Leadership: Ten Tips for Choosing an Academic Chair

Clear and realistic expectations are key to successfully hiring heads of departments, say Professor Pierre-Alain Clavien, University of Zurich, and Joseph Deiss, former President of the Swiss Confederation, in a commentary in Nature magazine.

Selecting a chair for a position in clinical academic medicine is often problematic, with the diverse demands placed on the position proving a constant source of debate. Today’s heads of departments are not only expected to be outstanding physicians, researchers, and teachers, but also adroit and cost-conscious managers. Finding people with such an extraordinary skill set is a formidable task.

To address this issue, Professor Clavien and the University of Zurich convened an international, conference in cooperation with other universities and institutions and the Swiss Academy of Medical Science (SAMS). Throughout the three-day conference, leading experts from industry, politics and academia critically examined procedures for appointing heads of departments in order to define generally applicable guidelines for appointing an academic chair.

Published as a commentary in Nature, the recommendations of the jury are summarized in ten tips outlining key criteria for top level appointments. One main cause of failing to hire successful chairs is conflicting expectations of the institutions involved, such as the hospital and the university. While the hospital may be seeking an effective manager, the university would prefer a top researcher. It is thus essential for the institutions involved to clearly define the job requirements. Aside from leadership qualities, emotional, personal and social skills are essential. And the closing tip in Nature: Don’t forget that even the best people need regular feedback, mentoring and support.

Literature:

Link: http://www.nature.com/news/leadership-ten-tips-for-choosing-an-academic-chair-1.17115

Further information:
http://www.chair4medicine.uzh.ch

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