In line with increasing professionalization of the discipline, we would like to offer some insight into the nature of the search and hiring processes for new academic anthropologists. Both of us chair moderate-sized departments. In the past five years we have collectively recruited for more than 10 faculty positions. Our experiences at the recent AAA meeting in Phoenix, where we once again participated in the "meat market" atmosphere of the placement service, prompted this article. We would like to share our view of the search process from the other side, and invite comments from colleagues who have conducted similar searches. Faculty recruiting is a difficult and challenging process, but one whose outcome is vital to the well-being of our departments. We view recruiting as one of the most important responsibilities that anyone takes on within the context of an academic department.

Some will view our comments and observations as disheartening, simplistic, and obvious. Were this the cat we wouldn't waste your time or ours. We are motivated by the fact that we have seen too many applicants undermine their own candidacy by failing to understand the search process. Tenure-track positions arise in two ways: as replacements (owing to death, resignation or retirement) and as replacements or additions to meet the first condition, not the second. New positions require extensive justification; even replacement positions last longer than anticipated. When a vacancy arises, we have to justify the replacement in terms of both short- and long-term departmental needs (in competition with the needs of other departments).

A great deal of thought goes into the preparation of a position justification. We must demonstrate how the particular position relates to the department's graduate and undergraduate programs, to present and future enrollment trends, to employment trends and to the goals and mission of the institution.

Most departments go through an intense discussion to produce the position description and its associated ad copy. Contrary to what you may be told "on the street," there is no sense applying for a position that bears no relation to your training and experience. All departments have internal and external affirmative action guidelines that preclude them from hiring someone whose background and experience do not match the appropriate position. Often, other departments would place departments at legal and other risk, and jeopardize any federal and/or state funding that the university might receive.

The Affirmative Action Process

The affirmative action process appropriates (and severely) limits our latitude in hiring. The process at both our institutions is similar. Once the administration approves the position, we work with the affirmative action office to draw up a plan for the search. We submit a job description, a set of candidate qualifications, and a prepared ad copy and a detailed plan to develop a pool of qualified candidates who would place departments at legal and other risk, and jeopardize any federal and/or state funding that the university might receive.

The process allows little latitude for departments to go on "fishing expeditions" beyond the limits set in the advertisement. It follows that little is to be gained by candidates going on a "hunting expedition" for positions where they clearly lack the paper qualifications.

Although it would seem obvious, it is absolutely imperative that you proofread the letter, resume, and/or application form, and be sure to have someone else read it before you mail it. That way you can avoid egregious grammatical and spelling errors and sentences like "I received my PhD from the Madrid and University in 1989," (an almost verbatim slip that showed up in this year's search).

The vita is even more important. A vita is not a business resume; it is a factual account of your academic accomplishments. Unlike a resume, information on (i.e., educational history, employment history, research/publication history) should be listed in reverse chronological order. It should not be printed on flashy paper, nor printed in nonstandard fonts. Academic departments regard "typewritten" vitae as unprofessional. Make every effort to insure the accuracy of information on the vita. If you progress beyond the preliminary screening, everything on your vita must be checked carefully; some universities actually require documentary proof of everything on the vita.

The two most important aspects of a vita are content and organization. Academic departments hire people who show potential to do the kinds of things you have done in the past. Your vita should demonstrate the extent to which you have met your goals, and also tell the reader what you intend to do in the future.

Search committees receive many (often more than a hundred) vitae for every vacancy, and it is at the preliminary screening stage, search committees have limited time to ferret out essential information from a vita. You may have a first-rate record and be eliminated because you did not make that record stand out when a committee member has 50 vitae to review in a initial screening pass.

The first page of a vita should contain your name, address, date of birth and sex. It should also contain an explicit listing of your major and minor areas of academic specialization, and recent work experience. If you are a social anthropologist specializing in political economy, this needs to be stated up front. Don't make a review committee hunt.

Vitae traditionally list number of students supervised, number of theses going on a "hunting expedition" for positions that clearly lack the paper qualifications. Candidates who list more than three and who do not indicate their priority somewhere do so at their own peril. In these cases we will contact the third listed. Since it takes extra time to contact them, it is important that you provide us with complete information about those two that you list especially their full name, address and phone number. Many preliminary contacts are made by phone these days. While there may be some legitimate disagreement about this process, we do not view with favor those applicants who offer that "names of referees will be sent upon request." At the very best, this adds an extra step to an already hectic process, and at the worst, this phrase evokes questions about your openness and candor. If there is a justifiable reason for not wanting to supply this information immediately, disarm us immediately by telling us why. Otherwise, we may reject your application.

In addition to the initial vita, search committees have recently been deluged with supporting documentation. Rarely is this information helpful, and often the preliminary screening stage. It is sufficient to quantitatively state your number of publications and students, etc. Any more is overkill. The worst overkill is to send unpublished reports or reprints in a large number of presentations. If this material becomes necessary, we will request it. But in the early stages it takes up space and is only rarely read. You are better off sending one copy of all current references and rate of these issues in your letter and vita.
The Initial Interview

Whenever possible, we both conduct pre-
liminary candidate interviews at the annual
meeting. If you get an initial interview, you
have an opportunity to go through a major sie
and should proceed accordingly. You have
communicated the reasons why your candidacy
should be seriously considered and you will be given
30-45 minutes to answer our questions. Please
remember that at this point interviewers will have
selected 20 to 25 candidates, each of whom will be
given 30-45 minutes. These interviews are concentrated in a two-to-three
day period, and after a while one candidate
can all too easily blur into another. Be mem-
bale, choose your answers crisp, focused
and not sporadic.

Departments adopt different philosophies
about conducting this preliminary interview.
Not infrequently, interviewers are free to ques-
tions, provides a substantial packet of material about
the department and university prior to meet-
ing with interviewees. These materials in-
clude current time, statement of philosophical position, philosophy and resources, as well as other
descriptions, faculty interest summaries, uni-
versity bulletins, etc. In addition to the nor-
mal academic interest questions that are asked, NAU interviews tend to be structured around your reading of and understanding of
this material. If you encounter similar prac-
tice, material that you have made a con-
torted effort to assimilate the material and create personalized reactions to it.

Departure. In contrast, does not pro-
vide this kind of information until the "short
list" candidates are selected. Relevant infor-
mation is provided during the preliminary in-
terview. Once a long "short list" is expec-
ted to respond to it "on the fly." PSU in-
terviewers also expect that candidates who have a serious interest in the position will re-
search the project independently and will ask thought-giving questions about the depart-
ment during the interviews.

If you are interested in your potential fo-
ment contributions to the discipline, your
creativity and your potential contribution to
our programmatic and academic orientations.
You must prepare to address the spe-
cifics of your qualifications for the advertised
position and to talk more in detail about your
research, teaching and vision for the future.

The process of getting you to the in-
terview is not trivial. Usually departments have fairly
firm timetables for initiating and completing
final interviews. Give yourself a sufficient
of the department for the interview. If you are not
persuaded that these prob-
lems exist, the statistics recently collected by
the AMA may prove sobering. In the last sur-
vey of recent PhDs, those who gained aca-
demic employment indicated that they spent
in the neighborhood of 15 to 20 hours per
week seeking employment, and those who missed
spent less than 10 hours per week.

It takes time to write, research depart-
ments and develop a proper vista. The payoff
for the time invested is obvious. We can at-
estimate the length of time you have been given to
attend. If you are not interested in the job,
we will not proceed with the interview. If you are
interested in the job, we will proceed with the inter-
view. The "short list" and Final Interviews

In our experience, three to six candidates will emerge as consensus "top candidates" from
this preliminary interview pool. Inter-
views will then develop among the most promising candidates until the time allotted for
the interviews is exhausted. We usually do not
ask specific questions or to a focused question or to answer a different question than the one asked. The answers honestly. Remember, interview-
teams have been playing this game for a long time longer than you and are sensitized to dis-
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