

# Finding an Academic Position During the Pandemic

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## **NISS Virtual Academic Career Fair**

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# ACADEMIC JOB MARKET IN STATISTICS

- Some thoughts...
  - There is lots of **heterogeneity** and **uncertainty** in the impact of the pandemic on higher education *in the short term*
    - public vs. private, geographic origin of undergraduate student population, auxiliary operations
  - I'm hopeful that the *long-term* impacts of the pandemic on the academic market in statistics will be minimal
- My advice...
  - **Apply for positions**, but try not to be discouraged if things do not work out
  - **Don't give up** if things don't go as you hoped
  - **Keep in mind that the "rules" are changing** (e.g., COVID impact statements, moving from industry to academia)

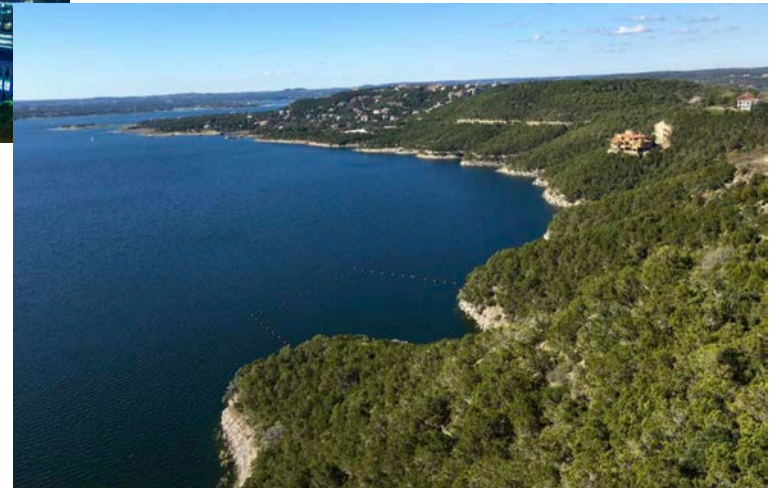
# STATISTICS & DATA SCIENCES AT UT AUSTIN

- Are we hiring? **YES!**
  - Three position: one tenured, one tenure-track, and one open rank
  - Deadlines:
    - Junior positions: Nov. 30, 2020
    - Senior positions: rolling (starting review around Dec. 15, 2020)
- Interviews will be conducted virtually in a format that is TBD
- We expect to be hiring at both the junior and senior levels *for the next few years*
  - we may not fill all three positions this year, but would like to...

# AUSTIN, TEXAS



*Keep Austin weird*



# UT AUSTIN



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## UT Austin Selected as Home of National AI Institute Focused on Machine Learning



# STATISTICS & DATA SCIENCES AT UT AUSTIN

- We're a new department... **started in 2014**
  - Our current faculty are leading experts in **statistical machine learning, Bayesian statistics,** and **causal inference** → **interdisciplinary collaboration** is strongly supported
  - Current educational/training programs: PhD/MS in Statistics, MS in Data Science (online), departmental postdoc program  
Planned educational/training programs: Undergraduate Major in Statistics and Data Science
- ➔ We're looking for faculty whose **research programs will complement/extend our areas of strength**, who are or have the potential to be **excellent teachers and mentors**, and who are **excited to help build a world-class department**

# GENERAL ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

## APPLICATION PROCESS

- Feel free to apply for any position if there is a non-zero probability you will accept an offer if one is extended
  - Opinion: Do not apply for academic positions just to "practice" interviewing
  - Opinion: Do not worry about whether you exactly fit the applicant profile in the job ad

# GENERAL ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

## Application Process

- Get **letters of recommendation** from people who know you well
  - Opinion: Applicants seeking their first faculty position do not need "external" letters
  - Opinion: Graduate students should have a letter from a faculty member from their graduate institution who is not their advisor
- Focus your **research statement** on your specific contributions to the field, not a description of the field
  - Opinion: Avoid self evaluation
  - Opinion: Be specific about future research directions
- Write a **cover letter** tailored to each position to which you apply. State why specifically you are interested in the position.



# GENERAL ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

## Interview

- Be prepared for all of your meetings and be able to succinctly describe your research, your teaching experience, your interests in the position, etc.
- Ask questions
  - Opinion: It's ok to ask the same question to multiple people *if it reasonable to assume you might get different answers*
  - Opinion: Demonstrate your interest in the specific position, not just getting any academic job

# GENERAL ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

## Interview cont.

- Carefully prepare and practice your **job talk**
  - Opinion: Focus on a single paper\*
    - \* ok to have 1-2 slides giving an overview of your research program
  - Opinion: Leave time for questions and be willing to take questions; don't assume that your seminar can run long (even if it's on Zoom)

# ADVICE FOR APPLICANTS

## Accepting/Declining a Position

- If you have **multiple offers**, remember the goal is to select the position that is best for you
  - Opinion: If you decide that you are no longer interested in a position, decline the offer immediately -> do not hold onto job offers for negotiation purposes
  - Opinion: Be polite and gracious while you are deciding which offer to accept