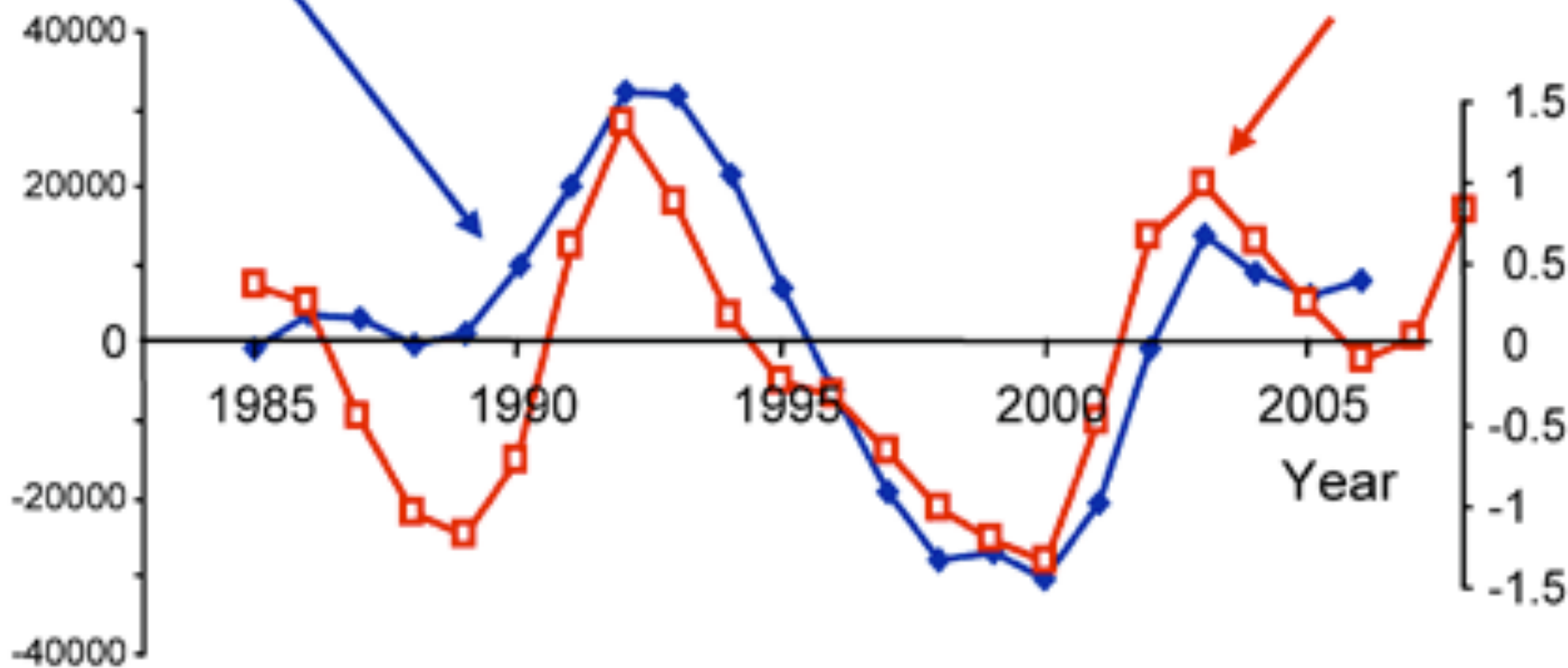


# Types of academic jobs and who should apply

Rytas Vilgalys, Biology Dept., Duke University, Durham, NC

# Fluctuations in Grad Student Enrollment (Science & Engineering)

# Fluctuations in the Unemployment Rate



Correlation  
Coefficient:

$$\rho = 0.75583$$

(that's pretty high)

# Where are the jobs?

- Academia: R1 universities, Medical Schools, Teaching colleges
- Government research organizations: USDA, DOE
- Healthcare organizations such as the NIH; Clinical laboratories
- Industry – Agriculture, pharmaceuticals, mushroom industry, food/ beverage, biotechnology;
- environmental organizations, NGOs (e.g., Sierra Club, WWF, );
- Secondary education (high school)

# Which job is right for you?

- **Research Scientist** (Industry; Government)
- **University or college professor** - Teaches in the classroom or laboratory, trains students, conducts research and performs community service (e.g., extension work)
- **science administrator** - college or university dean or in other administrative positions such as vice president or president.
- **Research director/Corporate executive** - company such as a biotechnology, pharmaceutical, agricultural or environmental firm.
- **Consultant** - Advises and reports information to organizations such as businesses or government agencies.
- **Science advisor or administrator** - Leads programs concerned with safety of new devices, food, drugs and chemicals and helps influence laws, regulations and research for government agencies.

# Triage

- ABD: Don't even bother to apply for a position unless you have a degree in hand. Finish writing thesis, or at least set a date for your defense before sending in an application
- Read the job ad: be sure that your stated areas of expertise are same as those specified in the job advertisement.

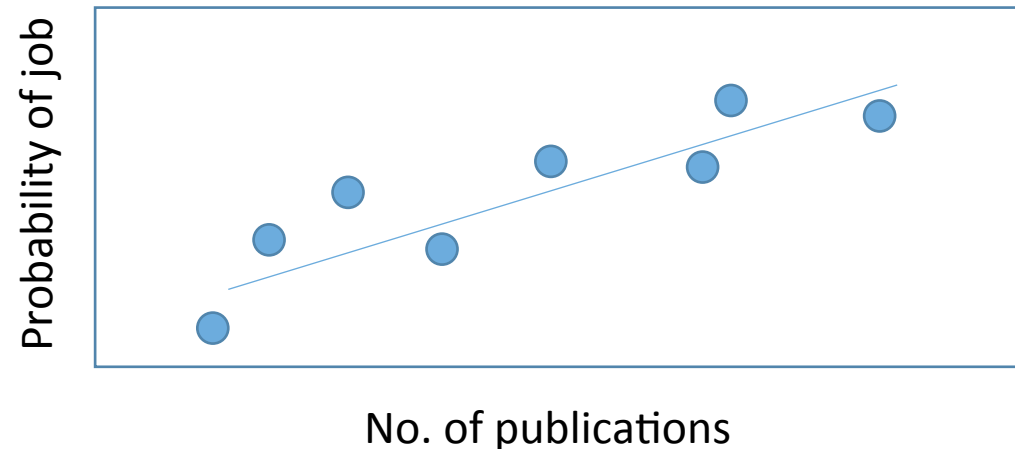


# Preparing your application: dos and don'ts

- **Web site:** Simple, elegant and straightforward professional web site with your job materials and publications. Post your job materials (research statement, teaching statement, CV) on your web site as soon as possible. Remove unflattering photos and anything which could identify your views on politics, religion, *etc.* Put a high-quality, professional-but-not-cheesy-looking photograph of yourself on your site. (Don't be surprised when this photo shows up on posters.)
- **Personal letter.** Not that important, but you must include it. Keep it simple. Be sure to include subjects you are prepared to teach. Departments often look to fill niches, including subjects that must be taught. Always list the requested areas first and your own favorites last.
- **CV and research interests statement.** Very important. Hundred of books on the subject, choose one. Have colleagues read it before you send it out.
- **Recommendations.** Best recs are from people who the committee knows and respects. If the recommender is willing to make a call, that's gold. In second place are letters from people who are well-known in the field.  
*Letters must be enthusiastic.* There are only two types of letters : claims that the candidate is great, or that the candidate is 'good'. Great means that you're good. Good means that you're probably not good.

# dos and don'ts (cont)

- **Publications.** These are essential. This is the single most important correlate of job success. This is how you show that you mean business. Best are refereed articles. Publishing in high impact journals is good, but society journals are also important. If you're only one of many authors that will be noticed and taken into account. If it's to your advantage, list the percentage of your contribution. Non-peer reviewed chapters (e.g., book chapters) count, but not as much. Important to establish yourself as an independent scientist able to direct and perform creative research.



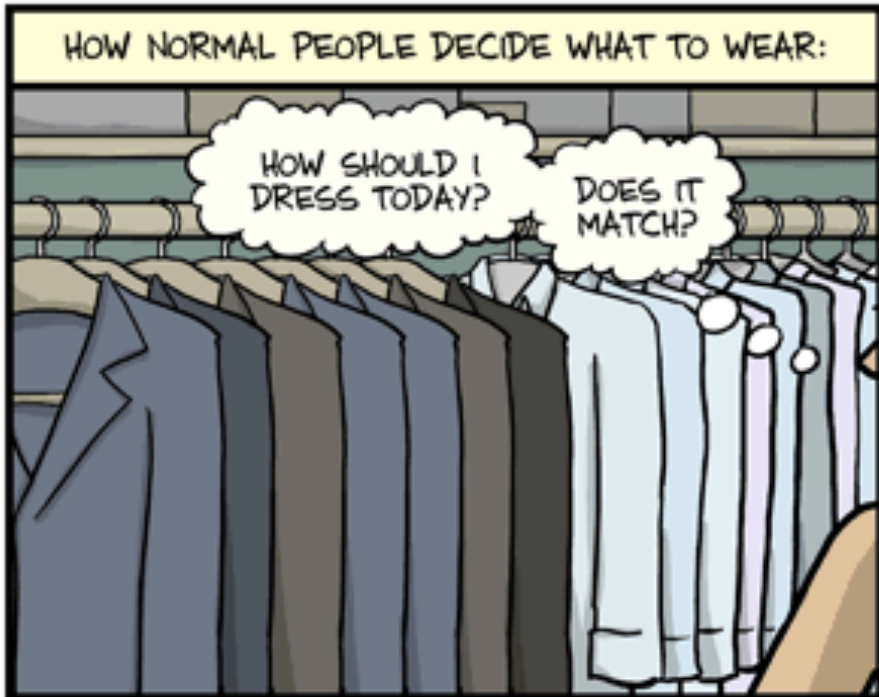
# dos and don'ts (cont)

- **Teaching experience.** The importance of this varies whether position is at a research institution or a 'teaching' college. For research universities, teaching is expected to be good but is not usually a basis for tenure. At teaching institutions, teaching usually the most desirable skill. They have heavier course loads and the school explicitly rewards and values them for their pedagogical skills. If you've received positive teaching evaluations as a TA or postdoc, include the results/ratings in the application at a research university (but don't make a big deal about it).
- **Research.** Still the most important factor. Your research needs to fill a necessary niche in the department, so best to be broad in describing your area (not too narrow). Big departments may want variety and try to represent all of the major areas. Smaller departments must select to be strong in three or four key areas. By examining the list of faculty you can see in which direction they're going and prepare yourself accordingly.
- **Grants.** Just as important as publications. You might not need to have a grant to get a job, but you will need to get a grant to keep your job. Start writing proposals early, and often. Small grants are just fine. Take a workshop and learn how to write a good proposal.



# dos and dont's (cont)

- **Do your homework.** You'll usually only get one shot, you can never know what little detail or nuance will give you the edge over other applicants. Thoroughly research the department you're most serious about contacting before you apply. Know what faculty members are doing, read what they've written. Find other people who know the department; network as much as possible. Check out demographics. A place with a predominantly older faculty may give you a better shot at landing a permanent position.
- **Going after one job, or many?** Sometimes a good practice. You can always leverage a crappy job offer against the place that you're really interested in.



You begin making a first impression before you even speak.

## What is your interview attire saying about you?

### Interview Attire Do's

Interview attire is a reflection of you. The way you dress can make a difference in how you are perceived. Here are some tips to help you make a good impression.

- Grooming** - Keep your hair and facial hair clean and well-groomed. Avoid heavy makeup and excessive jewelry.
- Posture** - Stand up straight and hold your head high. Avoid slouching or leaning back.
- Hands** - Keep your hands clean and well-groomed. Avoid nail polish and jewelry.
- Stockings** - Wear clean, dark-colored stockings. Avoid patterns and bright colors.
- Shoes** - Wear clean, dark-colored shoes. Avoid sandals, flip-flops, and sneakers.
- Clothing** - Wear clean, dark-colored clothing. Avoid patterns, bright colors, and excessive jewelry.
- Jewelry** - Keep jewelry simple and understated. Avoid large, flashy pieces.
- Manners** - Be polite and respectful. Avoid loud talking and excessive laughter.
- Bags** - Carry a professional-looking bag. Avoid backpacks and large, bulky bags.

### Interview Attire Don'ts

Interview attire is a reflection of you. The way you dress can make a difference in how you are perceived. Here are some tips to help you make a good impression.

- Grooming** - Avoid heavy makeup and excessive jewelry. Avoid messy hair and facial hair.
- Posture** - Avoid slouching or leaning back. Avoid holding your head low.
- Hands** - Avoid nail polish and jewelry. Avoid dirty or stained hands.
- Stockings** - Avoid patterns and bright colors. Avoid sheer or white stockings.
- Shoes** - Avoid sandals, flip-flops, and sneakers. Avoid worn-out or dirty shoes.
- Clothing** - Avoid patterns, bright colors, and excessive jewelry. Avoid wrinkled or stained clothing.
- Jewelry** - Avoid large, flashy pieces. Avoid multiple pieces of jewelry.
- Manners** - Avoid loud talking and excessive laughter. Avoid being disrespectful or rude.
- Bags** - Avoid backpacks and large, bulky bags. Avoid bags that are too casual or trendy.

# Misc do's and don'ts

- **The interview:** "Your packet got you the interview. Your job talk gets you the job." Practice your job talk; don't go over time. Try and dress for the job, be casual after you get the job.
- **Do not contact the search committee.** This is especially difficult after the interview. Resist temptation. Only contact them if you're being considered elsewhere.
- **Having "friends" in the department.** This is a delicate issue. While it may seem advantageous to have someone champion your application, this can also backfire if your insider is too pushy, or not that well respected by the department. Best to win the job on your own merits and avoid being seen as an 'insider'.
- **Final advice:** "Don't @\$% this up".

# THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE

