

NOTE: The following two articles are of interest to those Ph.D. candidates who are presently seeking employment. The first is an extensive report on how to find a job, compiled by Dr. Ken Helstrom; the second is a suggestion to those who fail to find a job, compiled by Prof. Mary B. Williams, Ohio State University.

REPORT:

INFORMATION ON SEEKING JOBS IN PHILOSOPHY

Kenneth Helstrom

1. Situation:

Prospects are not good for ABD's (all but dissertation) unless one has special qualifications or contacts. (The situation for those with degrees in hand is competitive.) In general, a graduate student should expect to remain in residence until he has finished his dissertation. Most schools, including junior colleges, are now looking for Ph.D.'s, since there are plenty available, and may not even consider ABD's. Promises about the date of completion of Ph.D. requirements are given little credence by prospective employers. For those interested in junior colleges, it should be kept in mind that candidates are wanted who are broadly educated in the history of philosophy, who have some inter-disciplinary competence and who can relate philosophy to current social issues.

2. Preparations:

There are a number of things to be done before the recruiting season begins, early November more or less. As things can get rather hurried, good preparation is not only necessary for survival but can also have an important effect on securing a position. These items should also be constantly updated.

2.1 APA

One should join the APA (American Philosophical Association). Student membership costs \$6 a year; forms can be obtained from the department chairman and must be signed by him. The chief benefit lies in receiving Jobs in Philosophy. Since most positions in philosophy are listed in this publication, it is the primary source of information about jobs. Some familiarity with its format will be helpful since one will probably want to send out letters

quickly after its receipt.

Jobs in Philology will be published according to the following schedule:

- 7 weeks before Eastern Division meeting (7 November 1975)
- 10-14 days before Eastern Division meeting: new jobs only (12 December 1975)
- 7 weeks before Pacific Division meeting (6 February 1976)
- 7 weeks before Western Division meeting (12 March 1976)
- Late May or early June (17 May 1976)
- Supplement in July

The second benefit is the "Applicant Resume Form." Each year in September, all members of the APA will have an opportunity to fill out a quadruplicate resume form, which is mailed to the National Office. One copy goes into an alphabetical file of applicants. The remaining three copies are filed according to the candidate's indicated first three areas of specialization. The specialization folder is updated yearly and sent to all their conventions. Three resume forms are valid for one year only, and the above procedure must be repeated yearly.

2.2 Credentials

A set of credentials should be established at the applicant's Educational Placement Bureau. This consists of three items: (1) detailed information about the applicant on a form provided by the Bureau; (2) up to five letters of reference (forms and envelopes are also provided); and (3) a transcript, which can be obtained from the Registrar. Credentials are duplicated and sent out upon request. Since a department will request credentials if interested in further consideration of an applicant after the first contact, no good is served by sending them unsolicited. An annual registration fee of \$5 is charged by most bureaus which entitles the registrant to receive vacancy bulletins and to send credentials. It may be necessary to periodically remind recommenders until they have finished their letters.

2.3 Letter of Application

Upon learning of a vacancy a letter of application and a curriculum vitae (CV) will be dispatched; this is normally the first contact. For this reason some thought should be given to these two items. Letters are typed individually (not reproduced), generally do not exceed one page in length, must be impeccable, and contain the information detailed below. This information is similar to that contained in the CV. In the CV one gives the reader

some quickly available data, while in the letter one is trying to present oneself attractively and to add some depth to this data. Information in the letters may include (it need not include all since it is largely contained in the CV; use your own judgement to present yourself most positively):

- An announcement of candidacy for the position(s), including the rank sought;
- Teaching experience;
- Title and thesis of your dissertation;
- Extent to which Ph.D. requirements have been completed and expected date of completion of remaining requirements;
- Areas of specialization and competence;
- Names and addresses of referees and instructions for obtaining credentials;
- Publications, if any;
- Expression of willingness to be interviewed at one of the APA meetings if you will attend (for the Eastern Division meeting in December letters should be sent as early in November as possible).

A good method to use is to write out a standard letter and sets of information for the various areas of specialization and competence. Then when applying for different positions, with different requirements, one needs only to add this variable information to the standard letter, making other appropriate changes or additions, to make up a letter appropriate to each job description quickly and efficiently. If you wish to have your correspondence acknowledged, enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard. Initial indication of your status will often also be indicated on returned postcards. Most departments will eventually write to all applicants.

2.4 Curriculum Vitae (CV):

A CV should accompany each letter of application and some will be needed for use at philosophical meetings. For these reasons a large quantity will be needed. It is advisable to have some member of the faculty, such as the Director of Graduate Studies, see and comment on your CV and initial letter. The CV is normally xeroxed or duplicated and lists in summary fashion some, though probably not all, of the following information:

- Personal data (name, rank, birthdate, marital status, number of children);
- Education - Degrees awarded (last to first)
- Dissertation and Thesis titles
- Honors and awards (last to first)
- Teaching experience and academic positions;
- Public lectures or papers read;

Publications (books, articles, translations, book reviews);
 Areas of specialization and competence;
 Availability of credentials and names of referees.

2.5 Specialization and Competence:

This information is indicated on both the letter and the CV, and many departments are quite particular and put some emphasis on these criteria. Hence some thought should be given to which are claimed and to the presentation of one's background in these areas. For younger graduate students this might also be something to consider in taking course work. Typical areas of specialization and of competence, more or less in order of demand, are as follows:

Specializations

Open
 Social or Political ∅
 ∅ of Science
 Epistemology
 Logic
 Aesthetics
 History of ∅
 Ethics & Value Theory
 Analytic ∅
 Phenomenology
 Existentialism
 Greek or Ancient ∅
 ∅ of the Social Sciences
 Metaphysics
 (History of) Modern ∅
 ∅ of Religion
 American ∅
 ∅ of Language
 ∅ of Mind
 Medieval ∅
 Oriental ∅
 ∅ of Law
 19th Century ∅
 Contemporary Continental ∅

Competences

Logic
 History of ∅
 Ethics & Value Theory
 Analytic ∅
 Epistemology
 Metaphysics
 ∅ of Science
 ∅ of Language
 Social or Political ∅
 ∅ of the Social Sciences
 Contemporary ∅
 Aesthetics
 Greek or Ancient ∅
 ∅ of Religion

2.6 Sample Papers:

Some departments may eventually ask for, or encourage sending, a sample paper; also a candidate may eventually be asked to visit the department to present a paper. Thus it might pay to give some thought to these eventualities. One ought initially to go through one's papers, etc., and to select a few, in different areas, for these purposes. Then if there is time they can be reworked.

And when appropriate something is ready to go.

2.7 Other

You should inform the Chairperson and Director of Graduate Studies of your intentions and give them a copy of your CV. In case of a request for nomination, they will then have available the information that they need. If an applicant is going to one of the APA meetings, he should find out who from the faculty are also going and seek their help in advance. This assistance can be valuable, particularly at the smoker. You should also keep the Chairperson and Director of Graduate Studies apprised of your progress and feel free to discuss job offers with them.

3. Sources of Information about Job Openings and of Contacts:

3.1 Unsolicited Letters:

Sending out an unsolicited letter, unless one has special reasons or special interest in a particular school or locale, is almost useless. Those schools having a vacancy for which you might be considered will quite probably list it in one of the ways below; and only a small percentage of schools are likely actually to have a vacancy during any one year.

3.2 Requests for Nomination:

In the past, many positions were filled through contacts with colleagues and with other departments, without public disclosure. Though this may still be the case in some instances, most junior vacancies are now listed in Jobs in Philosophy. In any case, one's department does receive requests for nomination from other schools (for openings which may also be publically advertised). Unfortunately about the only effect one can have on this process is to make sure that the Chairperson knows you are looking for a position and has available the information about you and the type of position you are seeking that he will need to make a nomination.

3.3 Vacancy Listings:

There are three important sources of information about job openings: Jobs in Philosophy (2.1), letters to the department and letters to the Placement Bureau. Letters to the department are usually posted on the department bulletin board; this should be checked frequently. The Placement Bureau will send to those who have registered a biweekly bulletin listing those positions of which

it has been informed; this is also often posted on the department bulletin board. The original letters are kept in a file cabinet in the Placement Bureau and may be looked at for more detailed information about the positions. In general, most openings will eventually appear in Jobs in Philosophy, although some small college openings will only be publicized through letters to the Placement Bureau. A good source of further information about the departments advertising openings is the Directory of American Philosophers.

3.4 Meetings:

Placement services and interviews are conducted at some philosophical meetings. Those in special fields, such as philosophy of science, should investigate what the societies in these fields are doing. In general the important meetings for this purpose are the three division meetings of the APA. The Eastern Division meets in late December, the Pacific Division in late March, and the Western Division in early May. Because of the time at which it meets, the Eastern Division meeting has much more placement activity than the other two. Also since many departments are just determining what their (possible) needs will be at this time, many new advertisements are made at this meeting. Perhaps a dozen or more schools will interview at the Pacific and Western Division meetings, and at the former placement is fairly regional. At the Western Division meeting, there are several last-minute openings for which a slightly larger range of applicants will be considered and also several positions of limited duration, e.g., one-year only.

3.5 Other:

For journals listing openings and candidates, consult the "Announcements and Reminders" section of Jobs in Philosophy. For those interested in junior colleges, the AAJC operates a Career Staffing Center; there is a \$15 fee. For information write to American Association of Junior Colleges Staffing Center, P.O. Box 298, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314. During August on Thursday afternoons the national office of the APA may be called for late information on fall employment opportunities.

There are also several agencies offering placement assistance of different kinds, whose value is at this time unknown. Additional information on the following may be obtained from the Director of Graduate Studies.

Cooperative College Registry; Does not publish vacancy lists, but forwards registrant's form to institutions listing vacancies for which he seems to be qualified.

Primarily serves liberal arts colleges. \$10 fee.

Address: Suite 10
One Dupont Circle
Washington, D. C. 20036

EES: Not a placement agency; supplies applicant with lists of positions available. \$12 fee. Encourages application by 1 November.

Address: P. O. Box 3477
Eureka, California, 95501

Intercept: Individual subscribers are sent Directory of Positions; listing institutions are sent Directory of Subscribers giving abbreviated resumes of subscribers. \$10 fee.

Address: Box 317, Harvard Square P. O.
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02138

American Catholic Philosophical Association: Interviews are held at the annual convention (Easter week), and a Personnel Placement Service is operated by the national office. Candidate resumes and position descriptions received are published periodically in a Personnel Placement Service Newsletter which is sent to all registered candidates, institutions filing positions, and philosophy departments of Catholic colleges in the U.S. and Canada. \$6 student membership fee (you must be a member of the ACPA) and a \$7.50 registration fee.

Address: The American Catholic Philosophical Association
The Catholic University of America
Washington, D. C. 20017

4. Application Procedures and Strategy:

4.1 Letter and CV:

The first contact is normally by the letter of application accompanied by a CV. Hence certain observations about these should be obvious. But, given the fact that departments will typically receive about 350 letters, how does one proceed further in the competition? All of these letters and CV's will be very much alike, hence it is probable that three things play an important role. First, and usually most important, is how much progress has been made on the dissertation and when it can reasonably be expected to be completed; promises are given little credibility. Usually this is used as an arbitrary criterion for sorting the large number of CV's. The lesson is simple: finish the dissertation as soon as possible. The second thing is the areas of specialization and competence claimed. Many departments are quite particular about and

put much emphasis on this. For this reason and because of the many applicants, it will be difficult to be considered where a department's needs and the applicant's strengths do not match somewhat. The third thing, which is an advantage if you have any, is publications. As long as it does not interfere with dissertation work, one might try to publish something. One good possibility is to submit a paper to be read at the Southwestern Philosophical Society meeting (deadline in August); these papers are subsequently published in the Southwestern Journal of Philosophy. Other possibilities are the APA meetings and the Review of Metaphysics Dissertation Essay Contest (deadline in January). Or you might talk to a faculty member about submitting to a journal. Information about philosophical journals and meetings can be found in the Directory of American Philosophers and in DeGeorge, Philosophical Bibliography and Research Methods. There is a section for graduate student papers in Political Theory.

4.2 Meetings:

Initial and follow-up contacts can also be made at some philosophical meetings (see 3.4). Advisability. As there is some expense involved, it is not usually advisable to go to the Eastern Division meeting of the APA just for placement activity unless significant progress has been made on the dissertation; otherwise the chances of fruitful interviews are small because of the large number of applicants with degrees or near to it. In any case, it is far from clear just what the value of attending this convention is, or whether there is any disadvantage in not doing so. If some departments prearrange appointments or express an interest in interviewing you at the convention (this assumes that you send them letters early enough for them to evaluate you and to send for your credentials), it can be of value. Or if you can make a strong impression at interviews, an initial contact at the convention can be helpful; otherwise probably not. For those close to the degree and who need a job, it is quite probably advisable to attend this convention. The Pacific Division has few interviews and is somewhat more regional. The Western Division also provides some experience, and gives some opportunity to the ABD.

Procedure: Since the placement activity is quite hectic (there will be several hundred applicants at the Eastern Division) you should go well organized and well prepared. Physically, it would help to be in good condition. Materially, you need a copious supply of CV's and should have assembled information about the schools you have contacted and with whom you want to interview. It might also be helpful to duplicate a letter, similar to your letter of application, to send with your CV to those schools not

previously contacted; this saves time in making up and writing out individual messages and is more presentable. Finally, you should ask for whatever assistance present faculty members can afford. The smoker held on the evening of the first day can be a good source of contacts, especially when introduced by someone who is known by the potential interviewer. Further, interviewers, if interested in you, may want to talk to faculty members who know you. Some departments may be interviewing but not openly; for this you need to use your ingenuity and it helps if you have previously contacted them.

With increased use of Jobs in Philosophy, and especially with much more scheduling and registering done in advance, the APA hopes to cut down the traffic and congestion, especially at the Eastern Division meeting. Jobs in Philosophy is being published early enough for much interview arranging to be done in advance. As a result, it is APA policy that there will be no first contact interviews the first day unless requested by an appointing officer. Only pre-arranged interviews will occur at that time. Except for pre-arranged interviews, applicants will spend the first day checking late listings and appointing officers may look at resume files. Only jobs which have been received since the last Jobs in Philosophy will be posted.

New listings will be coded so that an applicant will know if an appointing officer is in attendance. A list of appointing officers with free interview time will be posted so that candidates may make rational use of the message service. No messages will be accepted for an appointing officer not in attendance. There will be no first-come, first-serve interviews permitted. The decision to see a candidate is solely the decision of the appointing officer, and will be based on prearranged contacts, on perusal of the specialization folders and a consideration of messages from applicants. All convention placement will have four main areas of activity, described below.

(1) Registration Area: Any candidate wishing to receive messages will put his name on a manila folder, which will be filed alphabetically at the Applicant Message Center. At this time, a candidate who has not filed a resume form or has not received the latest Jobs in Philosophy, can do so, but only if he is a member.

(2) Appointing Officer Area: There will be a separate area for appointing officers to register and present interview schedules. Each appointing officer will have an institutional folder with his schedule in it and he may add to it at any time. Messages from applicants will be filed in his institutional folder and he can ask for them anytime during placement hours. Messages for candi-

dates will be delivered to the candidate folders. There will also be an area so that appointing officers can examine the specialization files. Finally, there will be an interview area.

(3) Posting Area: All jobs not listed in the latest Jobs in Philosophy will be posted chronologically as received. There will be a code indicating if the appointing officer is in attendance. On a large blackboard, a list of appointing officers and their institutions which still have interview time open will appear. Messages to appointing officers present at the convention will be accepted and transmitted to them.

(4) Applicant Message Center: A large blackboard will list the names of candidates who have received messages, which may be picked up in the candidate's folder available in this area.

Interviews: Since the interviews display some uniformity, they can also be prepared for. The following kinds of questions are usually asked and you should carefully think out answers to them in advance.

Dissertation: You should be able to explain clearly and concisely what you are doing and the methods you are using in your dissertation and to field questions about your conclusions, particularly in relation to the philosophical literature. You should also be able to state your progress and expected date of completion.

Background in areas of specialization and competence.

Teaching of courses: What courses you can and want to teach, how you would set up a program in your specialties, and how you would teach courses within this specialty and introductory courses including strategy and texts). If you have taught courses in philosophy, you may want to draw on this experience explicitly.

Questions: Typically at the end of the session, you will be asked if you have any questions. This is a chance to show your interest in and familiarity with the school, its vacancy, and its program. If you need some quick information, check the Directory of American Philosophers at the book display; this usually shows the areas of interest of those presently on the faculty.

4.3 Nomination:

Another means of first contact, over which one has no control, is a request for nomination directed to the department chairperson.

4.4 Credentials:

If a department is interested in you after the first contact, they will request a set of credentials. You can find out by going to the Placement Bureau to see if such a request has been received.

4.5 Sample Papers:

At this time, you may also be asked to send a sample paper. If you have publications, these are surely appropriate. If not, then it is useful to ask members of your department to review papers you wish to send prior to submission.

4.6 Interview:

The final slate of candidates will usually be invited to visit the department, perhaps to read a paper, and to engage in philosophical discussion.

University of Kansas