Tips for the Conference Interview

Before any interview:

1. Write down at least three goals you have as a teacher. Why are these goals important? What personal experiences in the classroom have shaped the goals you have?
2. Write down key points of your dissertation, upcoming book and/or article. Explain the methodology, the key figures who shape the research, and the importance of the project. What relevant personal experiences have influenced your research?
3. Write down three personal and relevant experiences regarding teaching and research you could share with interviewers.
4. Practice an “elevator speech” in which you describe the importance of your research and teaching. The elevator speech should last about one minute.
5. Practice a five-minute speech in which you describe the importance of your research and your goals as a researcher. Make sure you pay special attention to how you will discuss your dissertation and an upcoming book project or article.
6. Practice a five-minute speech in which you describe your goals as a teacher.
7. Do a teaching demonstration with friends.
8. Do a practice job talk in which you describe your research and your pedagogy. Request friends to ask questions or make comments.
9. Do a mock interview with faculty members or friends. Have one person act as department chair, another act as dean, another act as a faculty member, another act as a student, etc.
10. Have at least two interview outfits. Make sure you clean and iron them.
11. Remove any incriminating information posted on websites including, but not limited to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, blogs, etc.

Before the interview with a specific higher educational institution:

1. Research the department and institution thoroughly.
2. Imagine how you would fit in the department and the higher educational institution. What could you imagine doing within the department and institution? (Recruiting students, organizing conferences, teaching a particular course, etc.)
3. If you can find information about the faculty in the department, imagine how your research or teaching might relate to some of the faculty members.
4. Think about questions you would like to ask about teaching, research, students, faculty, programs, and departments within the institution. These questions can include the following:
   a. Tell me more about the students.
   b. What are some of the department’s success stories? What are some challenges facing the department? How do you address those challenges?
   c. How are teaching and research evaluated?
   d. How is tenure decided? What are the service expectations of junior faculty?
   e. For students: What made you decide to come? What are some things you’d like to change about the department? What are some courses you’d like to see?
Questions about Pedagogy You Might Be Asked:

1. How do get students excited to learn (fill in the blank with a boring course)?
2. How would you teach students who are first generation college students, religious students, etc.?
3. How would you teach an introductory course on (fill in the blank)? How would you teach a graduate course on (fill in the blank)?
4. What is the ideal course you would like to teach? Explain how you would teach it.
5. What critical or theoretical approaches to studying (fill in the blank) would you use to teach (fill in the blank)?
6. How would the reading and writing requirements for an introductory course for freshman or sophomores on (fill in the blank) be different from an advanced course on the aforementioned topic?
7. What are some courses our department doesn’t offer you think you’d want to teach?
8. How would you work with the majors in our department?

Questions about Research You Might Be Asked:

1. Why is your dissertation, article or book project important?
2. How do intertwine your research with your teaching?
3. Do you know of (fill in the blank with name of a theorist)? What theorists are you using? How are they relevant to your research?
4. What contribution does your dissertation, book, or article make to the field of study?
5. Why have you not published or why have you not published a lot? Or why did you publish in this (less respected) journal?
6. How does your research fit in with Dr. X from our department?
7. Why did you not consider using X theoretical perspective or X theorist in your research?
8. What are your research plans for the next decade?

Questions about the University or Department You Might Be Asked:

1. What does “service” mean to you?
2. Why do you want to work at our university or with our department?
3. We offer a certificate in (fill in the blank) or we have a center on (fill in the blank). How would you contribute to those programs?
4. Do you do interdisciplinary research and if so, what outside departments would you want to work with and why?
5. We don’t have X (specific equipment, computer program, extensive library collection on X, etc.). How will you be able to work around that?
6. What kind of service did you provide to the university or department where you received your doctorate or master’s degree?
7. What committees would you like to work with?
8. What are some general issues within higher education that interest you or that you would want to address?