

From: "Nathan Myhrvold" <[REDACTED]>
To: "Pritzker, Nick" <[REDACTED]>, "John Brockman" <[REDACTED]>, "Elon Musk" <[REDACTED]>, "W. Daniel Hillis" <danny@appliedminds.net>, "Jeffrey Epstein" <[REDACTED]>, "Larry Page" <[REDACTED]>, "Salar Kamangar" <[REDACTED]>, "Charles Simonyi" <[REDACTED]>, "Jeff Skoll" <[REDACTED]>, "Pierre Omidyar" <pierre@omidyar.org>, "Sean Parker" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: RE: Lisa Randall

Date: Wed, 26 Aug 2009 17:34:52 +0000

Feel free to pass this along to Lisa, and I would be happy to discuss with her in person in addition.

There are several issues raised in your email.

First there is Harvard vs Caltech or NYU. I think that the key issue there is where she will be comfortable. I agree with your assessment about reputation value of Harvard/Caltech/NYU, but if she has a second book out and you as her agent I don't think that she has to worry about that quite so much. Her brand value is mostly personal at this point - she isn't just some random professor at Harvard, she is Lisa Randall.

Within physics community nobody cares about what place she is - her papers are what matters.

An academic department doesn't actually do much for a theoretical physicist. You get an office and some teaching and committee duties, but that is about it. She could do her work anywhere, especially now that she has an established reputation.

If they are annoying her, then it should be taken seriously because it is not going to change anytime soon. Department chairmen can hold the post forever, and the rest of the faculty will be there even longer. So if she is not getting along with the department now there is no reason to think it will change.

If she wants to build an empire, then NYU's deal which includes hiring other faculty would be a possibility. I don't know whether Lisa wants to do that or not, but my guess is not. So I don't see any reason to go for NYU, unless she wants a mini-empire, or unless she really and truly wants to live in NYC.

One option that is not mentioned is whether there are other institutions that ought to be considered. Lisa is very high profile, and I suspect that there are departments that would love to have her. If they know she is "in play" then they might come up with offers. That is how University of Texas at Austin got Weinberg and some others - they went on a mission to increase their profile by hiring a big shot. NYU is clearly trying to do that - hire a big shot name brand physicist as part of a move to upgrade their department.

There might be some other department out there that doesn't know she might be available. However, just like putting a company "in play" can backfire with a suitor you don't want, or could screw up the deal with ones you do want, there are some possible issues with letting everybody know. Perhaps the physics departments do already know she might be available.

Second there is the salary issue. Without knowing more about the dynamics of the department, it is hard to say for sure. It probably does not hurt to ask for more money to a point, but past that point it could raise rancor in the department and ultimately be self defeating. Caltech is a much smaller institution than its reputation would suggest, and it is possible that they don't have any more resources.

So those are some general considerations, but here is the real advice.

She should accept Caltech. Depending on the details of the situation, maybe she could ask gently for a bit more money. However I think that is a small detail - she should basically

take the offer. Here is why:

- The reputation is perfectly OK. She has enough brand that it doesn't matter, but there is nothing wrong with Caltech. It is not a reputational embarrassment to go there. Yes, it is not as famous with the general public as Harvard, but that is small change compared to being unhappy at Harvard.

- She likes the place - both the department and LA. That matters a lot. One can strategize all day long about how to make Harvard pay more to keep her, or get NYU to step up... but if she really likes Caltech then that matters a lot. Asking a bunch of big-shot advisors like us to recommend a strategy is all well and good, but she has to live this out day by day for many years. She should go to the place that makes her happy.

- It may be less money but with less teaching load she can make more money in other ways. She can write books more often (you'll like that part John), she can give paid speaking engagements, she potentially could consult for companies... I don't know the key numerical details of course, and perhaps the difference in salary is huge. However I suspect that it is not. Lisa has sufficient personal brand that I think she can very likely earn the difference if making some more money is really important. Indeed, less teaching time may well make the Caltech offer higher if you factor this sort of thing in...

- However if making money is really important, then why be an academic in the first place? She chose an academic life and has been successful. She should go to the place that will make her happy.

Nathan

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-----Original Message-----

From: Pritzker, Nick [mailto:]

Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2009 9:34 AM

To: John Brockman; Elon Musk; W. Daniel Hillis; Jeffrey Epstein; Larry Page; Salar Kamangar; Nathan Myhrvold; Charles Simonyi; Jeff Skoll; Pierre Omidyar; Sean Parker

Subject: RE: Lisa Randall

John: with a board of advisors of this caliber, Lisa could be in REAL trouble!!

I suspect the consensus would be for Cal Tech, because it's closer to where most of us live. not sure about the negotiating/institutional dynamics though. I will give Lisa a call to discuss in any event.

sure she appreciates your efforts to help. n

-----Original Message-----

From: John Brockman [mailto:]

Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2009 11:25 AM

To: Pritzker, Nick; Elon Musk; W. Daniel Hillis; Jeffrey Epstein; Larry Page; Salar Kamangar; Nathan Myhrvold; Charles Simonyi; Jeff Skoll; Pierre Omidyar; Sean Parker

Subject: Lisa Randall

Eastover Farm

203-266-5930

Nick, Elon, Danny, JE, Larry, Salar, Nathan, Charles, Jeff, Pierre, Sean,

Lisa Randall needs advice re a possible move from the Harvard Physics Department to either Caltech or NYU, both of which have extended job offers. She's unhappy at Harvard, where the department seems to be intent on pulling the rug out from under her at every opportunity, and she wants a change. I am writing to all of you because I am out of my depth in advising her on her choices between universities and physics departments, compensation packages, etc. In this regard, it occurred to me that any of you might have good advice and/or connections and

that Lisa might benefit by talking to you directly.

Some background:

I believe NYU has already matched her Harvard salary and just this week, a donor put up \$5 million to build up the physics department around her if she comes (i.e. adding two more senior faculty, support services, etc.).

She prefers Caltech, both for the department and the ambience of LA. Their offer involves much less teaching but also less money. I have advised her not to take a penny less than she is making now. If there are resources available to allow Caltech to match her deal with NYU, that would require someone who knows the department to check it out (and that's not me).

As Lisa's literary agent, as far as getting the attention of the media and readers in general, Harvard is the gold standard, and Caltech is high-value. But NYU is not even on the cultural map. (I have exactly one client there and don't know of anyone to chase). In any event, Lisa's next book is sold and this shouldn't be a consideration in her decision. And in general, it hasn't hurt Steve Weinberg and Shelly Glashow to have left Harvard.

I know: Lisa is not easy. Some people are that way. But I say she's worth it. And, in terms of science, we all need to do what we can to give women a place at the table. It's not easy being a woman - perhaps the top woman - in theoretical physics, and nobody expects her male counterparts to be regular guys (nor are they). As I have said many times with regard to myself and the people I like to talk to: "Nice isn't enough". (And that includes all of you!).

Contact info:

Lisa Randall

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Best to all,

JB

[REDACTED] mobile

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