

**20 March 2014 Webinar**  
**How to Negotiate a Tenure Track Job Offer**  
**Dr. Karen Kelsky – The professor Is In**  
([www.theprofessorisin.com](http://www.theprofessorisin.com))

Karen Kelsky is a former tenured professor in Anthropology and East Asian Studies at University of Oregon and University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. She was department head for a 5-year term at UIUC, and has been an academic career consultant since 2011. She has worked with ~2000 clients.

Outline:

Who is Dr. Karen and why this webinar?  
The big picture of the tenure track job offer  
Why academics struggle to negotiate  
Why you must negotiate  
The rescinded offer  
Understanding context, avoiding disaster  
Types of institutions and what to expect  
Email or phone?  
Leverage, timing, pace  
The basic elements of a tenure track job offer  
Spousal and family issues  
Common mistakes made by green negotiators  
Methods for successful negotiations  
Examples and sample scripts  
The case of “W”  
Issues for women, people of color, first generation candidates, etc.  
Info on working with Dr. Karen

Webinar discussed the “W” case that went viral over the internet. Upon receiving the applicant’s demands, the small liberal arts college rescinded an offer made to the applicant who then shared her experience in a blog.

Issue revolved around RI (top research institute\*) or Ivy League negotiation vs a small teaching college. “W”’s expectations and requests were not unreasonable for an Ivy League or R1 institution, but were unreasonable for a small college.

“W” case: very rare! Do not panic! You can still negotiate! You just need to know how.

**Before you negotiate:**

- 1- Evaluate the status and rank of the campus and context of the offer, ask around, get help to be sure, ask recent hires what did they get.
- 2- Know the type/rank/expectations/financial circumstances of the institution.
- 3- Public university: check salaries on university website.

**During negotiation:**

- 1- Need time to consider the offer and respond
- 2- Get help from a trusted advisor
- 3- Negotiate via e-mail rather than by phone or face-to-face
- 4- Know when to stop
- 5- Be very careful with the TONE and wording; be COLLEGIAL
- 6- FIRM: No need to be apologetic, make excuses, elaborate justifications, rhetorical; retain a professional calm
- 7- COURTEOUS: these are your future colleagues
- 8- LTET: Be enthusiastic about the job, let them know you are excited and want it, don't seem harsh and distant or judgmental. Continue to be, during negotiations, the person they want as a colleague

GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING!

Leverage: if you have a competing offer, let them know, do not keep it secret, but do not reveal the name of the school right away.

Timing extension: ask for it, but have no expectations.

I recommend: get offer, come back with asks, hear response, make responsive asks (ie, "since you can't do xxx, I'd like to request yyyy"), hear response, and accept.

Rank priorities, do not ask for crazy things everywhere, balance the requests.

Recurring vs. non-recurring requests: non-recurring is easier for them, recurring is better for you.

**What you can negotiate:**

## Basic Elements of Offers

- Salary
- Start up funds/Lab start-up
- Computer and software
- Teaching load
- Teaching releases
- Guaranteed junior sabbatical/leave
- Research funding
- Conference travel
- Summer salary
- Delayed start
- Early start/pre-contract coverage
- Maternity leave
- Moving expenses
- Paid visit to look at houses
- Spousal position
- Family/Housing benefits
- Tenure expectations (special case only, not typically included)

## Salary:

1. Seek a 10% raise (if more, you need a good reason!), BUT it has to be less than the salaries of their tenured professors. (“W” asked for a 20% raise.)
2. Nine-month salary versus 12-month = the same but divided. 12 months is easier to budget.
3. Summer salary: most of the time it is an EXTRA, you don’t have to teach extra for it. Good to negotiate for the first 2 years.
4. No logic with national salary scale! Do not dictate to a department the “salary norm” for your position, which was the error “W” committed. Salaries are local to the institution. If current professors are underpaid, you WILL be underpaid too. Salary compression is a real thing.

## Startup Funds:

Depends on rank/type of institution. At least \$50,000 for science in general.

LTET: At a big university, theorists may expect \$300 - \$500K and experimentalists starting labs \$500 - 1,000K; at small colleges, divide by 10.

These funds cover computer/printer/software (check standards), lab equipment, research assistant, travel, books, recurring research funding, desk/chair/ergonomic (sometimes other pools of money for this) publication fees..., conference travel, etc. TIME RANGE for use of startup: best = no limit. You can request matching fund for grants that will be raised. Ask for what you really need.

## Teaching:

In writing! Establish regular load, + number of new preps per year.

Teaching release: x amount of courses released for x amount of years. Not happening in colleges. At elite schools, expect to be released from at least one course your first year, and ideally more.

Guaranteed junior sabbatical to complete tenure case (which “W” requested). **Not happening in small colleges.** At Ivy leagues or R1s, assistant professors will be given a guaranteed leave to assist them in research/writing done for tenure.

LTET: Can often get teaching release for first semester, to let you set up lab. Smart to use that time to write the course(s) you will teach the second semester.

## Other:

1. Delayed start: 1 semester, or 1 year. **LTET: and in some cases a two-year postdoc can be completed before starting a professorship.** Cannot be accommodated in a teaching college.
2. Early start/pre-contract coverage, especially for insurance. Not standard, but you can work with them on this issue.
3. Maternity leave: ask only if already pregnant, not if hypothetical. In this case, ask for policy, if unofficial make it in writing.
4. Moving expenses: either fixed amount, \$3000, or 2% of salary for instance, or x% of receipts. Get estimates before. Call moving companies.
5. Travel expenses to look at houses.
6. Domestic partner benefits in states where these are not guaranteed? Are they taxed?
7. Mortgage assistance
8. University childcare
9. Ask what are the articles that count from tenure: since first day? Only work done in-house?
10. Spousal position. Very complicated and delicate. Raise the spouse issue ONLY after firm written offer has been extended. Spouse must be hire-ready. Know a range of possible departments/jobs. Do the thinking for them. Let them know this is important for you.

Decision timeline: 2 weeks?

Things NOT TO DO (common pitfalls):

- Questions instead of statements
- Vagueness instead of specificity. Everything precise, with figures, pro-active, specific
- Control rhetoric, emotions, vagueness.

Issues for women: fear and paranoia instincts are wrong, being too diffident or too aggressive. Stay calm. Expect to negotiate.

A question arose from a participant regarding visas. One does NOT have to negotiate the visa issue. If you are offered a position, it means they will handle your visa requirements.

\*Category designated by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.  
“The Research I & II and Doctoral I & II categories of doctorate-granting institutions last appeared in the 1994 edition. The use of Roman numerals was discontinued to avoid the inference that the categories signify quality differences. The traditional classification framework was updated in 2005 and since identified as the [Basic Classification](#). Many of the category definitions and labels changed with this revision.”

Thanks go to Marion Le Voyer for taking notes during the webinar.