

Excellent **How to Get an Academic Job**

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“Selection of a position early in one’s career that undermines one’s long-term growth is an extremely common mistake from which many promising young academicians never recover.”

**Applegate & Williams
Am J Med 1990**

Overview

- Provide an overview of the academic mating process
- Step-by-step approach and timeline
- Negotiating 101
- Position yourself to succeed in your job search
- Questions and comments encouraged!

Positioning Yourself to Succeed

- 1) Does your research have “legs”?
- 2) Are you a “closer”?
 - The best predictor of future success is....
- 3) One way to position yourself to succeed is by:

Risk Stratification

Deliverables (juice)

		High	Mid	Low	Very Low
Effort (squeeze)	High	RCT	Qualitative study, Prospective cohort		
	Mid	Survey, Meta-analysis	Case control, CEA	Retro-cohort	
	Low	Database mining	CEA, MA, systematic review	Chart review	
	Very Low				Case report

Diversify your Research Portfolio

- When you select projects during your fellowship, keep in mind the risk of each
- Pick 1 or 2 projects in the lower risk groups and 1 in the moderate or high category
- Goal: have at least 1 completed project by the time you are interviewing

Outline

- ✓ Pre-Opening: Positioning Yourself to Succeed
- Opening: Dream Job & Searching
- Mid-Game: 1st Visit & Job Talk
- End-Game: 2nd Visit, Negotiations, & Decision Time

A Suggested Timeline for Job Search

Month	Tasks
July – Aug	Write “dream job” description
Sept – Nov	Send CV and letter to prospective employers
Nov – Feb	First Visits
Jan – May	2 nd visits, negotiating, accepting a position
July	Start junior faculty position

The Opening: Design Your Dream Job

- Extremely important!
- It is best to know what you are looking for before you start looking
- Clinician-Scientist vs Clinician-Teacher vs Other (eg, government, industry, private practice, administrative)

“Generic” Jobs: Scientist vs. Educator

Clinician-Scientist (tenure track positions):

- 50-80% protected time
- Partial or full salary support for ~3 years
- Expectation to obtain independent funding for most of salary
- Retention and promotion based on academic productivity (i.e., publications, grants, national recognition)

“Generic” Jobs: Scientist vs. Educator

Clinician-Educator (non-tenure track):

- 10-30% protected time
- Partial or full salary support indefinitely
- Expectation to generate significant portion of salary through clinical revenue
- Retention and promotion based mainly on teaching accomplishments, clinical productivity and to a lesser extent on academic productivity

Components of Your Dream Job

- Time commitments
 - Research
 - Clinical work/Teaching
 - Administration
- Full-time vs. part-time
- Geographic location
- Support
 - Mentorship/Collaborators
 - Research/Secretarial/Grant budgets
- Position for significant other

Components of Your Dream Job: Caveats

- Percent time may be counted differently at different institutions:

Question: How much is one ward month worth?

Answer: ?

- Better to think about the maximum # of ward months or # of half days in clinic that you want
- Make a list and prioritize
- Distinguish between “needs” and “wants”
- Seek advice from many quarters

The Opening: Find Out What's Available

- Ads
 - Journals
 - Newsletters
 - Letters of solicitation to your program director or Chair
- Talk to faculty and colleagues
- Unsolicited letters - often from fellowship director
- National meetings

*Start early, be aggressive, don't limit options, and
cast a wide net!*

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The Mid-Game

- The Division Chief (or Department Chair) will usually contact you after s/he has seen your CV and letter of introduction
- Letter of regret vs. personal call to find out more about your interests
- May invite you for an interview

The Mid-Game: First Visit

- Visit anywhere you might conceivably accept a position
- Keep an open mind
- Be prepared before you go: know the institution and faculty; get the itinerary in advance
- Know what you want to do
- Search out potential colleagues, collaborators
- Try to understand formal and informal administrative relationships
- Sell yourself but be honest

Mid-game: First Visit (continued)

- If you give a talk:
 - Find out in advance about the audience and tailor accordingly
 - Describe your work for a general audience
 - Make sure you mention where your research is going
 - Q/A session is very important (plan accordingly)
- Look for “observable” evidence of commitment
 - Space; faculty advancement
 - Division Chief’s reputation

First visits are “fact-finding” for both parties

Mid-Game: After Your First Visit

- You decide whether you like them and they decide whether they like you
- You will be invited for a 2nd visit if they are interested – you should accept only if you are also quite interested
- Your S.O. usually will also go to the 2nd visit

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End-Game: Second Visit

- They will recruit you and your S.O.
- Negotiations will probably take place: this is the time you will begin to “talk turkey”
- The best you will ever be treated is during your recruitment visits
- You ignore the “culture” of the institution at your own peril (and the peril of your employer)

End-Game: Academic Job Negotiations

Q: Is it more like getting married or like buying a car?

A: ?

End-Game: Academic Job Negotiations

- Asymmetry of power makes negotiating challenging
- A critical factor in any negotiation is personal power
- The way to counteract this very real negotiating disadvantage, is to have options
- The person with the better BATNA usually wins
- Options give *you* power

What is the Most Important Thing You Can Do
To Improve Your Chances of Getting a Great
Offer?

End Game: Academic Job Negotiations

The short-term goal: The offer should be fair to you *and* fair to the people already in your division

The long-term goal: The offer should:

- be conducive to your success and happiness in academic medicine; and
- allow you to provide for yourself or your family adequately without having to consult for drug companies

End-Game: Negotiating for a Position

- Salary
 - Source and duration (VA support?)
 - Expectation for independent funding
- Office space
- Secretarial support - time and duties
- Benefits
 - Retirement
 - Insurance
 - Travel/CME
 - Other educational support, e.g., journals, books
 - Medical society memberships

End-Game: Negotiating for a Position

- Time commitments - be specific, e.g., hours/wk, times per month
 - Clinical
 - Teaching/Attending
 - Administrative
 - (Try to postpone to allow for start-up)
- Computer support
- Start-up funding for research (use for pilot studies, biostat and programming support)
- Obtain specifics for promotional requirements

End-Game: Deciding on Which Offer

- If you are *not* deciding which offer to take, you have not done your job
- Deciding between several offers: many ways to decide
 - Multi-attribute utility analysis
 - Your own gut feeling/try a place out (in your mind)
 - Ask your significant other
- When you decide: let everyone know at the same time
- Contact all your potential employers with the good or bad news

Academic Mating Process: Key Points

- Know what you want
- You won't get everything you want: compromise is the rule
- If you are able to move, you must look around
- Generate more than one offer
- Be honest and above board with everyone
- Despite the anxiety, the entire process is (usually) enjoyable



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