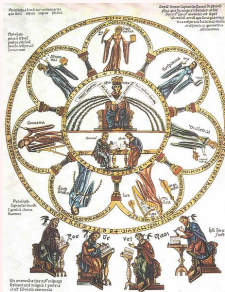


# *Living the Good Life at a Liberal Arts College*



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PIMS-Math Job Forum for  
Postdoctoral Fellows and  
Graduate Students

# Prelude

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Some day, a long time ago ...



I was an enthusiastic graduate student in mathematics.

Today, I am older but no wiser ...



and yet the trip so far has been amazingly delicious!

## Some things you should know...

### **WORKLOAD**

- Teaching load is typically 2-3 courses per term.
- Classes are (mostly) small (10-30) ...
- ... but your students will come to office hours!

## **Some things you should know...**

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### **COLLEAGUES**

- Most will not be in your research area.
- They are quite interesting people ...
- ... and you can eventually find / develop common (research and non-research) interests.

## **Some things you should know...**

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### **RESEARCH**

- At some places the appropriate word is “scholarship”.
- Some places have incentives for productive faculty ...
- ... but not all have sponsored research offices.

## Applying: your cover letter

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- Make it clear that you know something about liberal arts colleges.
- Highlight any teaching awards or unusual experiences.
- Mention any faculty whose research might align with yours.
- Address all requests/questions posed in the job announcement.

## Applying: your teaching statement

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- This is an important part of your application.
- We are not looking for people who know everything about teaching. We are looking for reflective teachers who are working to improve themselves.
- If you have done anything interesting in the classroom, tell us. If there are some new teaching ideas you would love to try, tell us.
- It helps to describe a teaching challenge that you overcame.



## Applying: your research statement

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- Give a compelling introduction readable by non-experts. (This can get you a job!)
- Since you might be isolated in your field, show that you have a plan for sustainable future work.
- Make sure you have thought about whether and if so how you can engage undergraduates in your work.

## Applying: your recommendation letters

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- Make sure you have at least one person write about your teaching (and hopefully not just saying that you give good math talks).
- It helps to have multiple people mention your teaching if possible.
- We do want to know about your research!

# The Interview

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- Make your job talk accessible!
  - All of it (if possible).
  - To undergraduates (and not just the seniors).
  - It need not contain all of your cutting-edge research.
- You might teach a class. It is important. Including something interactive or collaborative is a plus.
- Be ready to explain your research to people (including the president) outside of the math dept.
- Ask us questions!

## For more on liberal arts colleges ...

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### COMMUNICATION

## Liberal Arts Colleges: An Overlooked Opportunity?

*David Damiano, Stephan Ramon Garcia, and Michele Intermont*

*Communicated by Steven J. Miller*

#### Introduction

Liberal arts colleges have been part of the American academic landscape almost since the beginning of higher education in the United States; the oldest were founded in the late 1700s. They are largely an American invention, although there are fledgling liberal arts colleges being

#### Teaching at a Liberal Arts College

At a liberal arts college, teaching is as important as, if not more important than, research. This is reflected in the daily experience, which revolves around interactions with undergraduates. The time spent in the classroom is interspersed with office hours (Figure 1), although

David Damiano, Stephan Ramon Garcia, and Michele Intermont, "*Liberal Arts Colleges: An Overlooked Opportunity?*", *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, Volume **63** Number 5 (May 2016), page 565–570.

Good Luck!

