Giving your fellows Wings....

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Educational Objectives

• Tips for getting a job
• Getting prepared for the job market
  • Academic, Community, Industry
• Things you can do throughout training
• How to keep a job
• How to thrive on the job
• Use ‘case based’ approach with built in periods for discussion
• My role: provide you with examples; prompt your questions, facilitate discussion.

Conflict of Interest

• I have no financial conflicts of interest to report
• Note: elements of these stories are true, but the demographic/specialty details of each fellow have been changed to protect their identity....

My background...

• 21 yrs. in practice
• 16 yrs. in community setting
  • 8 yrs. boutique practice
  • Exclusively outreach: FNA, paps, outreach surg path
  • 8 yrs. Large community practice
  • 29 pathologists, 150K AP specimens/yr.
  • 10 locations, FNA clinic w/USFNA
  • Intense competition for outreach work
  • 4 terms as Group President
  • Oversee hiring/firing
• 4 ½ yrs. Academics
  • Member & Chair of multiple searches
  • Surg Path Director
  • Support and Mentoring
  • AP Director
  • Expanding opportunities for Cytology

Fellow #1

• AP/CP resident at very prestigious university
• Fellowship in Cytology
• Glowing recommendations from a world renowned pathologist (‘in top 5% of trainees ever’)

Fellow #1

• Competent at Cytology
• Very slow at Surgical Pathology
  • Showed many, many cases (sometimes twice)
  • Could only do a fraction of the work load (despite 7am - 11pm hours)
  • Nine months in still was not at full workload (60%)
Fellow #1

• Issues:
  • Non solidified surg path skills
  • Surg Path fellowship on the “job”
  • Partners calling for his firing at 9 month review

• Saving Grace:
  • Very nice/gracious/positive attitude/never complained
  • Worked very, very hard 7 days a week

Fellow #1

Takeaway’s

Lack of solid general surgical pathology skills
- Most Cyto Jobs also contain element of Surg Path

Niceness, hard work, failure to complain paid off

Fellow #2

• AP/CP Cyto Fellow had applied and received an interview from an institution he was very interested in...

Fellow #2

• During the interview he began asking if he could take off every other Friday...
• He was told that the practice had a weekly schedule and Friday’s off would be difficult to manage..
• Later at Dinner he disclosed that he’d like to only do cytology and that he didn’t like going on FNA’s (even though he knew the group had an FNA clinic to staff) ...
• He also mentioned his wife was hoping to have kids soon and asked about family leave for fathers..

Fellow #2

• Multiple signals that the applicant was going to be:
  • ‘Difficult to work with’
  • ‘Not a team player’
  • ‘High maintenance’
• And that the practice structure didn’t fit his goals..

Fellow #2

• Multiple Interpersonal Skill and Dedication ‘Red Flags’ ➔ not offered job

• Key during interview and dinner to:
  • Be open minded
  • Avoid sense of entitlement
  • Appear receptive to current job structure
  • Willing to help out, do what’s needed
  • Not demanding
  • Avoid divulging personal information
  • Leave requests
  • Part time desires
Fellow #2

• → No Job Offer

• Key: Wait until actual offer before negotiating, asking for exceptions..

Fellow #3

• AP/CP, with subspecialty fellowship
• With Average skills ....

• What advice can we give..?

Fellow #3

• Consider applying to more places
• Broaden job hunt geographic area
• Consider looking in ‘less popular places to live’
• Larger groups might provide an opportunity for mentoring or additional subspecialty training

• Use remaining time to ‘bone up on skills’
• Mentor fellow about their ‘real weaknesses’
  • Suggest strategies to improve
• After job starts:
  • CME courses
  • USCAP microscope tutorials
  • Update courses
  • ? Find a helpful niche with:
    • Medical director
    • Marketing
    • CP
    • Admin/IT
    • Maximize other strengths...

Fellow #4

• AP/CP, cyto fellow with weak interpersonal/ or diagnostic skills asks you for a reference...

• How do you handle the letter?

• How do you answer questions by phone?

Fellow #4

• Everyone needs a job –

• How to be supportive without being deceptive?
  • One strategy: talk about positives, avoid negatives
  • But do we have a duty to be straight and discuss weaknesses?
• Problem: Your reputation/ institutional reputation can be damaged
• Your recommendation may no longer carry weight
• Blacklists: No interviews or hires for your program!
Fellow #4

• Are you more candid over the phone?
• Easy to praise fantastic fellows, but what about weaker trainees?
• What strategies do you use....?
• DISCUSSION.......

Recommendations

• Discussion

Fellow #5

• AP/CP Cytology & GI path fellowships
• From smaller lesser known program
• How do you compete against ‘bigger name’ programs
• Challenge to get noticed/ interviews/offers

Fellow #5

• Possible strategy:
  • Proactively reach out to potential employers with letters/ emails advocating your fellows at the beginning of a search (try to generate enthusiasm)
    • See people doing that this season....
  • Apply to broader range of positions...

Fellow #6

• AP/CP fellow in cytology and hematopathology
• Offer from a well respected 5 member group
• Brought in to be the only hemepath person in group....

Fellow #6

Job limitation:
No mentors for hemepath...

Joining a group with other hematopathologists would allow continued ‘training’ and development..
Especially important in early years
Fellow #7

- AP/CP Surg Path fellow, Cytology fellow
- Interested in Academic or Community Jobs
- Receives multiple offers:
  - Chooses job with the highest starting salary

Fellow #7

- Factors to consider when comparing job offers:
  - Salary/compensation
  - Time off (vacation or just off service)
  - Location / cost of living (compensation can vary by region)
  - Retirement (401K, etc.)
  - Insurance: Medical/Dental/Eye/Life/Disability
  - Partnership/Tenure Track?
  - Dues/Fees/Ed Fund for CME
  - Housing supplement
  - Pension
  - Sabbatical
  - Non compete
  - Bonuses?

Fellow #8

- AP/CP Cytology and Surg Path fellowships
- Decides to leave first job after 1.5 yrs....

Fellow #8

- Common
  - Shouldn’t feel stuck in a job ....
  - OK as long as you are leaving by choice
  - Have a reasonable/ good story to tell
    - Wasn’t a good fit
    - Wanted different/better location
    - Move close to family
    - Wanted to maximize subspecialty skills
    - Wanted a more general practice experience

Fellow #9

- Fellow with District Attorney spouse, looking for a job which values work – life balance
- Would consider a part time job (70- 90%)

Fellow #9

- Find out about the group/ practice reputation
  - Does the group have part time pathologists?
  - Does the group favor earning money vs time off/benefits? (or visa versa?)
  - Or does it try to be balanced?
- When should you bring this up..?
  - Probably best not to bring this up during first visit...
  - Ask open ended questions....(what do you do outside of work? Do many Pathologists have families/kids? What benefits do you offer...?)
  - After the offer has been made is a good time to explore part time possibilities
Fellow #10

- AP/CP with a Cytology Fellowship
- Also interested in Lab Management...

Fellow #10

- Add on skills help fellows thrive on the job
- Practices benefit from skills in:
  - Lab management/ medical dir.
  - IT
  - Marketing
  - Leadership
  - Operations
  - Finance
  - Innovations

Gomez AG et al. Impact of Pathologist Performed Ultrasound Guided FNA in Tertiary Care Academic Center

Fellow #11

- It’s May and your Fellow still hasn’t found a job...
- What can you do to help him/her..?

Fellow #11

- If you like the person (and they have decent skills) check and see if a Clinical Instructor position is possible...
  - Could cover for Sabbaticals/ leaves
  - Keep looking: Just need one job
  - Broaden search
  - Both geographically and type of job
  - Consider part time
  - Consider locums
  - Consider additional training:
    - Fellowship, CP (if AP only), add on additional subspecialty work

Fellow #12

- AP/CP plus Fellowship
- Accepted Job
- Began proctoring in July

- During Fall group meeting: an un-scheduled vote was taken to end his employment... contract terminated the next day. Given 60 day severance pay as stipulated in contract
Fellow #12

• What went wrong...??
  • General sign out skills not up to par
  • Over confident in diagnoses
  • Made multiple false positive cancer diagnoses as well as some false negative diagnoses
  • Felt to still be at ‘resident’ level
  • Amount of time and effort needed to rehabilitate his skills was too great
  • ‘Not a training program’
  • Want/need people who can ‘help us’

• What could have prevented this?
  • Needed better general diagnostic skills
  • Increased ‘graduated responsibility’ / junior attending/ Clinical instructor may have helped
  • Need careful programmatic assessments: avoid trainees falling thru cracks
  • Overconfidence was a problem
  • Didn’t know what he didn’t know
  • Failure to accept switch to more CP/ lab medicine/or other role(s)

Fellow #13

• AP/CP Cytology and Surg Path fellow
  • Positioned at off site/ semi remote lab
  • Functioning as site medical director
  • Signing out Surg Path and Cytology
  • Terminated for interpersonal issues:
  • Not following group policy
  • Not supporting group policy
  • Undermining group decisions, strategies with local staff
  • Disclosing confidential information to staff

• Issues:
  • Close ‘personal friendships’ with staff blur professional boundaries: need to avoid confidential disclosures
  • Lack of good judgment by not following or supporting group policies
  • Not receptive to corrective counseling
  • In general: multiple interpersonal/judgment issues

Fellow #14

• AP/CP double subspecialty fellow
  • Interviewed early and often
  • Received an offer from everyplace she applied
  • Accepted a job offer early on in the process

• Keys to success:
  • Outstanding training
  • Sought out several non-advertised word of mouth positions
    • Check frequently with faculty
  • Applied to a wide variety of jobs in various geographic locations
  • Applied and interviewed quickly
  • Had a very good sense of what she wanted in a job
Fellow #15

• AP only Surg path, Cytopathology fellow
• Looking for a community practice job...
• Advice without CP?

Fellow #15

• Check local area: are they hiring AP people? Or only AP/CP
• May need to apply to more places
• May need to apply to a broader geographic area
• Larger groups more likely to accommodate AP only pathologists
• Groups that subspecialize may hire AP only
• Groups with designated CP pathologists may take AP only candidates

Fellow #16

• AP/CP Surg path, Cytology fellow
• Looking for community based or academic practice
• Good training and well thought of
• Gets numerous interviews

Fellow #16

• Accepted a job at her top choice
• Wound up doing cytology only during the first 2 years
• Husband needed to move
• Now needs to move, but her surg path skills are rusty

Fellow #16

• Take away points:
• Best to practice broadly (general surg path/ cytopath) during the first years out of training to solidify a base and get ‘seasoning’ in as many areas as possible
• Ideal to subspecialize later on in training (if possible)
Fellow #17

AP/CP Cyto fellow

Accepts job across country

Fellow #17

• Job going well but....
• Spouse is unhappy
• Far from family
• Cost of living is very high- worried about affording a house/ family/ paying of medical school debt
• Not making many friends
• Weather is unfamiliar
• Tough fitting in to the local culture

Fellow #17

• After 1 ½ years left the job
• Moved back across the country...
• Closer to family
• Lower cost of living
• More familiar culture
• Friends

Fellow #17

• Things to consider:
• Proximity to family *
• Cost of living
• Culture/ ability to find friends easily
• Weather
• OK to switch jobs- but not easy & costly

Fellow #18

• AP/CP Cyto and Surg Path Fellow

• Received several interviews at ‘good institutions’....
• Went on interviews ... But received no job offers..

Fellow #18

• Follow up with employers revealed:
• Fellow was unenthusiastic during interview
• Didn’t show good interest in job(s)
Fellow #18

• Keys:
  • Don’t interview unless you have serious interest
  • Try to be enthusiastic
  • Send a Thank You note!
  • ASAP after interview (email or written note is OK)
  • Do some homework on the department/practice beforehand

• Always have a list of questions to ask:
  • Open ended questions are best
    • What might my job be like?
    • What is a typical day like?
    • What are the group’s biggest challenges?
    • What do you think/hope will change in the future?

Fellow #19

• AP GU and Cytology fellow
• Looking for academic only jobs...

• Some keys/tips for academic search:
  • Write a strong cover letter that is specifically crafted for that job and addresses the needs advertised
  • CV should be academically focused
    • Pedigree
    • Highlight and include details of all relevant scholarly activity
  • Publication record key (first/last author, strong journal)
    • Papers related to job search focus
  • Wildcard: Unsolicited letter from a faculty member strongly praising applicant

Fellow #19

• Read job ads very carefully
• Are they looking for junior faculty (Assistant Prof.)
• Do they want experience (3-5 years?)
• Probably not appropriate to apply for Director Positions

Fellow #20

• AP only Head and Neck Path, Cytopath Fellow
• Interested in Academics

• Strong application on paper
• Invited for interview

• Interviews were going well
  • During dinner:
    • Candidate looked at wine list and ordered an expensive bottle of wine
    • As dinner progressed:
      • Mentioned he expected to sign out consults from day one
      • Wanted Christmas, Thanksgiving and Spring break off every year so he could be with his family
      • Expected to attend USCAP and subspecialty meetings every year
    • Indicated he would only accept a large salary
Fellow #20

• No Job offer ..............

• Discussion

Fellow #21

• AP/CP double subspecialty fellow

• Interviews in Sept. / Oct.

• Job Offers from all three

• Each wants a response within a few weeks of Offer...

Fellow #21

• Stress/ uncertainty in deciding about a job
  • Early in the process
  • Time pressure
  • Uncertainty of additional openings....?

• Think about making a list of Key job attributes:
  • Location, location, location
  • Salary
  • Benefits (don’t forget to add these to compensation)
  • Time off
  • Subspecialty vs General
  • ‘Busy-ness’ ... wear and tear
  • Academic vs Community, etc.
  • Work- life balance

• Ok to ask for more time...
  • But it may not be enough time to explore all offers
  • Be honest about your situation...

• Let other groups know you have an ‘offer’ and time deadline..

• Good ‘test’ to see how reasonable the new group might be..?

Fellow #22

• AP/CP fellow training on East Coast

• Wants a West Coast job...

• Having difficulty locating opportunities...

Fellow #22

• Many of the best jobs not advertised
  • Only via selected word of mouth connections
  • Helps to finish training near desired area

• Check department/organization web sites for open searches

• Continually ask about new job openings
Fellow #23

- AP only with Cytology / Molecular fellowships
- Accepts job w local Biotech start up
- Molecular assays
- Functions as Medical Director, Medical Advisor/Consultant

Fellow #23

- New testing/ work up makes company obsolete and it goes out of business
- Fellow now has skill set that doesn’t easily translate to new emerging technologies/ businesses
- Diagnostic skill set is ‘atrophic’
  - Difficult to land or maintain a clinical opportunity

Fellow #23

- Risk of Alternate bio-tech career path
- Technologies, Targets, Usefulness of products can rapidly change
- Questions: Can the company/ you switch gears to keep up with technical/ scientific advances?
- More risk in smaller ‘one or two product’ companies
- What is the market size/ scale of the product?
- Does it relate to multiple sites/diseases?
- Do you have a fall back plan..?

Discussion

- Discussion

Summary

- Key elements to preparing for a career:
  - Things to do during training
  - Key elements: 1) well trained generally 2) good interpersonal skills 3) subspecialty expertise
  - Differences between Community/ Academic/ Industry jobs

- Strategies for landing a job offer and negotiating
  - Understand key elements of job: Location, practice style emphasis, salary, benefits, time off, flexibility, governance, competitive forces

- How to thrive on the job and evolve with your practice
  - Key elements will carry you forward
  - Add value with: IT, Molecular, Business skills, leadership, operations, marketing, innovation

Thank You...

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