Operations Job Market and Beyond

Renyu (Philip) Zhang
New York University Shanghai
December 18, 2017
About Me

About Me

### About Me

- On the operations academic job market in AY2015-2016.
About Me

- On the operations academic job market in AY2015-2016.

- Assistant Professor of Operations Management, New York University Shanghai (Sept. 2016-).
About Me

- On the operations academic job market in AY2015-2016.

- Assistant Professor of Operations Management, New York University Shanghai (Sept. 2016-).

- Research and Teaching: Operations Management, Business Analytics.
Outline

- Big picture of operations academia
- Why pursue a faculty position in operations (or not)?
- Operations job market advices
Operations Academia
Operations: 

- An area of business that studies the design, procurement, production, and delivery of (physical) goods and services.
- The science of making intelligent decisions.
Operations Academia in a Nutshell

- **Operations:**
  - An area of business that studies the design, procurement, production, and delivery of (physical) goods and services.
  - The science of making intelligent decisions.

- **Academia:** Scholars who run the **business of knowledge**.
  - Creating knowledge: Research.
  - Communicating knowledge: Teaching.
What is Academic Research?

- Process of creating **new knowledge**.
  - Generalizable (different from consulting).
  - Rigorous (scientifically sound).
  - Innovative (not immediate from existing knowledge).
What is Academic Research?

Process of creating new knowledge.
- Generalizable (different from consulting).
- Rigorous (scientifically sound).
- Innovative (not immediate from existing knowledge).

Products: Peer-reviewed publications.
The quality of research is judged by experts of the related field(s).
Peer-Review: The Ecosystem of Academia

- The quality of research is judged by experts of the related field(s).
  
  - Promotion and tenure: The quality of a scholar is judged by experts of the related field(s).
Peer-Review: The Ecosystem of Academia

- The quality of research is judged by experts of the related field(s).
  - Promotion and tenure: The quality of a scholar is judged by experts of the related field(s).

- Issues:
  - Subjectivity: What if the experts are wrong?
  - Variability: Too few experts are qualified to judge a specific research work/scholar.
Peer-Review: The Ecosystem of Academia

- The quality of research is judged by experts of the related field(s).
  - Promotion and tenure: The quality of a scholar is judged by experts of the related field(s).

- Issues:
  - Subjectivity: What if the experts are wrong?
  - Variability: Too few experts are qualified to judge a specific research work/scholar.

- Implication:
  - Academia: Business of reputation.
Assistant Professor Job Duties

- Peer-reviewed publications.
  - Journals on the UTD-24 list.
Assistant Professor Job Duties

- Peer-reviewed publications.
  - Journals on the UTD-24 list.

- Teaching for educational programs.
  - Undergraduate, MBA, MS, PMBA, EMBA, PhD, etc.
Assistant Professor Job Duties

- Peer-reviewed publications.
  - Journals on the UTD-24 list.

- Teaching for educational programs.
  - Undergraduate, MBA, MS, PMBA, EMBA, PhD, etc.

- Services
  - Internal: faculty committees, program directors, etc.
  - External: paper/grant reviewers, journal editors, academic community officers.
Assistant Professor: Beyond Job Duties

- Tremendous freedom and flexibility.
  - Only teaching is required.
Assistant Professor: Beyond Job Duties

- Tremendous freedom and flexibility.
  - Only teaching is required.

- Tremendously high workload.
  - Research, teaching, and service duties from multiple sources.
Assistant Professor: Beyond Job Duties

- Tremendous freedom and flexibility.
  - Only teaching is required.

- Tremendously high workload.
  - Research, teaching, and service duties from multiple sources.

- Tenure.
  - Convince the experts of your field that they can write reference letters indicating you did the best research.
  - Be liked by your tenured colleagues that they interpret the letters positively.
Why Should You Become an Operations Professor

- Full flexibility and freedom to pursue your intellectual vision.
- Entrepreneurial job style with good job security.
- Getting external credit via publications.
- Having long-term impact on the body of human knowledge.
Why Should You Become an Operations Professor

- Full flexibility and freedom to pursue your intellectual vision.
- Entrepreneurial job style with good job security.
- Getting external credit via publications.
- Having long-term impact on the body of human knowledge.
- Big data trend.
  - Teaching needs and openings.
- Little funding pressure.
- Decent pay.
Why Should You NOT Become an Operations Professor

- Very demanding in terms of time, energy, and mentality.
  - Time management of tasks from multiple sources.
  - Most of your daily jobs are routine.
Why Should You NOT Become an Operations Professor

- Very demanding in terms of time, energy, and mentality.
  - Time management of tasks from multiple sources.
  - Most of your daily jobs are routine.

- Research is of great uncertainty.
  - Feedback clock is really slow.
Why Should You NOT Become an Operations Professor

- Very demanding in terms of time, energy, and mentality.
  - Time management of tasks from multiple sources.
  - Most of your daily jobs are routine.

- Research is of great uncertainty.
  - Feedback clock is really slow.

- Little immediate impact on practice.
Why Should You NOT Become an Operations Professor

- Very demanding in terms of time, energy, and mentality.
  - Time management of tasks from multiple sources.
  - Most of your daily jobs are routine.

- Research is of great uncertainty.
  - Feedback clock is really slow.

- Little immediate impact on practice.

- Poor pay by hour.
Operations Job Market
What Are Schools Looking For?

- Addressing certain (research and/or teaching) needs.
What Are Schools Looking For?

- Addressing certain (research and/or teaching) needs.
- Good colleagues.
What Are Schools Looking For?

- Addressing certain (research and/or teaching) needs.
- Good colleagues.
- Good researchers.
What Are Schools Looking For?

- Addressing certain (research and/or teaching) needs.
- Good colleagues.
- Good researchers.
- Good teachers.
Your Goal as a Job Market Candidate

Have yourself visible, and convince the recruiting committee that

- You can well address their needs;
- You will be a good colleague;
- You can do great research;
- You can do well in classrooms.
Characteristics of Academic Job Market

- Overwhelming uncertainties.
  - Over 100 candidates compete for one tenure-track position.
Characteristics of Academic Job Market

- Overwhelming uncertainties.
  - Over 100 candidates compete for one tenure-track position.

- Bottleneck effect.
  - A candidate is limited by his/her weakest attribute.
Characteristics of Academic Job Market

- **Overwhelming uncertainties.**
  - Over 100 candidates compete for one tenure-track position.

- **Bottleneck effect.**
  - A candidate is limited by his/her weakest attribute.

- **Winner-take-all.**
  - Only the top candidate(s) can get the offer for each position.
General Advices for the Pre-Job-Market Stage

- Be an early-bird.
  - A strong CV takes years to build.
General Advices for the Pre-Job-Market Stage

- Be an early-bird.
  - A strong CV takes years to build.

- Hone your communication skills.
  - You need to convince the schools to hire you.
General Advices for the Job Market Stage

- Devote all yourself.
General Advices for the Job Market Stage

- Devote all yourself.

- Apply broadly.
  - You never know what will happen.
General Advices for the Job Market Stage

- Devote all yourself.

- Apply broadly.
  - You never know what will happen.

- Rehearse your talks.
  - Practice makes perfect.
Journey towards Faculty Job

- Application.
- Conference/skype interviews.
- Campus interviews (fly-outs).
- Decisions.
Journey towards Faculty Job

- Application.
  - Submit your application before conference interview deadlines.
Journey towards Faculty Job

- Application.
  - Submit your application before conference interview deadlines.

- Conference interviews.
  - Have your conference talk and interview pitch well rehearsed.
  - Engage the recruiters with your research, your teaching, and, most importantly, yourself.
Fly-Outs

- Contact/Ask your advisor(s) to contact professors wherever possible.
Fly-Outs

- Contact/Ask your advisor(s) to contact professors wherever possible.

- Job talk
  - You have done solid research.
  - You will do exciting future research.
  - You are a charismatic scholar and teacher.
Fly-Outs

- Contact/Ask your advisor(s) to contact professors wherever possible.

- Job talk
  - You have done solid research.
  - You will do exciting future research.
  - You are a charismatic scholar and teacher.
  - Tell an interesting story to your friends.
  - Handle questions and interruptions gracefully.
  - Keep close track of time.
Fly-Outs

- Contact/Ask your advisor(s) to contact professors wherever possible.

- Job talk
  - You have done solid research.
  - You will do exciting future research.
  - You are a charismatic scholar and teacher.
  - Tell an interesting story to your friends.
  - Handle questions and interruptions gracefully.
  - Keep close track of time.

- One-on-one meetings.
Decisions

- Location: The only thing a school cannot change.
Decisions

- Location: The only thing a school cannot change.
- Colleagues.
Decisions

- Location: The only thing a school cannot change.
- Colleagues.
- Tenure cases.
Decisions

- Location: The only thing a school cannot change.
- Colleagues.
- Tenure cases.
Decisions

- Location: The only thing a school cannot change.
- Colleagues.
- Tenure cases.
- Research support.
  - Research environment, research fund, teaching load, service load.
Summary

- Devote all yourself.
- Start early.
- Apply broadly.
- Contact professors wherever possible.
- Carefully choose where to start your career.
Thank you!

renyu.zhang@nyu.edu