little more about your professional experiences, particularly those not mentioned on your resume/application.
- Why are you interested in leaving your current assignment and why do you feel that this assignment would be better for you?
- Why did you choose this profession/field?
- What attracted you to this position?
- How does this position fit into your overall career goals?
- What contributions can you make to our college/department?
- The University is committed to building a culturally diverse and inclusive environment. How would you further this goal?

About the candidate's professional background

- What do you consider to be your particular strength(s)?
- What motivates you to do your best?
- Describe how you go about solving a problem? Please give us some examples.
- What is the biggest conflict you have ever been involved in at work? How did you handle the situation? What did you learn?
- What experiences or skills will help you manage projects?
- Tell us about your preferred work environment.
- Describe a situation in which you did all the right things, and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn from the experience?
- In your opinion, how should the workload of a faculty member be split and into what areas?
- What are your professional goals?
- What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?
- How do you view your role in the faculty development process?
- What experience have you had in mentoring? Describe an experience mentoring diverse students, faculty and/or staff?
- What professional development activities have you been involved in over the past few years?

About the candidate and your department

- Please tell us about your research interests and how you see them aligning in with the department's/college's mission/direction.
- Tell us how you go about organizing your work. Also, describe any experience you have had with computers or other tools as they relate to organization.
- Students of color are not well represented in the field, including ours. How do you see yourself contributing to the recruitment and retention process of students of color?
- What do you look for in your academic colleagues?

About the candidate's leadership (management/supervisory) experience

- What are three leadership competencies you possess? Please provide an example of when you have used these to provide effective leadership during a difficult time.
- Have you ever experienced a situation in which you had difficulties getting people to accept your ideas? What was your approach to handling these situations?
- What practices do you implement during conflict situations and are they successful?
- If we were to ask your superiors (i.e., department chair/dean/provost) or your colleagues to comment about your leadership how would they respond?
- Who have you coached or mentored to achieve success?
- Tell us about a time when you had to make a decision without knowledge of all the necessary data?
- What are the techniques that you use to clarify the meaning of unclear messages?
- How do you maintain a positive discussion?

About the candidate's research

- What grants have you received in the past and what plans do you have to fund your research?
- What is your research agenda and how does that benefit this college or university?
- What types of resources would you require to successfully continue your research agenda?
- With whom would you collaborate, if you were selected for this position?
- How would you involve undergraduate and graduate students in your research?
- Please identify your most significant work and share with us why you picked it.
- What courses have you created or proposed in the past five years?
- What changes have you brought to the teaching of _____?

About the candidate's teaching

- Tell us about your teaching methods, philosophy and goals.
- What do you think are the most important attributes of a good instructor?
- What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor? In which areas do you feel you can use some further development?
- What is your experience with distance learning, on-line courses, and using technology in the classroom?
- What is your experience in teaching students of diverse backgrounds? What methods have proven to be effective and what have you learned from the experience?
- Describe strategies that you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for your students.
- Tell us about a time when you successfully managed a difficult student and a time when you did not successfully manage a difficult student.
- What students do you find most challenging to teach?
- What have evaluations for your teaching indicated, both positive and negative? How has evaluation feedback changed how to teach today?

About Diversity and Inclusion efforts

- How have you handled a situation when a colleague or student was unreceptive to the diversity of others? Or situation where there was very clearly bias?
- What have you done or accomplished to enhance your knowledge/skills related to diversity? How have you demonstrated what you learned?
- What are some examples of ways that you have incorporated diverse or underrepresented populations into your research, curriculum, planning or decision-making?
- What do you see as the most challenging aspect of working in a diverse classroom environment such as those at WPI? What steps have you taken to meet this challenge? Do you have any experiences that you can draw from and tell us about?
- What opportunities have you had working and collaborating in diverse, multicultural and inclusive settings.
- How do you seek opportunities to improve the learning environment to better meet the needs of students from all over the world and from students who have been historically marginalized in the USA, such as the Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and other communities?
- How would you work with people under your supervision to foster a climate receptive to diversity in the department, the curriculum, staff meetings, printed materials, initiatives, etc.?

- Suppose that in working with a University unit you discover a pervasive belief that diversity and excellence are somehow in conflict. How do you conceptualize the relationship between diversity and excellence? What kinds of leadership efforts are needed to encourage a commitment to excellence through diversity?
- In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?
- When interacting with a person from a different culture than your own, how do you ensure that communication is effective?

Closing Questions

- Do you have any concerns that would make you have reservations about accepting this position if it is offered to you?
- What do you think most uniquely qualifies you for this position?
- Do you have any additional information that you would like to share? Do you have any questions for us?

Adapted from Source documents:

Iowa State University, <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/administratorresources/recruitment/guide/appendix-5>

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

<http://www.uml.edu/hr/pdf/REVISED-F-Sample%20Interview%20Qs%20Faculty.pdf>

Search Committee: A Tool for Human Resource Professionals, Administrators, and Committee Members by Christopher D. Lee, Ph.D. SPHR, CUPA-HR