Interviewing 101 Presentation Outline

1. Before the Interview
    a. Familiarize yourself with your agenda
    b. Learn about the individuals with whom you will be meeting
        i. Know research/expertise
        ii. Recent papers
        iii. Expect them to ask questions relevant to their area
        iv. Are their opportunities for collaboration you could discuss?
    c. Educate yourself about the 'target' (crop, university, company, pathogen, etc.)
        i. Research economic aspects if applicable
        ii. Know details as relevant to this company/location/etc. as possible
        iii. Don't assume to know something
    d. Ask your contact clarifying questions for anything unclear in your interview schedule
        i. Dress expectations
        ii. Presentation break-down
    e. Talk to experts in your network
        i. What were their experiences in a similar interview?
        ii. What advice can they offer
    f. Practice
        i. Practice interview questions, especially if expecting behavioral questions
        ii. PRACTICE YOUR SEMINAR…IN FRONT OF PEOPLE
            1. Or at least have someone else review your slides
2. The day of the interview
    a. Sleep—don't stay up all night making last minute changes
    b. Hydrate, eat→ it's like an athletic event, you need to feel good.
    c. Dress to impress
        i. But be practical—a trip to the field might alter your clothing and footwear choices.
    d. Bring your materials (never assume they will have something you need)
        i. Itinerary, extra copy(ies) of CV, presentation flash drive (and back ups), pointer, adapter, completed job application (if applicable)
    e. Remember that you are interviewing all day, with everyone you meet
        i. Don't be too casual with one group or another
        ii. Be enthusiastic, respectful, and professional throughout the day
    f. Interviewers know you're human—don't be afraid to ask for water or a bathroom break if you need it.
    g. Like a prelim, it's ok to admit if you don't know something but be ready to show interest and discuss where you would look for answers
    h. Be confident and be yourself
        i. It's hard to keep up and act and interviewers will usually see through it
3. After the interview
    a. Follow up!
        i. Send a personalized thank you ASAP!
            1. You may need to send several
            2. E-mail versus hand-written?
        ii. Ask any remaining questions you may have

iii. It is okay to ask for a timeline
1. Then follow-up again when the next milestone passes

b. Remain courteous throughout all interactions—you never know when/how you might run in to these people again
i. And, if you've left a good impression, you might hear from them again in the future!

4. The interview seminar(s)
a. Almost every interview will require a seminar
i. Most for industry and USDA(?) are research-based
ii. Academic interviews often require a research-based seminar as well as a teaching or extension seminar, depending on the appointment
iii. Though it is not always explicitly stated, include a few slides discussing your vision for the role and what you bring to the table
iv. Generally, don't use references that may alienate some of your audience
1. Example) Pop-culture

b. Research seminars
i. Keep your seminar focused
1. You only have ~45 minutes in most cases, choose a specific area of your research to highlight
ii. Choose aspects of your research or present your research in a way that is relevant to the job
1. Example) Maybe your interview is for a turf pathology position and your PhD was on potato diseases—but if both are relevant to IPM, you can emphasize that aspect
iii. Anticipate and prepare for questions
1. Because this is a different setting and people have different expertise, questions may differ from those you have had at your own institution

c. Extension seminars
i. Be focused and relevant
1. Consider local diseases, growing practices, statistics, economic data, etc.
ii. Know and present to your audience
1. Don't be overly scholarly and don't be condescending
2. DON'T INSULT YOUR AUDIENCE
iii. Include a plan for building your program and how you plan to interact with your clientele
iv. In most cases, change your units from metric to standard if adapting from a

d. Teaching seminars
i. Stick to material you are comfortable with
ii. Be interactive
1. Activities are great, but keep it simple
iii. Keep it relevant and fairly introductory
1. Jumping into something specialized that most people can't connect to will make it much more challenging for yourself

5. Types of questions to expect
i. General
1. Credential verification
a. How long were you here, why did you leave, etc.
2. Experience verification

            a. What did you learn, what were your responsibilities, etc.
        3. Opinion questions
            a. Strengths and weaknesses, three words that describe you, etc.
    ii. Behavioral interview questions
        1. Measure past behaviors as predictive of future results
        2. Require you to describe a specific situation/problem/task
        3. Answered using the S/TAR or CAR models:
            a. **S**(ituation)/**T**(ask)/**C**(hallenge)—Simply describe the situation, task, or challenge that you faced.
            b. **A**(ction)—Describe the action that was taken to overcome the situation/task/challenge and achieve results.
            c. **R**(esults)—What results did you achieve. This should be as specific as possible and numbers are highly desirable! Positive and quantifiable are keys. You can also mention lessons learned.
    iii. Competency questions
        1. Similar to behavioral questions but generally associated with specific core competencies, such as leadership or problem solving
    iv. Problem solving questions
        1. Designed to examine your critical thinking skills
        2. How would you design an experiment to…?
    v. Seemingly random questions that actually have a point…
        1. Intended to throw you for a loop, get beyond any prepared answers, and see how you think on your feet
        2. What color best describes, your favorite 'something' and why, batman or superman, etc.
6. Things you should not be asked about
    a. Race, religion, sexuality, political affiliation, disabilities, etc.
    b. Age, marital status, children or plans to have children
    c. Whether or not you drink or smoke
    d. Questions about eligibility for employment must be asked consistently across all applicants and in specific, HR-approved language
    e. Once you bring up a topic (i.e.—a spouse or children) you can be asked about it.