Academic Job Interview Questions (Screening and On-Campus)

You'll probably be asked or prompted any/all of the following:

1. Why you want to work at [x] university?
2. What do you think you'll do here/What are your future plans... at [x] university?
3. What is your one-year, five-year, and 10-year career plans at [x] university?
4. What do you hope to accomplish during your first year here?
5. Describe your research.
6. What are the contributions of your work?
7. What do you want your research group/lab to be like?
8. What is your "home" conference?
9. What do you think is the future of your research/field?
10. Who would you collaborate with within the department? What other departments could you work with?
11. What is your experience with funding and/or who funds the type of research you do/where will you pursue funding?
12. What resources do you need for your lab?
13. Who will you collaborate with externally?
14. Describe your teaching experience.
15. Give a specific example of a teaching experience that went wrong and what did you learn from that? (*For institutions/positions that emphasize teaching*)
16. What is the most recent challenge/milestone in your teaching that you solved? Explain the details and your approach to solve it? (*For institutions/positions that emphasize teaching*)
17. What courses do you want to teach? (*Do some homework so that your answer corresponds with their curriculum.*)
18. How would you go about recruiting new students into the program?
19. What other schools are you interviewing with? (*I was totally up front about this in every conversation I had—whether I was prompted or not*)
20. What is your timeline [for accepting an offer] and salary requirement?
21. One other good point is also to prepare 30-sec, 1-minute, 2-minute, 5-minute elevator pitch about your research. This is important. You also need to tweak your pitch based on your audience.

When you have the chance to do so, you should ask…

…students:
- Why did you come to [x] university?
- What do like about the courses?
- What would you change?
- Where would you like to end up working after graduation?

- What do you look for in a mentor/advisor?
- Describe an ideal classroom experience?
- What resources do you need that you don't have?
- Do you have health insurance? Is your stipend a living wage?
- What kind of research projects are you interested in working on?
- Tell me about one of your biggest accomplishments in the program.
- Outside of providing feedback on specific courses, what sort of voice do you have in shaping the development of the program?
- What kind of students would you like to see coming into the program?

… junior faculty:
- What does mentoring of junior faculty look like?
- What are the departmental meetings like?
- Do you feel like you have a voice in the vision for the department?
- What do you get to do to shape the organizational culture?
- What kind of culture do you want to create?
- What are the students like?
- What is your teaching load like?
- What's the short and long-term vision for the school?
- What is service like?
- What is the tenure /+ promotion process like?
- Is there a lot of collaboration both within the department and across departments?

…mid-career and senior faculty and staff:
- As a leader in the department and the university, what are you doing to help shape the culture? What kind of culture do *you* want to create here?
- Can you tell me a bit about the department's strategic vision/mission? (Try to read it ahead of time if possible and ask about specific details)
- What kind of workspace would I be provided? Is it shared?
- What would you say is the success rate for long-term careers here?
- What is the local industry scene like?
- What are the mentoring opportunities for junior faculty?
- Which classes need instructors?
- What makes for a great junior faculty member?
- Where do the undergrads usually go after graduating? The grad students?
- Is there a lot of collaboration within the department and with others?

Sharing these questions is my attempt to pay it forward. I based this document off of a question list shared here by Austin Henley. I adopted almost all of it and modified it where necessary to fit my needs.