Academic Job Search: Negotiating Your Faculty Startup Package

Negotiating Your Faculty Compensation and Startup Package

Bill Lindstaedt, M.S.
Assistant Vice Chancellor
Career Advancement, International and Postdoctoral Services

Agenda

- Part 1: Negotiation items
  - Salary/compensation and other personal benefits
  - Departmental or institutional items
  - Start up funds and space

- Part 2: Negotiation process
  - Review of samples
  - Step-by-step strategies
  - Tips for the negotiation conversation
Part 1: Negotiation items
Salary/compensation and other personal benefits

Faculty Salaries in the US vary
- Doctoral Institutions
- Masters Institutions
- Baccalaureate Institutions

- Chronicle of Higher Education/AAUP Survey chronicle.com
- Medical School faculty salaries - AAMC Faculty Salary Survey
- State institution employee salaries – individual salaries public information
  - See state government or major city newspaper websites
Part 1: Negotiation items
Salary/compensation and other personal benefits

Salary structure may be very complex!

- 9-month vs. 12-month structure
- Base salary may vary widely in large univ system
  - Scale, rank, step
  - Plus add-ons at many institutions

Part 1: Negotiation items
Salary/compensation and other personal benefits

Salary structure may be very complex!

- At UC, for example:
  - “X factor” = base salary depends on dept’ s “scale”, may be the same for all in dept at rank and seniority
  - “Y factor” = compensation paid in addition to the base salary; negotiated depending on such factors as the quality, scope, and volume of a faculty member’ s teaching, research, clinical and administrative activities
  - “Z factor” = incentive compensation or bonus; based on service to dept, outside income, etc
Part 1: Negotiation items
Salary/compensation and other personal benefits

- Personal items that might be requested:
  - Salary and compensation
  - Moving expenses
  - Housing loan assistance
  - House-hunting visit
  - Day care
  - Tuition assistance – Self? Family?
  - Summer salary support
  - Parking
  - Salary advance
  - Spouse/partner appointments or other dual-career couple issues
  - Individual institutional issues
Academic Job Search: Negotiating Your Faculty Startup Package

Part 1: Negotiation items
General items for your success

• Release time
• Teaching load requirements
  – Teaching assistants?
  – Lab or lecture?
  – Postpone for initial year(s)?
  – Small class vs large class?
  – Loaned lecture materials?
  – Weekdays without teaching?
• Service requirements
• Timing: Tenure clock, contract renewal dates, start date
• Graduate program affiliations
• Sabbatical
• Unrestricted account in your name

Start-up funds: How are they structured?

• Lump sum?

• Funded exactly from your submitted detailed list?

• Is your salary included in the package or separate?

• Typically 4 categories: reagents, equipment, staff, research support

• Key: Enough to cover your costs until you generate another revenue stream
Academic Job Search: Negotiating Your Faculty Startup Package

Start-up funds: How are they structured?

- Key: *Enough* to cover your costs *until* you generate another revenue stream
  - *Enough*: 
    - Reagents
    - Equipment – expensive one time cost; you may be pushed to share
    - Staff – recurring cost, so most difficult to negotiate;
      - one PhD student, one postdoc, one technician could exceed $230,000/year (salaries/stipends, benefits, tuition)
  - *Until*: 
    - How long will funds be available? 3 yrs? 5 yrs?
    - Do you have discretion on the per-year amount that you will spend? Can funds be carried forward year-to-year?
    - If you get a grant, do you immediately lose your startup funding?
    - Find out about the institution’s indirect cost policies

General Research Support from Department or Institution

- Administrative/clerical support – grant writing support, other writing support, dealing with new hires
- Students/postdocs on departmental training grants
- Core facilities and shared research equipment/resources
- Office space, office equipment
- Hardware and software
- Travel support
- Submission and publication fees
Lab Space

- Space is money
- Quantity, quality and location are all important
- Ask about:
  - Condition of lab space
  - Fit to your program
  - Renovations needed
  - Location/neighbors
- Space in animal facilities
- “avg = about 1000 sq ft” – BWF

Part 2:
The Negotiation Process
Review of samples

Offer letter info, research:
http://www.bwfund.org/career-tools/academic-tenure-track-offer-letters

Part 3:
The Negotiation Process
Step 1: Receive the job offer; respond intelligently

- Express enthusiasm
- Ask for basics in writing/email

Possible response:

a. “Well, this is great news. I felt there was a great potential fit when I was on campus and I’m thrilled to receive this offer.”

b. “It would be really helpful if I could see everything that you’ve just described in writing -- would it be possible for you to send me the basics of what you just offered in an email?”

Step 1: Receive the job offer; respond intelligently

- Your goal is to respond only after having time to prioritize your requests. You cannot prioritize effectively during this initial conversation!
  - Never tip your hand about individual items or overall offer during the initial offer conversation!
  - Do not commit to anything.
  - If it’s clear that something important is missing, don’t mention it yet.
Step 2:
Decide if you can succeed in that department. Decide if you MIGHT accept the offer. If so, plan to negotiate.

- The negotiation process is a detailed conversation about how you will succeed.
- “It’s not good for either party to only go back and forth once.”
  
  senior faculty, Medical College of Wisconsin

- “As a rule of thumb you can expect to win roughly four important points of negotiation in your final offer.”
  
  Emory professors Boss and Eckert

Step 3:
Re-evaluate and prioritize your negotiation requests.

Prepare private list:
- Make a prioritized list of what you want that is not provided in the offer.
- Re-evaluate your list of the deal-breakers without which you will fail

Prepare public list:
- If asked to provide a detailed start-up lab budget then “the more detailed the budget, the more credible”
- In some scientific fields: Budget may have been requested prior to offer
Step 4: Begin negotiating.

a. Start out with positive and enthusiastic comment

b. Provide an overview of your requests and ask about how to proceed

c. Make and defend your first request

d. When at a stopping point, find out and/or agree on what happens next; express appreciation

Possible approach:

First of all, I wanted to say again how thrilled I am to have received this offer...
Step 4: Begin negotiating.

b. Provide an overview of your requests and ask about how to proceed

Possible approaches:

...I do have a number of questions. These questions run the gamut from salary issues, to whether or not my husband will find a job there, to how I will access necessary equipment...

OR

...I’ve outlined four main points to discuss with you about the items presented in the email you sent to me.

...Is this a good time to discuss these or would you prefer to do it later or perhaps by email?

Step 4: Begin negotiating.

c. Make and defend your first request.

Possible approach:

...As we discussed previously, in order for me to be successful with (project X) I need access to a flux capacitor (expensive equipment), which the department does not currently own. Purchasing a flux capacitor from my startup funds would compromise my ability to hire the research staff I’ll need to move forward. I just don’t see how I can succeed if I have to purchase it from my startup funds...and, I’m wondering if there is any way that item could be covered by other funds?
Academic Job Search:  
Negotiating Your Faculty Startup Package

Step 4: Begin negotiating.

c. Make and defend your first request.

Note:
By email, strategic delays are built in. By conversation, remember that you can ask to stop and continue later.

Possible approach:
You know, I feel like we’re at a point where I need to back up and look at everything we’ve discussed. I’m encouraged by the progress we’ve made so far. Can we agree to move onto the next points later?

---

d. When at a stopping point, review progress and commitments, find out and/or agree on what happens next; always express appreciation.

Possible approach:
…I really appreciate your flexibility on these three items and I’m aware of how much effort it takes to request an approval for moving me to a salary step 2. I feel like we’ve made a lot of progress already, and I’m looking forward to the possibility of finishing this up. I will re-calculate my reagent budget as you requested and get back to you by tomorrow. What happens from here, on your end?
Step 5: Continue making requests and negotiating until finished.

- Always ask for final agreement in writing.

Principles to follow throughout

- Always re-open and close each step with appreciation and enthusiasm.
- Negotiate with integrity.
  - This is not an ego trip -- give on some points.
  - Balance satisfaction with relationship issues.
- Be sure that points are documented in writing (email or letter) at every stage of the process.
- Avoid miscommunication when negotiating
  - Keep detailed notes of each conversation
  - Follow up each conversation with an email summarizing the agreed-upon points
Academic Job Search: Negotiating Your Faculty Startup Package

Principles to follow throughout

- Suggest win-win’s whenever possible.

  …I’m aware that John Smith and Carol Jones and several others would also benefit from access to this microscope. If you could help find departmental funds to purchase it, I will maintain it and schedule it.

What to do about multiple offers

- Be sincere; it’s a small world
- Notify other institutions with the “good news” of your offer
  - I was thrilled to receive a competitive offer for a faculty position at another university yesterday. While I was honored by that offer, that offer expires a week before the decision date you announced for the position in your department. Everything I’ve learned so far tells me that I’d prefer to accept your position if it was offered. Do you know if your process can be accelerated?

  • Convey information in a timely, transparent way
Declining Offers

- Announce in a timely manner
- Keep the conversation or email brief and polite
  - I regret to tell you that I don’t feel this position can provide the ideal fit for me to begin my faculty career research program...
  - My partner has not been able to find a suitable job offer in the area...
  - I have accepted another offer that provides an optimal fit for my overall career and family goals.

Suggested reading

**Book:**
- *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In*

**Articles:**
- *Academic Scientists at Work: Negotiating a Faculty Position,*
  - ScienceCareers.org by Emory professors Jeremy Boss and Susan Eckert.
- *Be Honorable and Strategic,*
  - ScienceCareers.org by Carnegie Foundation Scholar Chris Golde.
- *Negotiation,* download Discussion Guide; video
  - https://leanin.org/education/negotiation/ by Margaret Neale, Director, Stanford Executive Program for Women Leaders