Negotiation Advice from Successful UA Faculty

Do your research before you enter into the negotiation process. Find out what people in your role earn at the University of Arizona. Search peer university websites and turn to sources such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) for data about national trends. Consider the value of UA benefits (e.g., retirement contributions, medical insurance premiums, wellness programs) as part of your total package. Compare the cost of housing, childcare, and parking and commuting distances when weighing your options. Find out what kinds of start-up packages others receive.

Don’t be afraid to ask for what you think you’ll need to be successful. The worst thing that can happen is that you’ll be offered less than you want. Departments don’t rescind offers just because a candidate asks for more than is possible to deliver.

Don’t consider an offer a final offer. Sometimes there is room for negotiation and sometimes there is not. If the offer is not what you hoped for, share your concerns and ask for reconsideration. Explaining your rationale for doing so can be helpful: “I’d like to come here because of the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, but University B offered me a salary that is $4000 higher than what you offered. Given that the cost of housing is much less expensive there and parking permits are only $175 a year, I have to weigh my options. If you could increase the salary by $7000, I would be able to accept your offer.”

Consider substitutions of value. Salary not as high as you’d like? Ask for a few years of travel dollars to support your attendance at professional conferences. Is your department unable to provide a vital instrument necessary for your research? Request time to use shared equipment. Concerned about your ability to prepare courses in time for the fall? Ask about the possibility of teaching less in the fall and more in the spring in order to have adequate preparation time.

Consider your department head’s position in the negotiation process. He or she is likely trying to offer you the very best package so that you will join the department. Consider the negotiation process a partnership and not an adversarial experience. Be honest about your needs and concerns.

Don’t assume credit toward tenure is a gift. Candidates with prior experience often ask to be given credit toward tenure and promotion. This is often a bad strategy. You may always submit your promotion packet before your sixth year, so it’s generally best to buy yourself adequate time to establish yourself and start the tenure clock over.