Rheumatology Division Recruitment Strategies

Adding additional members to your faculty can be a complex process. Finding someone who shares the vision and mission of the division and fits well into the team is key to success.

One common strategy is to transition fellows into the ranks of junior faculty. Alternatively, a national search can provide a broader platform to recruit more established faculty to your division.

Planning

- How does this recruitment fit into the overall vision or strategic plan for the Division?
- Will this recruit fulfill a needed niche and/or contribute to divisional growth?
- What role do you see this new faculty member playing within the division? Do you need specific skills, scientific expertise, clinical excellence, commitment to or passion for medical education, proven leadership, or demonstrated ability to raise funds (philanthropic, extramural, or industry)? Is there a specific cultural literacy that is desired to optimize communication and care to your patient population?
- Are you trying to enhance diversity within the division?

What can you afford?

Often this may be the deciding question. Money is good, but space, staffing requirements and other resources may also be needed.

A fiscal analysis of the potential upfront recruitment costs (salary, infrastructure, equipment, moving etc.) can provide you with a clearer picture of the level of funding you may need to be able to provide for a recruitment to be successful. An additional analysis of the time to recuperate these costs based on varying estimates of a candidate’s “earning potential” can form the basis of a productive discussion with the Department Chair or Dean on the goals of the recruitment and the overall financial benefit to the University and the Department. Defining the indirect costs from grants, the revenue from “taxes” on clinical billings, clinical trial overhead, industry contracts, or relationships with philanthropic donors that will be generated after hiring the candidate can provide a negotiating tool with the Dean and Chair for additional funds that can be returned in a reasonable timeframe (usually five years).

- Will this recruitment blend with more global initiatives from the University Chancellor or the Dean’s office?
- Is there a broader opportunity to garner a recruitment package for an established investigator? (e.g. administrative leadership role, new Dean’s initiative, etc.)
- Do you have the appropriate infrastructure or capital equipment in place for
this recruitment or will this be an additional cost? [ultrasound, arthroscopy, biobanks, mass spectrometers, computational capacity, etc.]

- Is this recruitment associated with an endowed chair with a specific mission?
- Are there philanthropic funds that can be used to support this hire?

**Process**

The institution will have policies for hiring academic personnel that may be handled separately from the human resources office. Identifying the roadmap of forms and procedures for your institution prior to active recruitment is highly recommended. The process for approval for hiring clinical faculty is likely to be through the clinical enterprise, especially if initial salary support is required; whereas hiring research faculty will need other prior approval mechanisms.

- Document the circumstances, process, and outcomes.
- Get a recruitment mentor[s]. Ask your institutional officer who has recently completed a successful recruitment similar to the one you are proposing and contact them. This faculty member will be the best versed in the paperwork, pitfalls and institutional procedures.

**National recruitment**

**Advertising**

**Web based**

- ACR Career Connection is cited as the most used site for rheumatologists seeking employment. [www.rheumatology.org/Career-Connection](http://www.rheumatology.org/Career-Connection)

**Other sites that may increase the diversity potential for candidates include:**
- [www.mdjobsite.com](http://www.mdjobsite.com)
- [www.practicelink.com](http://www.practicelink.com)
- [www.ziprecruiter.com](http://www.ziprecruiter.com)
- [www.womeninsidestem.com](http://www.womeninsidestem.com)
- [www.diverseljobs.net](http://www.diverseljobs.net)
- [www.nativeamericansinhighered.com](http://www.nativeamericansinhighered.com)
- [www.healthcareers.com](http://www.healthcareers.com)
- [www.physiciansjobsplus.com](http://www.physiciansjobsplus.com)
- [www.americasjobexchange.com](http://www.americasjobexchange.com)

**Journal**

- Journal of the American Medical Association [www.jamacareercenter.com](http://www.jamacareercenter.com)

**Networking**

Always look for chances to promote your division and to establish connections. A personal connection is more likely to influence the process and lead to referrals for your recruitment. Your contacts may know a candidate that would be appropriate for your recruitment and broaden your recruitment pool.

**Assembling a recruitment committee**

- Ideally create a recruitment team of 2-3 faculty plus the division director
- Decide on job description
Review all of the institutional policies on recruitments to ensure a fair process and identify strategies to avoid unintentional bias and to attain diversity in the applicant pool.

Review the advertising criteria.

Set up basic selection criteria (e.g. BC/BE, area of expertise, etc.)

**Compensation**

- Understand the average compensation for the regional market. Can use MGMA or AAMC salaries as a reference.
  
  MGMA membership [fee required]
  
  [www.mgma.com/membership/joinmgma](http://www.mgma.com/membership/joinmgma)

  **Inquiry for AAMC data**
  
  [www.aamc.org/data/479586/requestaamcdata.html](http://www.aamc.org/data/479586/requestaamcdata.html)

Alternatively your institution may have an account with Vizient, which uses AAMC data

[www.vizientinc.com](http://www.vizientinc.com)

- What portion of compensation is guaranteed and which portion is performance based? How are consulting fees, speaker bureau fees and honoraria handled at your institution?
- Is there 403b or a defined benefit pension plan?
- Non-salary compensation such as benefits, paid CME days, number of vacation and sick days, etc. should be taken into account.
- Work/Life Balance: Flexibility is very important to young parents.

**References**

- If a candidate is to serve multiple functions within the division it is important to obtain professional references, who can speak to each of those duties.
- Individual referees may be able to cover a subset of areas, and the referee pool may need to be expanded to obtain multiple perspectives.
- An initial verbal conversation with the referee may allow a broader discussion of the candidate's potential within your division than only a written reference.

**Hiring...getting to yes**

- It is important to understand what motivates the person you are looking to hire. It may be a high salary, it may be access to certain research mentors, or it may be having a day a week they can do things with their kids. Understanding what is important to the person is the best way to make the most attractive package.

**Local recruitment**

Fostering the professional growth of trainees has become increasingly recognized as critical to the future rheumatology workforce. Establishing a network of collaborators, sponsors, and mentors is conducive to academic success; however, outlining the steps to independence and providing a structured roadmap engenders confidence that they will be successful. This strategy includes aligning their responsibilities with their funding streams and the performance criteria for academic advancement.
How is the role of this faculty member impacted by extramural funding, institutional resources, and clinical billings?

Are the funding streams and professional responsibilities aligned with expectations for advancement?

Is there a formal mentorship plan in place?

Has a timeline been established to check progress for committee service, teaching assignments, grant preparation and research reports?

It is never too early to convey a sound understanding of the “business” aspects of academic medicine.

**The candidate has signed—so now what?**

Your institution likely has an onboarding procedure, but this can be stalled at any point and will need to be monitored for appropriate progress. Identification of several mentors before the candidate arrives can smooth the transition and the moving process.

**Partial checklist:**

- Obtaining the appropriate state license to practice
- Clinical credentialing (if your institution has part of the training program at a VA, the applicant may need to be credentialed separately at the VA).
- Background checks
- Verification of vaccination and TB testing
- Formal reference letters may be needed separately for clinical and research skills. Referees are often overcommitted faculty and may need to be reminded of your timeline.
- Have space needs been met? Is any remodeling necessary? Special installations?
- Appropriate office space and furnishing
- Major equipment purchases
- Identification and initiation with fund managers-pre and post award; clinical trials; etc.
- Initiation of use authorizations [biohazard, chemical, laser, radioactivity]
- Initiation of appropriate IRB and animal use protocols
- Special needs like animal transfer and quarantine.
- Identification of moving companies that are permitted to transport chemicals across state lines
- Installation of appropriate electric outlets and emergency power/alarms to be ready for transported freezers upon arrival
- Identification of appropriate storage [liquid nitrogen, freezer] for samples shipped in advance

**Small things matter to provide a welcoming atmosphere**

- If possible in person: Introduction to the Division administrators and brief outline of their roles [Division Administrator, Administrative Assistant, Program Coordinator, Clinical Service Chief] can facilitate email and communications
- Business cards for each venue
  - clinical with contact information for patients
  - research with investigator contact information
- Phone lines connected in advance
- Internet connectivity
- accurate directory listing
- white coats in the correct size and with an embroidered name

Retention begins the day of arrival
The institution often has a formal orientation process with an overwhelming amount of paperwork and information.
- Highlight at interviews opportunities for professional growth, such as institutional faculty development programs
- When the person comes on board integrate him/her into the group so that he/she feels like part of the team.
- For the first six month check in frequently with the person to make sure they are adjusting to the new environment and address any issues that come up.
- Identifying mentors within the existing faculty can establish a culture of mutual support and enable the exchange of ideas.