Overall Campus Visit

- This department should run a "how to treat candidates with respect and dignity" seminar at the MLA every year. I just got back from my on campus visit and cannot say enough about the collegiality of the faculty. During all steps of the visit -- research talk, teaching demo, group interview, etc. -- I can honestly say I thoroughly enjoyed talking with all of them. They seemed generally interested in my work and had not only read the entire writing sample but had read it with depth and engagement. The itinerary had enough free time scheduled in to allow for useful down time without leaving me bored. The associate dean announced that at dinner, I was officially "off the clock" (as much as I could be, at least) and no one was to ask me interview-related questions. The warmth and friendliness they showed allowed me to relax enough that my nervousness didn't distract me when I was "on the clock." The research support is generous, but the tenure-track process is also remarkably humane to junior faculty. Oh, and one other positive: many of the faculty have dogs and bring them to work, which for me is always a good sign (though others might not like this). All in all, should they offer me a job I'd take it in a heartbeat, and if I'm rejected, I'll still remember this interview very fondly.

- I was a finalist for a search there and was not offered the job. However, over the course of being part of their search I admired how prompt they were with communication and how well they treated me. They promptly acknowledged my application, invited me for an AHA interview a month before the conference, and arranged for my on campus visit quickly thereafter. While I was on campus I was treated affably as a future colleague and was impressed with everyone I met. Also, faculty attended my job talk from multiple departments, asked questions, and made sure to talk to me afterward. This is truly a liberal arts college and run by classy, humane, and friendly folks. Finally, I found the students to be engaging, willing to talk in my teaching demo and ready for a rigorous education.

- They are extraordinarily systematic. The campus is driven towards reaching out towards strong research-oriented people. I was there on a job-talk -- and was amazed by how carefully they had read the letters and the materials. In fact, I saw in the hands of at least four people, underlined transcripts of my application letter. Moreover, they had researched most of my presentation material well before my arrival. This is a school to look out for in terms of quality research and teaching. The thing is, even though they are a liberal arts college, ultimately, they grant tenure for teaching and research -- and not for teaching, service and research (in that order).

- The visit I had there was my first experience of meeting a committee who never put me on the defensive, and just seemed excited to talk about ideas and teaching. They had clearly read my writing sample thoroughly, and wanted to get to know me as a possible future colleague. Everyone I met was proud of their students and the colleague. Everyone I met was proud of their students and the work they can do, which was very encouraging. The
visit was all paid for and organized carefully in advance; I never had to worry about anything.

- The interview process was incredibly efficient and straightforward -- request for conference interview came a month after applying, I heard back for a campus visit a few days after the interview, and as the last candidate, I received their final decision within 2 days of returning home. I absolutely loved the faculty -- there was a collegial, friendly atmosphere that felt like an extension of grad school (and everyone actively commented on the collegiality of the department). Everything about the campus visit was so well organized, and they even scheduled 'downtime' between appointments, when they would let me just take over someone's office and be alone to prep or relax. The negotiation process (which I had been dreading) was also so easy and straightforward and everything was settled within days. This was my first year on the academic job market, and I had been dreading the process after reading a lot of horror stories online, but I couldn't have had a better experience with XYZ.

- From the moment I submitted my application, I was treated with respect and decency. The administrative assistant sent a very kind email acknowledging receipt of the application, and included the following reassurance (!): "I realize that an email message may seem a rather impersonal way to acknowledge your application, but please be assured that the Appointments Committee will read your letter and vita with careful attention." Wow. They also wrote a very kind email to tell me I was out of the running on Dec 18, just a day after the wiki showed that calls for MLA interviews had been made. The English department at XYZ ran an efficient, thoughtful search, and it was very much appreciated. Please, if other SCCs are out there, consider taking a similar approach.

- I just had a campus visit with this department and it was wonderful. They were incredibly organized and professional, all the way down to who was going to take me to what meeting and who was picking me up afterward. The weather was incredibly cold and they kept apologizing and being very understanding as I walked around bundled up even in the building (My suit and coat were not enough to keep out the cold). Each of the faculty members (with the exception of one) was warm and inviting. Although they did ask me about whether or not I had children (oops), I felt safe enough to answer. There were no aggressive or insulting questions asked at any time.

- Very collegial and well-organized search. The chair kept me well-informed throughout, which was particularly important as the search hovered around cancellation for several weeks. Faculty were friendly and helpful, as were staff members. Dean was also the height of professionalism and very open about answering questions. Hotel arrangements were top-notch. Job talk was well-attended, and students generally asked good questions. Rejection, when it came, was extremely kind and positive, as such can be. Makes me wish I'd gotten the job even more, but the candidate they chose was, I have to agree, a much better fit.
Universities/Colleges to Fear

Disorganized/Disrespectful

- All of my recommendation letters were mailed to Chair of the Dept. about a month before the application deadline. Received an email a month later from committee chair saying that one of my letters was missing. The letter writer then emailed the recommendation directly to the committee chair. This was confirmed by the committee chair that she received it. Roughly a few weeks later and I receive another email from the secretary this time that one of my letters was missing and my application would not be considered. Called and talked directly to the secretary and got a lot of attitude. Basically said that she did not care that my recommendation letter was in the committee chair’s email inbox and that my application is not complete unless she has it. It was my problem that the committee chair did not pass it along! Wow, I then had my letter writer email it directly to the secretary. Never got a confirmation even after emailing the secretary again that it was received and have not heard anything since then. What a joke....must be like the circus in this dept. Glad my application was mishandled and I did not get an interview with these bozos since this appears to be more than just an isolated incident. [posted March 2013]

- Committee chair committed to pay to bring me in for an interview and two nights in hotel, asked me to prepare a talk. Over Christmas I spent hours working on the talk, then four days before the interview got frantic call from department chair claiming I couldn't come since the dean wouldn't be in town. She said the interview process was being "suspended" but when I questioned her, she said the other interviews had been conducted and mine was the only one being suspended. A couple weeks later someone in the department emailed the truth--they liked one of the other candidates they had already interviewed so much that they decided to hire him and renege on commitment to bring me to campus. Tacky, classless and even dishonest. This school claims to be all about teaching "integrity" yet they failed--how could anyone who applies at this school trust them? [posted Jan. 2012]

- They were really, really disorganized. I called, emailed, and called some more to get details about the interview ahead of time, but couldn't get any concrete answers from the search chair (who was surprised that I had questions) or the department head. They sent me a schedule 4 days in advance, and then changed the schedule a lot on the fly. The department head changed the start time from 8:30 to 6 am -- the night before the interview, by email at 9 pm. The initial interview schedule included a 2-hour "research and teaching talk" and no one could tell me who (or how many people) would be attending it, whether I would have access to any technology, or what was typical for the department. The 2-hour talk was changed to a 50-minute teaching demonstration FIVE minutes before it started. They told
me I wouldn't have tech, then told that morning that I would and they expected a presentation (which I luckily had as a backup!), and then the tech wouldn't work. The IT people took 10 minutes of the 50 minutes before they gave up. I had to ask for bathroom breaks. The head of this department does not hold a Ph.D. and made several remarks about how offended she was by candidates withdrawing when they learned this. I received a form letter rejection, not even a personalized letter, let alone a call. This department might improve over the next few years as they hire new people, but for the 2011-2012 search, they were really disorganized and unprofessional. [posted July 2012]

- I was told that they would let me know of their decision in two weeks. As I had another job offer by then and had promised to get in touch with them if I had any news, I contacted them at the end of that time period to receive a very short email brusquely informing me that they would let me know by the middle of the following week. Nothing of the sort happened. I emailed again at the end of that week just for closure as I had learned from wiki jobs that they had made an offer to another candidate the very day I had sent them that initial email and that it had been accepted. I am still waiting to hear from them. I’m assuming that I will get a short impersonal email informing me that the position has been filled. Actually, I will be super impressed if this institution gets its act together to send me any information at all! I met these people; I ate two meals with them. They did not strike me as evil fiends. Despite the slightly self-conscious muttering, they struck me as generally a good lot. What happens at the institutional level that all interpersonal interaction leads to this phenomenal boorishness? [posted March 2012]

**Inappropriate/Discriminatory Questions and Comments**

- .....At one point in the day she (the search chair) informed me "XYZ is very racist" and suggested I might have trouble adjusting to the racism. And, by noon she disappeared leaving me to fend for myself. I not only ended up walking around trying to find various faculty offices and meeting rooms by myself, but introducing myself as well...Awkward! It became rather obvious to me during the course of the day that I was not really being considered and that they likely had an internal candidate. This was practically confirmed when the Dean (who was actually very nice) said "you should be very proud of having gotten this far in the interview process" not once but TWICE! He also indicated that however much he might disagree with a search committee hiring recommendation he would still follow it. ..... 

- Strange, surreal campus visit that seemed entirely structured around ascertaining my marital and family status. I am almost certain they Googled me extensively online prior to the visit, and desperately wanted me to give up this information so that they didn't "have" to ask illegal questions. ..... After that, another SC member drove me around town, also trying to figure out my family status. S/he drove me by several schools, asking me "if I cared
about school districts" and "wanted to check out the local playgrounds." Um, ye..-maybe? No? At lunch that afternoon, I endured more tedious, indirect attempts to figure out my family status, including a SC member telling me that someone else at the school dressed his/her pets up as children, ha ha, childless people do odd things, *wink wink*  Sigh. Eventually, during this meeting, I was asked point blank if I had children. I looked the person in the eye, saying nothing, and they awkwardly held my gaze. I declined to answer, and the person simply walked away flummoxed (who knows where s/he went? Awkward.).

- I went to this institution for a campus visit. At dinner, the search committee made small talk amongst themselves and discussed random students and institutional politics. When I asked for water without ice (due to a sore throat), one SC member helpfully suggested that I had "probably grown up without the concept of ice" since I am a scholar from the global South! The irony is that I think this member was trying to make polite conversation. The next day was disastrous. I was rushed from one meeting to another on an ad hoc basis. At the end of the day, I was standing in the department lobby all alone with a suitcase waiting for my ride to the airport. I think that schools should practice common courtesy even when there is a chance that they might never see a particular individual again. This is one of my worst memories of the campus visit: standing alone in the lobby of a strange and unwelcoming institution and being yelled at by their cranky secretary (who did not budge from her room but preferred to yell from her seat) that my car had arrived.