Strategies to Find and Negotiate Your First or Next Academic Job

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Disclosures

- I serve as a consultant for Johnson and Johnson Institute on their Global Education Council.

- I do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in my presentation.
Guiding Principles

• Understand yourself
  – Know what you want professionally and personally
  – Take time to reflect on what makes you happy
  – Be honest about the value you add
  – Make sure your negotiations reflect your values

• Understand the job
  – Know what they want you to do
  – Understand how you will be paid
  – Make sure there is consistency in expectations, compensation, and benchmarks
Introduction
The grass is always greener....
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• “One should consider an academic move only for an improvement in anticipated opportunity and environment of ≥ 50%.”

• Anticipate 1 year of lost productivity
  – Recruitment and negotiating
  – Decision-making and angst
  – Time off (make sure you take it!)
  – Ramp-up phase both clinically and academically
Can you stay?

- Can you reach your goals at your current institution?
- What changes can you make to accommodate?
- Search for new allies, collaborators, ideas, leadership opportunities
- Have clear goals, reasonable ideas about how to get there before talking to your chair.
- Bring solutions to the table
- Don’t try to bluff to get a retention
Why are you looking: Push v Pull?

- Are you being recruited to another institution?
- Are you applying for another job?
General Recruitment

• Visit 1: They are evaluating you! So DO NOT:
  – Ask about salary on the first visit
  – “You asked me to look. I’m happy where I am.”

You have to get asked back to have a visit 2.

• Visit 2: your turn to look them over.

• If needed, ask for more visits to clarify issues.
Surgeons are NOT Trained to Negotiate

- We either under- or over-value ourselves
- Do your homework! Know the benchmarks, market, and local environment. Be able to defend your “ask”.
- Be sure to UNDERSTAND what you are offered.
- Do NOT ASSUME anything in a negotiation.
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Understand Yourself
Professionally

- High profile, pedigree - the “H” tax
- Specific clinical mentoring
- Specific collaborator(s)
- Upward mobility (rate of ascent)
- Big fish in a little pond v little fish in a big pond
- Be clear about your area of contribution - Have a “major” and a “minor”
- Articulate a clear plan
Personally

• Do you want a major city
• House with a yard
• Geographic variation in salary
• Good schools...or low taxes
• Easy commute facilitates more family time
• Near extended family
Negotiations Must Reflect Values

• There is likely a set amount for the recruitment

• Appreciate that your compensation will go up over time.

• However, you will rarely have more than one opportunity to establish your lab, your outcomes program, your clinical expertise......
  – A dollar-value is difficult to assign to great clinical or academic mentors.
  – Start-up funds are critical to gather preliminary data if you want to get funded.
Understand the Job
What are you being hired to do?

• What is the clinical need?
  – Talk to future partners about their current practice
• Are you creating a new clinical program?
  – What are the hospital / department commitments?
• Is this primarily a research position?
  – Are there sufficient resources and time?
  – Are academics valued?
• What is the envisioned “protected time”?
  – 25% research time is not a research job
What are you being hired to do?

• Who is your boss(es)?
• What does your boss think the job is?
• What do your partners think the job is?
• What do the administrators think the job is?

• Is the conceptualization consistent?
• Does it align with the resource and time commitments?
• Will your contributions be valued in the current culture?
Understand the Compensation

• “Surgeon-scientists want to be compensated like surgeons, not scientists”.

• Understand the compensation plan
  – What are the incentives? Salary v “eat what you kill”
  – What is protected time and how is effort calculated?
  – Do they reward/finance academic success? How?
  – How is clinic space, clinic staff, administrative support financed?
  – Personal benefits - retirement, tuition
Start-up Package - Clinical

- Minimally have a salary guarantee which is competitive for geographic region for a defined period of time (AAMC, MGMA)
- Should incorporate specific equipment needed (ie ultrasound, robot time)
- Define OR block, clinic time, and call expectations
- Incorporate clinical support persons
Start-up package - Research

• Define protected time, assign compensation structure to include this
• Written commitment of mentorship and collaborations
• Support for equipment, lab set up
• Research assistant and level (tech vs PhD) - support for FTE v start-up coverage
• Access to core resources
• Separate, contiguous space to grow your program with other like-minded researchers
How will they measure success?

• Metrics need to be specific and measurable
• Do the metrics align with the job and the resources?
• Make sure you can meet them
• Examples of metrics
  – CDA funded by year 3
  – R01 submitted by year 5
  – RVU target by year 3 - may be benchmarked
• If this is your first job, the initial metrics must be about you, NOT the program.
What else do you need to know?

• A thorough understanding of the position and environment are necessary.
• Have others of similar qualifications been successful?
• What is the departmental attrition rate?
• Where did the last person holding a similar position go, and why?
• What is the recent extramural funding success rate?
Do your homework!

- Discuss with mentors, other recent recruits
- Know the benchmarks and be able to defend your ask with numbers and rationale
- Assess for red flags:
  - Too many assistant professors, not enough senior faculty?
  - Impending leadership turn-over?
  - Is this position dependent on one individual?
Aligned Expectations are the Key

• Level 1
  – Know what you want and what you need to get there
  – Know who your boss(es) are
  – Know what the job is
  – Know what the resources / support are
  – Know what the metrics of success are

• Level 2
  – Be sure it is the job YOU want
  – Be sure bosses are aligned in job expectations
  – Be sure the metrics are consistent with the job
  – Be sure you have the resources sufficient to be successful
Thank You!

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