The Critical 6 F's of Successful Recruitment

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1. Make a lasting (good!) **FIRST** impression.

   No matter what the outcome with each candidate you invite to interview for a position, the first onsite visit is crucial to not only landing your desired candidate long term but equally important for those you do not select/match for the role. Every candidate that visits you and your institution will leave with a lasting impression from the first visit. If it is good and they turn you down – they will still think highly of you and your institution and share that positive experience with others. A good experience/first impression may even lead them to consider other opportunities with you in the future. In the event the recruiting experience is negative, for example a disorganized visit where the candidate is treated poorly, this experience will also be carried forward and likely be shared for years to come impacting you and your institutions reputation.

2. Don't allow for **FAILURES**.

   A failed first onsite visit is sadly not an unfamiliar occurrence and is generally the result of no or a lack of effective preparation. From the individual coordinating the visit logistics with the candidate(s) (preparing the itinerary, travel, transportation, hotel, welcome package etc.), to everyone they interview with (virtual or on campus), tour with, or share a meal, each requires coordination and planning for maximal impact and effect. Essentially, you must try to engage everyone who will 'touch' a component of the visit to ensure they understand the goal and plan. Make sure they understand why they were asked to participate, what perspective you hope they will provide, what you need them to do to prepare and the importance of the visit in the larger context of the division/department/hospital/school. It is also helpful to prepare the candidate with advance information on the individuals they will be meeting so that the candidate can also maximize the interview. Effective interviewing is a talent not everyone has. Consider carefully who is selected and if the resources are available, invest in helping your faculty and staff to learn about effective

interviewing approaches and strategies. This approach can also be helpful to search committees who are often tasked to cull candidate dossiers in creating the initial candidate pool. Ensuring the process allows for a selection of candidates that meet the institution's goals in achieving cognitive diversity and excellence is an important priority to achieve in a successful search.

3. Make **FOLLOW UP** a priority.

   The follow up to a recruitment visit, virtual or onsite, must be timely and thoughtful to ensure a good exchange of information is shared while things are 'fresh' on how the visit went, what the experience was, what was learned and what is still left to be considered. It allows you to define the plan for next steps and critically to define the process and timeline anticipated to complete the search. Your role is to not only gain information and gauge interest but as important, to ensure the candidate feels you are engaged with them now and will continue to be so as the process unfolds. To have your lead candidate(s) be excited about the role only to be left for months without knowing the process and timeline is a sure way to lose the momentum that came from a good first impression. Understanding the estimated time to decisions on the next step prevents many misunderstandings and also allows the candidate to alert you if they require an earlier decision. The follow up period also includes your review of written evaluations/recruitment forms from your faculty and staff and feedback both written and verbal from all who participated in meeting with the candidates. In preparing for a successful follow up consider the goals for the recruitment, the competencies to be evaluated and ensure the written documents you plan to use fit well with the intended purpose. Engaging the faculty or search committee in designing the appropriate and succinct evaluation form that can be completed promptly may increase faculty engagement and maximize the attention and focus of interviewers on the important competencies to be assessed during the interview. Importantly, the evaluation form should be available to the interviewers prior to the interview. Make a point to reach out to the stakeholders for verbal input that could be critical in understanding any barriers that could impact a candidate going forward in the recruitment process. As with the candidate, ensure all stakeholders understand both the desired recruitment goals, specifics of the process and timeline and make an effort to keep them and the candidates engaged as the recruitment process goes forward. Lack of follow up with candidate(s) and stakeholders reflects poorly on you and allows for mis/disinformation to derail what would have been an otherwise successful recruitment process.

4. You are recruiting a **FAMILY**.

   A candidate is part of an extended family whether they are married, unmarried, have a partner, have no partner but have children, have no partner and no children, have parents, or pets etc. They are also part of a community they are considering leaving and their personal/family circumstances and communities are all factors in their choice to move. From the earliest point in the recruitment

process, you and your team must work to understand all the factors that need to be addressed beyond the specifics of the position, title, start up package and financial & benefit plans. Those participating in the recruiting process must understand the rules around pre-employment recruiting, pay careful attention to implicit biases that may creep into the recruitment process, and create a respectful environment where the candidate can elect to share information that addresses their professional needs and the personal accommodations that need to be considered. Training of committee members (e.g., in implicit bias) and understanding of the institution's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion will go a long way to sensitizing your interviewers to the legal and appropriate ways of interacting with candidates. Understanding the communities that the medical center services is important. A standardized, prepared package of community resources, housing information, including referral to realistic housing opportunities through qualified realtors can be very helpful to the candidate. A failure to do so may lead to candidates changing their minds or arriving and realizing this move won't work for them long term. These efforts emphasize your commitment to the candidate and the people important to them and may be the difference for success.

5. An effective recruiting effort requires **FLEXIBILTY**.

    Recruiting anyone is complicated, time consuming and hard work when done well. And even when every effort is well planned and executed, there are often issues that arise sometimes unexpectedly, that will tank an otherwise successful recruitment if you are unwilling to be flexible and make the additional effort or time to overcome the unexpected barrier that arises deep into the recruitment process. Being flexible and demonstrating your desire to address issues by being open to alternative plans in timing, appointment specifics, or family issues (as examples) can help you realize your goal even if it is not on the original timeline you had envisioned. When unique situations arise, consulting other institutional chairs or leaders to see if they have found solutions to similar situations can be extremely helpful. Being flexible though does not mean exchanging one issue with a new problem. As an example, creating inequity amongst your faculty &/or making promises that would be difficult for you to defend or even support long term once the candidate arrives.

6. Recruiting is a **FINANCIAL** investment.

    Every recruitment at every level is a financial investment in your and your faculty and staff's time along with substantial costs associated with visits, recruitment packages, long term candidate financial commitments and even additional faculty lines for senior level positions. A failed recruitment where you don't land a preferred candidate or <u>any</u> candidate, is an unfortunate waste of both time and financial resources that would be better committed to the position or other investments in your department. As examples, recruitment visits that include expensive meals with more than 4 or 6 attendees rarely allow the candidate to

have meaningful conversations and can be isolating for the candidate and/or the accompanying individual. We have also experienced virtual visits as an effective strategy to launch a search and start candidate interviews in a timely and cost-effective manner. Streamlining and reducing on-site visits of many candidates by including virtual visits not only reduces financial investments in the recruitment process but as important, the time to concluding the search.

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