

LETTERS

Residents' Perspective on the Faculty Hiring Process

To the Editor. I read the Viewpoints editorial entitled "Hiring Residents as Faculty Members: Dancing With the Stars"¹ with great interest. It addressed many of the concerns I myself encountered during the interviewing process for a faculty position 1 year ago.

The statements regarding the need for timelines were very appropriate for faculty programs and first-time applicants alike. As a resident applying for my first professional position, this lack of structure created much unnecessary stress. My first interview was mid-January, and the following 3 were spaced out by another 2 or 3 weeks each. I had to ask nearly all programs to allow me about 4 to 6 weeks for a decision, in order to have time to thoroughly consider the other positions. I was fortunate enough to receive several interviews and offers, and wanted to be sure I was making the right decision. I often felt I was leading programs on or that I had some issues with commitment. It is good to know that the author of this article believes that applicants should not hesitate to respond to communication, even if it is to simply ask for more time for a decision.

From a different standpoint, a colleague of mine is quite happy where she ended up, working at the only faculty program with which she interviewed. However, this colleague had a nagging feeling when she first began, wondering whether it was the right decision to not interview elsewhere and consider other positions.

The beauty of relocating to a new area to complete a residency program is knowing that you are only staying for 1 or 2 years. Deciding where to begin your career as a faculty pharmacist, on the other hand, requires more thought and consideration of personal factors. I realize that many people begin in one place and stay for a few years, and then move for personal reasons. But after many years of school and residency, most prospective faculty members feel a need to make the "right" decision now, the one that means they will stay in one place for several years. I believe the author gave an excellent

example of this, in reference to the applicant who spoke with 30 programs at ASHP's Personnel Placement Service and interviewed with 6 different colleges and schools.

A few other points I would add from a former resident's perspective:

- It may be difficult to find a mentor within your pharmacy residency program with experience in the particular area you are applying for (ie, academia).
- Many non-academic preceptors seem to have negative perspectives regarding unaccredited academic programs, with little or no experience behind these opinions.
- Coworkers offer an overwhelming number of differing opinions regarding professionalism and communication.
- This may be the first time you discover how your family and friends really feel about your endeavors, ie, it may have been easy for them to entertain the idea of relocating or being separated for a short-term residency program, but supporting a long-term career move to a location further from home may be more difficult.

While these factors were certainly stressful, the decisions made were ultimately my own. But I agree that the process can be significantly more difficult when programs are working with first-time applicants. I know that I missed many steps in the dance myself. This left me feeling very unsettled, but I am glad to know I am not the only one with this perspective. I hope "Hiring Residents as Faculty Members: Dancing with the Stars" has encouraged other pharmacy faculty members to consider the lack of structure in the interviewing process and to encourage their departments to change this.

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REFERENCES

1. Boyle CJ. Hiring residents as faculty members: dancing with the stars. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2012;76(8):Article 143.