LOOKING FOR AN ACADEMIC POSITION DURING A PANDEMIC: SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER

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THE UNIVERSITY & SCHOOL

EMORY ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

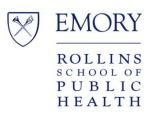
- Located in Atlanta, Georgia
 - 9th largest metro area in the US
- Emory University
 - Druid Hills neighborhood
 - Private University
 - \$831M in federal funding in 2020
 - 9 Schools
 - Woodruff Health Sciences Center
 - Emory Health Care, Winship Cancer Institute, Yerkes National Primate Center, Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health
 - CDC next door
- Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH)
 - 6 departments
 - 4th in nation in NIH funding





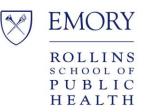


- 35 current faculty
- Current research expertise includes:
 - Bioinformatics, machine learning, competing risks and survival analysis, imaging, high-dimensional statistics, functional data analysis, spatiotemporal statistics, clinical trials, infectious disease, causal inference
- Current areas of application:
 - Almost any area of basic or applied health science you can think of
 - Vaccine evaluation, climate change and environmental health, mental and behavioral health, genetics, microbiome, neuroscience, cancer



- PhD program enrolls about 8 students per year
 - All have a full fellowship for the first 3 years
 - Alumni work in pharma (e.g. Merck), information and biotechnology (e.g. Google, Genentech), government (e.g. CDC, NIH) and academia (e.g. Duke, Yale)
- MPH and MSPH degrees in Biostatistics
 - About 60 students per year
- MSPH and certificate in Data Science pending Provost approval

OPEN TENURE-TRACK POSITIONS



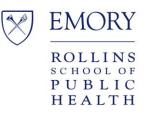
- Two open tenure-track assistant or associate professorships
- Search committee looks for the best candidate, but there are two areas of particular interest:
 - Applied machine learning and bioinformatics
 - Infectious disease and spatial statistics
- Typically teach 1 graduate course per year
- Are expected to develop and lead a methodological research program
- Are expected to develop collaborations, ideally related to methodological interest
- Are expected to eventually mentor graduate students, both master's and PhD

OPEN RESERCH-TRACK POSITION

ROLLINS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

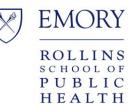
- One open research assistant professorship
- Expected to become a lead applied statistician working on
 - HIV studies
 - Longitudinal and clinical trial data
- Expected to work partially through the Biostatistics Collaboration Core
- Expected to teach about 1 graduate course per year
- Expected to eventually mentor graduate students, in particular with regards to collaborative biostatistics

PLANNED PROCESS



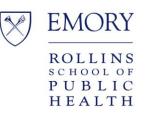
- Have started reviewing applications.
 - Can still apply.
- Initial invitations for the tenure-track position are expected for early January, for the research-track position potentially sooner.
- First round of interviews will be remote.
 - Reduce traffic coming through RSPH (have 30% in person instruction).
 - Remote seminar.
 - Will meet with department faculty, students and potential collaborators remotely.
 - Still deciding on the best format: How many hours per day? How many days? Group meetings?
- Potential for later in-person visits.
 - Up to everyone's comfort level and safety.
 - See the beautiful campus and department despite not many people around.
 - See Atlanta.

WHERE I AM COMING FROM



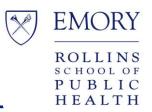
- Where I've been:
 - BS in Math and Dance, SUNY Stony Brook
 - MA in Math, University of Pennsylvania (Arts & Sciences)
 - PhD in Biostatistics, University of Pennsylvania (School of Medicine)
 - Faculty in Statistics, University of Pittsburgh (Arts & Sciences)
 - Faculty in Statistics, Temple University (Business School)
 - Faculty in Biostatistics, University of Pittsburgh (Public Health)
- Started as Chair and Professor of Biostatistics & Bioinformatics at Emory's RSPH in September.
 - I moved during a pandemic!
 - First interview was in-person in February.
 - On-site visit in June.
 - A lot of Zoom calls between March and June.

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT



- Remember that you have a lot to offer.
- Make sure that you think about what you want in both your career and your life.
- In "normal" times:
 - How much and who do you want to teach?
 - Where do you want your research to be on continuum of theory, methods and applications?
 - Do you have geographical restrictions or preferences?
 - Do you work best in a small or in a large department?
- During the pandemic:
 - Questions such as geography might be more complicated.
 - Consider now but think towards the future.
 - How do you feel about moving this summer?
 - Can something be worked out where you don't have to move this summer if you have concerns?

SHOULD I GO FOR IT?



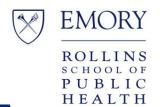
- If a position is not right for you, don't apply!
 - Hate teaching? Don't apply to a position where you teach a lot.
 - Hate collaborating? Don't apply to a biostatistics job.
 - School is in an area you would be miserable living in? Don't apply!
- If a position seems it might be a good fit for you:
 - In "normal" times:
 - Apply!
 - Ask mentors, colleagues or others if you want to know more about places. It's a small field.
 - Don't be afraid to reach out.
 - During the pandemic:
 - Uncertainty seems to increase fear and hesitation. If you think its right, go for it.
 - Think about what you are comfortable with in terms of in-person visits. If you get an interview, be open to the search committee about this. Remember that every institution will have different rules.

WHAT ARE THEY LOOKING FOR?



What is the search committee looking for in an application and during an interview?

- In "normal" times:
 - Current and/or potential for producing high-quality, impactful, independent research? Scientific and technical rigor?
 - Do they know who they are or want to be as a scholar?
 - Can they communicate? How was their seminar?
 - Do they appear to be excited to join and contribute to the department?
 - Will they be successful and happy here as a faculty member?
- During the pandemic:
 - Search committees know how to do this in person and are working hard to overcome the remote challenges.
 - They understand and will try to make it as easy as possible for you.
 - Do the same for them, and for yourself.
 - Do a practice seminar on Zoom.
 - Practice your "elevator speech" and making small talk on Zoom.
 - Make sure you are in a quiet place where you won't be interrupted.
 - If your room is messy, find a fun background.



They are interviewing you, but you are also interviewing them. Some things to consider:

- In "normal" times:
 - What's the teaching load? What's the funding expectation? Other expectations for promotion?
 - Does this place provide the recourses to do the work you want to do?
 - Computing, collaborators, protected time, students
 - If you are junior, what is the mentorship plan?
 - Do you see yourself being happy there?
- During the pandemic:
 - If the on-line format made it difficult to ask all of your questions, do not be afraid to reach out.
 - Think about the things that are important to you.
 - If you are junior, talk to both junior and senior people about mentoring and the environment.
 - Get to know the people and environment as best you can. We all have different comfort levels, think about yours with regards to how good of a feel you can get given the circumstances.

Good Luck!