

Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs

Recruitment as a Means to Build Department Culture

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From the Perspective of a Chair

- There is nothing more important or more rewarding than recruiting outstanding faculty.
- Recruitment involves personal involvement and commitment by the Chair.
- **Recruitment** and **retention** are linked.
- **Recruitment** and **retention** are critical for establishing the **culture** of the Department.



Photo: Scott Dressel-Martin, Children's Hospital Colorado



Recruitment

- Recruiting faculty at any level is increasingly a contact sport.



- Different approaches may be required for recruitment at different levels.
- For junior faculty positions, recruitment may be internal or external.
- Leadership positions may also be internal or external and often require a more extensive process.

Recruitment

- Make every recruitment a fair process. At the end of the process, you want all candidates to reflect on a great experience.



- Remember that each recruit, whether they end up on the faculty or not, can be an ambassador for the Department.

Recruitment

- Great recruiting requires a standardized, transparent, equitable, and realistic process.
- The early part of the process should be confidential.



Steps in Recruitment

- Position justification (business plan)
- Position should be defined by mission/needs
 - Clinical/program growth
 - Research
 - Teaching
- Positions often include a mix of missions. Important to define how that mix should work for each position



Position Justification – Clinical

- Assessment of needs for clinical programs
 - Productivity of current team
 - Access (next 3rd available appointment)
- Timing for new visits
- Program growth
- Work at appropriate scope
 - APP or MD
- Faculty burnout
- Satisfaction of referral base



Position Justification – Research

- Fit with existing research programs
- New research program development
- Need for start-up package (availability appropriate to resources).
- Need for space
- Appropriate mentorship
- Clear expectations in acquiring intramural and extramural support



**It is important to consider these things
at the beginning of the process.**

Position Justification – Education

- Is there a defined role in Education Programs?
 - Program Director
- How will education time be supported?



Define the Position

Clinical

- Sessions per week
- Weeks of service
- Time for ramp-up to need, productivity, expertise

Research

- Unfunded / protected time
- Productivity / funding expectations
- Available space
- Equipment
- Bioinformatics
- Biostatistics

Education

- Specific role
- Education program development
- Department role vs. School of Medicine role
- Educational scholarship
- Support



Define the Position



- Expected salary and sources of salary support
- Retirement contribution
- Support for license, board certification, travel, dues, meetings, other benefits
- Support for additional training
- Non-compete clauses
- Incentive possibility

Recruitment

- Most institutions have important policies and procedures for recruitment.
- Familiarize yourself with those policies.
- Remember that recruitment is an opportunity to improve diversity.
- Many institutions require formal training in systemic racism and implicit bias for search committee members.



Recruitment

- Should you use a search firm?
 - No one correct answer
 - Pros and cons



Identifying Candidates

- Cast a wide net—use your personal and professional networks (and those of the faculty) to identify candidates.
- Although an advertisement may be necessary for legal reasons, you rarely identify candidates from ads.
- Be persistent—you may need repeated contacts with candidates.
- Encourage candidates from diverse backgrounds— women and minorities.
- Often the best candidate is one who is not actively looking for a job.



Evaluating Potential Candidates

- Search Committees and, ultimately, the Chair, must consider a variety of aspects of the candidate to determine if they will be the best candidate for your Department, the medical school, and your hospital partner.



Evaluating Candidates

- COVID made this process more difficult. A large portion of initial interviews took place via zoom. Many COVID practices persist. However, there is no substitute for an in-person meeting for evaluation.



Free Photo by Anna Shvets from [Pexels](#)



Challenges to Identifying a Strong Candidate Pool

- Small candidate pool in a particular subspecialty and competition for candidates



- Even more difficulty identifying minority and women candidates. (This requires a very directed approach and should be a proactive effort that is often hard work.)
- Finding the best match for your institutional culture
- Sometimes the best candidate may challenge your institutional culture



Finding Candidates for Leadership

For Leadership Roles:



For Finding Individuals who:

- Are academically accomplished individuals with management and leadership skills
- Can balance personal, divisional, departmental, and School of Medicine responsibilities and needs
- Have an understanding of the variety of missions, but may not have extensive experience in all
- Understand the approach to building a leadership team
- Are willing to learn

Reasons to Have a Search Committee

For Leadership Roles:

- Creates a fair process
- Allows for input from a variety of directions
- Creates a 2-stage process
 - 1) Search committee (recommends)
 - 2) Hiring authority—Chair (chooses)



Characteristics of a Strong Search Committee

- Clear charge to the committee from the Department Chair
- Energetic committee chair with outstanding leadership and people skills
- An engaged and hard-working committee
- A well written job description
- Consensus on candidate training, experience and personal qualities
- Committee members who understand the mission, vision, and values of the Department and are able to articulate these core principles, as well as the strengths of the program and the role.



Search Committees

- Need to focus on achieving and maintaining momentum
- Should be given some leeway on the specifics of the search process



- Need to commit to supporting diversity
- Need to understand the “Rules of Engagement”

Job Description

- Important for the candidate and important for you
- Articulate what you need, what you want, qualifications, and expectations for the role
- Use the job description as you evaluate credentials, skills, fit within your Department, Medical School, Hospital



Vetting the Candidate



- Review the CV carefully.
- Ask for written comments from faculty interviewers—a uniform questionnaire can be helpful.
- Check references—but only when the candidate is comfortable moving forward.

What Makes a Chair a Wonderful Recruiter?

- Enthusiasm about your Department and your faculty
- Ability to tell your story in an engaging manner
- Curiosity and the ability to listen
- The desire to learn about and from the candidate
- Honesty and credibility: over time, people will learn whether you honor commitments and whether you work in the best interest of the Department and your faculty.



How Can You Retain Outstanding Faculty?



Remember that Recruitment is the Beginning of Retention

- Recruitment is a commitment to provide the best possible environment for success.



Build a Culture that Embraces and Rewards Faculty Development and Recognition

Pay attention to:

- Career and life mentoring
- Individualized leadership development and opportunities
- Faculty morale / satisfaction
- Faculty recognition and awards
- Fair and equitable compensation



Faculty Engagement and Retention

- Faculty are the Department's most valuable resources.
- Highly engaged faculty are excited by their work and invested in the success of their institution.



- Engaging and retaining valuable faculty creates a productive and positive work environment and ultimately saves time and money in turnover costs.

Faculty Satisfaction: A Key to Success

“Understanding the strategic role played by faculty satisfaction is vital to the success of our institutions.”

Darrell G. Kirch, MD
Former AAMC President and CEO



Build a Culture of Communication

- Frequent faculty meetings to address academic and clinical issues and to recognize accomplishments
- Periodic newsletters
- Web-based calendar with important events
- Annual “State of the Department” talk



Build a Culture of Recognition

- **Recognize accomplishments**—big and small
- **Annual faculty awards** that recognize faculty excellence in all aspects of an academic department: clinical care, clinical innovation, teaching excellence, teaching innovation, scientific breakthroughs, outstanding papers, mentoring, humanism, leadership



- **Public recognition** of individual or group accomplishments
- **Periodic newsletters**
- **Frequent personal messages** and “real-time” congratulations from the Chair



Advancing National Recognition

You and other Department leaders should be strong sponsors for faculty

National Recognition: The Road Forward

- Nominate faculty to serve on national committees and societies, editorial boards, study sections, foundations, etc.
- Use personal networking to lobby for your faculty and to get others to lobby for them
- Court people in leadership roles graciously and effectively to promote your faculty
- Promote appropriately at all levels:
 - Identify stars—rising in your midst and outside
 - Selective recruitment, retention, and promotion
 - Choose wisely and strategically—recognize your best



Recognizing Those Who Are Ending Their Service Helps Retain Future Stars

- Work with senior and retiring faculty and their programs to understand what is most meaningful:
 - Symposium
 - Festschrift
 - Dinner
 - Other



Summary

- Recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty are among the most important and most rewarding roles for a Chair. It's your opportunity to build the Department's culture.
- Become skillful at recruitment. Recruitment is the start of retention.
- Be mindful of the importance of faculty retention—every day.

