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Notes from Leadership Lunch with Jennifer Bol, executive search consultant, Spencer Stuart

Top three top components of executive function are:
- Critical and conceptual thinking;
- Interpersonal and social awareness; and
- Self-evaluation and adjustment (of the three, this correlates most highly with executive success)

Also, search committees look for a track record of:
- Driving results – bringing people along to achieve an outcome
- Strategic thinking – developing a strategic plan that’s based on an understanding of the external environment
- Leading change
- Leading people (team building, positive relationships)
- Collaborating & influencing (the ability to influence people who don’t report to you)
- Building capability (developing people and organizational capacity)

How to Develop an Administrative Profile
- Get on university-wide committees that deal with university-wide resource allocation
- Keep an academic vita and an administrative vita. Under each administrative role you have held, list four or five bullet points illustrating your accomplishments as they map out to the skills and qualities listed above.
- Keep your public profile updated. Post your CV on line.

Recruiting Firms
- Recruiting firms can encourage hiring committees to meet specific candidates.
- Recruiting firm’s role is to craft the strategies to gather recruits. Also, firm reps talk with sources, reach out to people too senior for the position to get their views on potential candidates.

General suggestions:
- Develop a list of mentors both within existing institution and at another university who will recommend you for such positions. Mentors should have significantly more experience than the candidate
- Before going on an interview, mine the publicly available information. Talk with trusted sources at the institution and/or people who used to be there. Committee wants candidates to show curiosity and find out information on their own ahead of the interview.
- Try to direct the answers to hypothetical questions back to your specific experience. “I am not familiar enough with _____ to tell you where you should be going but I know that Cornell I led the team that did …..”
• You can ask recruiting firm for the format of the interview, what you should prepare, if the committee has any particular concerns that you should be prepared to explain.
• It is acceptable to ask committees if there’s something they would like to learn about you.
• Beware of going into “broadcast mode,” telling everyone how great you are. You are evaluated on your ability to respond to a group and listen.
• Talk about fundraising and resource management experience;
• Demonstrate you know what is going on in the “outside world” and how it impacts your field or institution
• Articulate how you think about access, affordability and diversity in higher education, especially for high level dean/provost/president positions.
• Take time to reflect on the business model of higher education (it is under internal and external pressures).
• Ask search firms or committees to let you know if you’re not competitive so your and their time will be respected.
• Not a good idea to be in a lot of searches and never be selected. Choose carefully.
• Think about “scope and scale” – explain the scope of your work and be able to explain how you will scale it up.