Preparation for tenure-track faculty job search

Job ads sources:
- Research intensive positions: Nature Careers, Science Careers, Cell career networks, job boards from specialized society (ex: ASM, ASBMB…etc)
- Teaching-intensive positions: HigherEdJobs, AcademicJobsOnline.org (mixed with research/teaching positions) (I didn't aim for teaching-intensive positions. You might want to seek other sources)
- Your PI and other PIs
- Set your job ad search broadly! You never know what the hiring department is looking for…(sometimes, the department might be developing research fields that they lack)
- Carefully read the job ads about the position
- Check the faculty of the hiring department to see if someone doing similar research, potential collaborators, strength/weakness of the department…etc.
- Be careful with the deadline/review start dates. I usually apply at least one week prior to the deadline. 1-2 weeks ahead of the deadline gives your reference writers more time to send the letters
- For some job ads without deadline: Apply early! Usually the departments start reviewing ~one month after the job ad is out. So, it is better to apply within 3-4 weeks
- Compile a list with all the information (institutions/department/job ads/deadlines/requirement for references)
- Apply as many as you can! (I applied 40+. Joshua Modell at JHU said that he applied 40+ as well)

Reference letter writers:
- Your PI
- PhD mentor
- Someone knows you well and supportive. Ask them if they would like to be your reference writers.
- Most departments ask for 3 references. Few ask for 4.
- Some ask for letters to be sent when you apply. Some only ask for contact info. for the references. (about half/half)
- Compile a list of institutions that you plan to apply and keep your reference writers updated about the deadline and when you apply.

Documents for application package
- Cover letter (1-2 pages)
- CV
- Research statement/proposal
- Teaching philosophy/interest statement (about 1/3~1/2 institutions asked. It is required for teaching-intensive institutes)

- Diversity/Inclusion statement (only 2-3 institutes asked, but the trend is going up. Maybe more common for teaching-intensive institutes, be aware of that the institutions might ask you questions about diversity/inclusion during interview)

Research statement/proposal
- Usually 3~4-page limit. Some have no limit but you don't want to send them a long one. I stick to 3-4 pages. A few have 2-page limit. I also applied a couple that asked for 1-page. So it is better to have different versions
- You can develop a 3-4 page version first. Then modify it to shorter versions.
- A trick I played for applications with short research statement: Use your cover letter to describe your major discoveries. Then only briefly state the background/key questions/findings in the research proposal
- You should start thinking and writing at least 6 months prior to the season starts (ex: the hiring season usually starts in September, you should start writing in March)
- Discuss with your PI and have your PI review and edit it
- Need multi-round of revision (just like your manuscript)
- You should have more than 3 different future projects. But only write 2-3 most important projects in one statement
- Tailor your statement to the description on the job ads/the department. Ex: host-pathogen interactions, microbiology, or immunology…etc. Choose the future projects that fit best with the type of person they want (this is why you should have more than 3 projects)
- Titles/subtitles should be **CONCISE** and **ATTRACTIVE**!!! (Gigi said that titles/subtitles ae the part she has most impression)
- Get inputs from multiple PIs with different expertise.

Teaching philosophy/interest statement
- There is no fixed format. You may find samples from internet.
- Usually 1-2 pages
- TAKE the "Scientists Teaching Science" course by OITE. One of the course assignments is to write a teaching philosophy statement and the instructor will edit it and give you feedback.
- You can built your teaching philosophy from your personal experience in research/learning.
- Describe your main teaching strategies for graduate/undergraduate students and make them follow your central "philosophy"

Diversity/Inclusion statement
- Usually one page, no fixed format
- Only few institutions ask for it. But is more common for teaching-intensive institutions
- I wrote about how I am aware of diversity/inclusion situations and how I could promote diversity/inclusion in the department based on my own experience. (not sure if it is good or not)

- They might ask you about diversity/inclusion questions at interview

Recommended courses at the NIH
- Scientists Teaching Science
- Writing and publishing a scientific paper
- NIH grant writing course (focus on K grants)
- Find more on the OITE website, pay attention to FAES, NICHD announcements

Suggestions for how to plan your postdoc training if you are aiming for a faculty position

TIME flies!!! You have 5 years at the NIH. One month means 1.67% of your stay. You NEED to publish something before end of your 4th year!!!

Closely work with your PI on your timeline! Put efforts on your annual plans!

Key timepoints
- By end of the 3rd year, have your main project 90% done (enough for you to write a manuscript)
- If you are applying a K99 grant, try to submit it before end of the 3rd year (gives you one year for re-submission)
- Prepare manuscript and publish your first paper before end of the 4th year
- Actively preparing for job hunting in the 5th year

Year 1:
- Make sure that you can work in this lab
- Decide the project as early as possible
- Establish key techniques or some solid results by end of your first year→ make sure you have something that you can publish within next 1-2 years
- Take courses (OITE or FAES)

Year 2:
- Work on your first project
- Develop second project
- Take courses (ex: NIH grant writing for K grants, paper writing…)

Year 3:
- Finish your first project, write manuscript
- Write grant applications (ex: K99 grant)
- Take courses (ex: Scientists teaching sciences or paper writing)

Year 4:
- Manuscript preparation, submission, revision, and publication of your first paper

- Work on the second project
- Explore teaching opportunities (alumni of "Scientist teaching sciences" receive notices about potential teaching opportunities at community colleges and teaching universities in the area. Good for people who are interested in teaching-intensive positions)
- K grant re-submission (if you need to)

Year 5:
- Prepare job applications
- Prepare manuscript for your second project
- Go out for job hunting!

OITE also offers assistance in reviewing your application, mock interviews, job offer negotiation…etc.