

Fall 2021 NISS Career Fair

Joshua M. Tebbs

Professor and Chair
Department of Statistics
University of South Carolina

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- 1 Department of Statistics/University of South Carolina
- 2 Available positions at USC
- 3 General topics for discussion

- Created in 1985; grew out of the Department of Mathematics
 - **Founding Chair:** Joe Padgett
 - Guiding principles: Excellence in research, teaching, and service to the profession
- Current composition
 - 12 TT faculty
 - 6 full time instructors
 - 38 graduate students
 - 99 undergraduate majors
- NISS affiliate member/active in the profession
- Popular host for regional conferences
 - Reliability and survival analysis
 - Nonparametrics
 - Latent variable modeling
- BS/MS/PhD degrees offered

- State's flagship university (founded in 1801)
- "Very High Research Activity," Carnegie Foundation
- 35,000+ students on main campus
- Located in Columbia, SC
 - state capital
 - intersection of I-26, I-77, and I-20
 - short drive to Charlotte, Charleston, and Atlanta
 - mountains/beach for "down time"
 - excellent restaurants
 - cost of living is ridiculously low

- Our department is housed in the **College of Arts and Sciences**
 - with 18 other departments (e.g., PSYC, SOCY, ENGL, THEA, CHEM, BIOL, etc.)
- CAS is one of **13** colleges/schools at USC
 - Medicine, Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing
 - Law, Music, Journalism, Business
 - Education, Engineering, Social Work, HRSM
- This means a lot of collaboration
 - Department of Biostatistics: located in Public Health
 - excellent relationship
- Honors College: Ranked **#1** nationally
 - 20% of our majors (highest in CAS)

Our department's future

- Retaining **core strength** in statistical methodology and theory
- Moving towards data science
 - modernizing graduate and undergraduate requirements; offering more courses in
 - visualization
 - modern statistical learning
 - analysis of big data
 - enhancing collaboration with other departments and colleges
 - “Department of Statistics and Data Science”

Available positions

- We are currently hiring for **4 positions**:
- **Two** visiting positions
 - 1-2 year positions; primary emphasis on teaching undergraduate majors
 - encourage collaboration/methodological research
 - all areas of statistical science encouraged to apply
 - **Start date:** Immediately (Spring 2022)
- **Two** tenure-track positions
 - emphasis on modern data science
 - methods and applications in all areas considered
 - one position is “open rank”
 - **Start date:** Fall 2022
 - review of applications begins in November
 - on campus interviews in January/February

Q: *What are the preferred qualifications for a tenure-track/tenured faculty position in your institution?*

- **Visiting Assistant Professor**

- primary interest is teaching undergraduate students
- not low-level service courses; upper-level courses in statistics and data science
- “Teaching post-doctoral position”
- ideal for candidate who envisions teaching as a career

- **Tenure-track Assistant Professor**

- strong consideration for research potential
- at USC, excellence in teaching is critical
 - research and teaching receive “nearly equal” weight in evaluation process
- strong leadership potential

Q: What are the potential distinguishing characteristics of candidates for a tenure-track/tenured faculty position in your institution?

- TT positions both emphasize modern data science
 - “quite broad;” all areas of statistics will be considered
- Post-docs encouraged but not necessary
- Strong potential for excellence in both research and teaching
- “Team player” attitude
 - we are a smaller department (and highly collegial)
 - everyone does their part
 - celebrate our successes together
- Willingness to advise PhD students immediately (e.g., co-advise, etc.)

Q: *What advice would you give to job candidates?*

- Be prepared to invest an enormous amount of time
 - application process
 - pre-interview process
 - interviews
- Do your homework!
- Do not interview if you have no desire to go there
- Be ready to ask questions when interviewing
 - pretend they are your colleagues already
 - don't be afraid to talk about "normal" things
 - "Can I see myself working with this person?"
 - "Will this person make our department a better place?"
- Negotiate initial offer
- Go with your gut

Q: What advice would you give about how Ph.D. students or post-docs should prepare for the future?

- Effective communication is the key to success
 - publishing papers and getting grants funded
 - becoming an effective teacher
 - if these skills are poor, your future will likely be limited
- Get involved in the profession
 - volunteer for an ASA committee
 - attend conferences and present your research
 - build a network of colleagues
- Find time for yourself to think about research and ideas
 - if you think you are busy now, just wait
- You cannot work all the time; you must have outlets to regroup and regenerate

Final thoughts

- A wise academic mentor once told me,

“Every day you should wake up and think about how you can make your department a better place.”

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