

Finding Fit and Fighting Filters

CORD Academic Assembly 2020

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Sponsored by CORD-EM Advising Students Committee

In this handout, please find the session's goals and objectives, deliverables, and an outline of the presentation. Please see our other handouts for presentation slides, as well as a template ERAS application review process and rubric.

Goals and Objectives:

Objective 1 Learners will explore methods for evaluating strengths, priorities, and characteristics both of their programs and their residents to identify applicant qualities that are likely to yield successful matches to their programs.

Objective 2 Learners will become familiar with strategies for reviewing applications systematically, effectively and efficiently.

Objective 3 Learners will understand common pitfalls in the application review process, and develop strategies to mitigate bias.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Define "fit" as an applicant who has qualities and characteristics that predict success in training, and who also would be well served by the unique educational opportunities a given program provides.
2. Reflect on which applicant traits predict good fit in their program and how to identify ERAS data points which correlate to those traits
3. Start developing a consistent, efficient application review process
4. Identify common pitfalls to avoid, including how screening tools can amplify bias in the selection process

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. Introduction
 - a. The problem(s) with filters and fighting through the ERAS morass to find fit
 - b. Identify shared goals of how the app review/selection for interview should work
 - c. Fit as an "f" word to be careful with (bias, diversity)
2. A cautionary tale: how one program failed to fill after trialing a new ERAS application review process
 1. Our problem was a common one: how to find our 9 interns among the 1000 applicants. And to find the ones that will succeed in our program and in EM.
 2. We attempted to analyze and quantify our applicants - Attempts to "quantify" applicants were well intentioned - other programs had done similar
 3. Unfortunately our attempt to quantify was too rough - resulted in focusing on numbers - we essentially created our own filter with the intent of avoiding a filter
 4. Interviewed many candidates, but still missed the mark and didn't fill. We fell well short of our goal.
 5. Changed approach by looking deeper at our program, past candidates, matches.

1. Looked at who has succeeded in our program.
 2. Looked at what makes our program unique - location, local resources
 3. Looked at candidates with Leadership, personal interests, character traits that matched with ours
 4. Used geographic, locale, candidate based strategy after reflecting on our past successes.
- a. Building an app review algorithm to find fit, and avoid the pitfalls already discussed
1. Tips to maximize ease & efficiency of scoring system, interrater reliability, and that identify the highest-yield applications
 2. The more explicit your review process is, the less it relies on the PD and institutional memory (easier to delegate and make PD life easier!)
 3. Designing the process for your program's needs, priorities, vulnerabilities:
 1. Correlating data points and sections of the ERAS app to your program's values/priorities and markers of "high yield" (applicants likely to rank your program highly, and thrive there)
 2. Consider program branding
 1. What do you do well?
 2. How will applicants know if they fit at your program?
 3. Create a weighted scoring system, assigning relative values to each component of the app
 - a. Scores should be easy for different reviewer to consistently assign. Clarity & detail of instructions and breaking things down into smaller, more discrete components -> better interrater reliability, easier for neophytes
 - b. Total score should allow for differentiation of applications (wider range of scores > tighter clustering)
 - c. Bonus points: What makes an applicant more likely to be a good "fit" at your program, or more likely to rank you highly?
 Geography, particular interests or extracurricular experiences, having rotated at certain other, similar programs, having applied to rotate at your program, having contacted you in some form to express interest
 What do you want to actively recruit for? What does your program need more of? Diversity in terms of gender, racial/ethnic background, subspecialty interests?
 Remember: it's not enough just to invite these applicants. You have to be thoughtful and proactive about showing them how they will fit and be supported at your program.
- iii. Test run your system, checking for bias, ease of use, interrater reliability
- iv. How to construct a scoring system into ERAS, and sort apps by score
1. Score setup and building custom scores
 2. Built-in scores to use and to avoid
 3. Filtering/viewing by composite score
 4. Avoid overreliance on composite scores: need to maintain a birds-eye view of the big picture of who you're inviting.
- v. Recruiting for fit during the interview

1. Applicant selection continues well after the ERAS process
2. Interview acts as another 'filter,' can inadvertently screen out great diverse applicants
3. Interviewer preparation
 1. Take the implicit bias test, has not been shown to mitigate biases, but awareness is the first step
 2. Express explicit goal to recruit residents that may not currently 'fit' at your program - won't know unless you tell them
4. Your interview team is big, need to get everyone on the same page
 1. 'Shared vision'
 2. Blind them to USMLE scores in their packets - can skew perceptions of entire applicant
 3. Encourage standardized experience
5. Predictive value of interviews is low
 1. Slightly better with standard questions
 1. Allows more objective comparison
 2. What's 'your question' for the interview season?
6. Consider resident prep as well - social event, lunchtime, etc.
7. Guided discussion of applicants by interviewers
 1. Be mindful of 'fit' when it comes up
 2. Empower all interviewers to speak up when
 3. Limit focus on similarity to current/previous members of department
 4. Follow up on gestalt impressions
8. Creating rank list
 1. Limit the weight of the interview - low predictive value
 2. Re-review any written comments for possible bias, exclude any possibly unfair impressions
 3. When in doubt, seek external opinions - SLOE comments, faculty at applicant's own institution. (Deeper relationships than just 1 interview day)