

“Visiting” Along to Tenure-Track

Facing budgetary and intellectual restraints at both the state and private levels, many university programs have had to restrict or eliminate tenure-track lines in recent years. Whether this is the mark of a more permanent trend in academia or just a temporary slump, the tenure-track (hereafter “T-T”) position is in flux. Although this reality makes for a daunting job search, when broken into bite-size efforts, the candidate can begin to assemble an array of instruments to help facilitate the path to employment.

One example was last year’s 2016 GSIC panel “Assembling a Teaching Portfolio for the Job Market,” which demonstrated that the construction and maintenance of a teaching portfolio acts as one vital assessment tool used by search committees and college deans to gauge a candidate’s suitability for the available position. Alongside this recent component, there is a new trend that requires attention: many T-T seekers will land an “adjunct” or “visiting” position upon the completion of the PhD before ever landing that first T-T post. How then can this intermediary position land you that T-T job?

Despite what many candidates fear represents falling short of the “real job,” the adjunct post can offer many opportunities that enhance the candidate’s attractiveness for that T-T position. Therefore, this paper will introduce some basic strategies for bolstering the candidate’s overall portfolio while in a visiting position. As one who has held several adjunct positions, I have found three “c”s to be essential in landing a T-T post: cultivation, collaboration and cooperation. First, in addition to one’s teaching portfolio, most search committees at a research university or liberal arts college are looking for a substantive and well-organized research agenda. This involves the articulation of and viability of your research in the form of a monograph proposal and/or articles. I will

suggest specific ways in which the candidate can assemble and cultivate his research trajectory, including by way of a proposal, suggested work on and publication of articles and the where and how to disseminate.

Next, the candidate ought to foster collaboration with his peers both departmentally and in the field at large. I will advise on several forms of this, including the careful solicitation of scholarly feedback and sharing your work with others, bearing in mind the negotiation of professional relationships and personal comfort level(s). Furthermore, collaboration does not necessarily entail co-authoring, per say (though this is not unacceptable!), so much as participating in a trusted network of peers who promote an environment of mutual critical and emotional support. This support network should extend to senior mentors or colleagues, as well as the candidate's peers.

Lastly, – and tied both to cultivation and collaboration – foster cooperation with and professionalism among your department colleagues in the field and other academic arenas. Since intellectual insularism and professional pusillanimity is incompatible with the university community, make an effort to engage with others, especially via scholarly and interdisciplinary conferences both at your home institution and elsewhere. Most want to hear the candidate's innovative way of thinking about the Classics and why it is germane to the rest of the academic and local communities. This may translate to outreach and other pedagogical related activities that enable him to act as both an intellectual and professional bridge within and between disciplines.

Ultimately, the three “c”s should provide for a healthy and well-rounded articulation of research, teaching and community engagement that will help you secure that coveted T-T line.