

Writing CVs and Cover Letters for Academic Positions:

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Fields

Slides are based on work by:

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Agenda

- Faculty and search committee perspectives
- Self analysis of your background
- Relevancy of both documents
- Tailoring and refining your documents
- Best recommendations for each section

What does the search committee do with these materials?

- Apps reviewed individually
- Committee consensus
- Documents are skimmed to make the first cut

Pedigree
Fit
Productivity
Reputation
Ability
Collegiality

Think Like a Search Committee!

First

Take 2.5 minutes to individually review each application
Identify elements that stand out for you

5 minutes

Then

Share your opinions with your “faculty partner” and compare notes

5 minutes

Prioritize Your Elements

Job Application Self-Analysis

1. Identify *one* key element in each area that you would want to emphasize on your CV. If you don't have an item to add to an area, skip over it and move on to the next.
2. In the 'Ranking' column, rank order the elements in terms of your strongest applicant characteristics to the job for which you are applying or considering applying.

Ranking	CV Element	Primary emphasis
	Contact Information	
	Education and Training	
	Certification and Licensure	
	Research Experience	
	Research Interests	
	Teaching Experience	
	Clinical Experience	
	Mentoring Experience	

What is a Curriculum Vita?

“the course of one’s life (career)”

Relevant professional history and a **marketing tool**

- Used to apply for teaching/academic research positions
- Supporting document for grant proposal
- Required document for departmental reviews (promotion/tenure)
- Audits or accreditation reviews

Academic cover letter structure

- 1-1.5 pages in length
- Conservative sales document ***tailored to a position***
- Writing quality important

Cover letter:

Tells your strongest story as it fits to the job

Makes the case for your CV

Convinces reader that you are a fit and serious
Distillation of the most essential points

Chair, Faculty Search Committee
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
California Polytechnic Institute
200 Maxim Street
Town, CA 91111

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to apply for the faculty position in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at California Polytechnic Institute advertised in the December 17th issue of Science. Currently, I am a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California at San Francisco in the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry in the laboratory of Dr. Jean-Pierre Raffarin.

My primary research goals are directed toward understanding the basis for molecular recognition at the atomic level using physics-based computational methods. As a postdoctoral fellow at UCSF and as a graduate student at Indiana University with Dr. Lionel Jospin, I have balanced method development for computational structure-based drug design with the application of these powerful tools to relevant antiviral and anticancer targets. My future research plans are aimed at *one sentence to discuss near term research goals*. My ultimate aim is to *one - two sentence(s) to discuss long term research goals*.

Beyond my research successes (including nine papers to date and others in preparation) I have been fortunate to obtain a wide-range of teaching experiences. As my curriculum vitae indicates, my teaching roles have included teaching assistant, instructor, guest lecturer, and mentor. I received the Indiana University *Julia Childs Teaching Award* as well as the Indiana University *Koffi Annon Memorial Prize* for best Ph.D. thesis. My experience with outstanding mentors has made me realize just how important one good teacher can be to a student. I will work hard to be the best teacher I can.

Enclosed are my curriculum vitae, publication record, teaching and research statements, and proposed research budget. Letters of recommendation are being sent under separate cover, and, if desired I would be happy to provide letters in support of my teaching. Please do not hesitate to contact me if further information is needed.

Sincerely,

Francois La Rouche Foucauld

Review job description, website, faculty profiles.

Use words/phrases directly from job description

Cover Letter Anatomy

Paragraph 1:

- Statement of what you're applying for that shows you've read the job description.
- Be succinct.

Paragraph 2:

- Your best argument as to your fit.
- How job is launching point for your career.
- How you plan to meet stated department needs.
- The best fit between what you offer and what they asked for.

Paragraph 3 & 4:

- Your second and third best arguments.

Examples of Arguments

“My work on X fits perfectly with your department's interest in Y...”

“The job posting expressed particular interest in candidates who could do Y. Not only do I have expertise in teaching Y, Z and Q, I also would be interested in developing or teaching courses in A and/or B, which would complement the department's existing offerings in C.”

“I was trained in M, N and O, cutting edge methods in the area of research highlighted in the job posting.”

“My interests overlap closely with Dr. B and Dr. E. If I were to join the department, one of my first steps would be to discuss their interest in collaborating on research in Area Z.”

CV Elements

- Name, address, phone, email, website
- Education (graduate, undergraduate)
- Relevant Experience
 - Research
 - Teaching
 - Mentoring
 - Clinical
- Honors and Awards
- Grants and Fellowships
- Publications
- Presentations - Posters, talks, invited talks
- Memberships or Professional Societies
- References

Optional Elements

- Research Interests
- University Service or Leadership
- Community Service and Outreach
- Contributions to the Profession
(contributed to reviews)
- Additional Training or Professional
Development
- Languages
- Licensure, Certification, Registration
- Community Involvement

First Things First: Contact Info

Name

Your Address

Departmental Address

Phone

Email

Website

Education & Honors

Education (graduate, undergraduate)

- Degree, University, field/major, date of completion/milestone
- Concentrations or other relevant information
- Dissertation/thesis title
- Dissertation/thesis advisors
- Key distinction tied to degree (“BS with Honors”)

Ordering Experience

WHAT ORDER & DETAIL

Depends on emphasis

- **Research-intensive:**
 - List relevant research experience section (or grants/fellowships) first
- **Teaching-intensive:**
 - List relevant teaching experience before research experience
 - Describe relevant teaching-related activities

Research Experience

- Your title, department, dates
- University/Institution, location
- Advisor name
- Research project title

Teaching Experience

- University, location, department, dates
- Your title, course title
- 1-sentence description of course content, size, level of students
- 1-sentence description of your role/responsibilities
- May highlight teaching awards, recognition

Mentoring Experience

- Mentee's class level, dates
- Project title
- Resulted in [publication/poster/presentation]

Publications

- **Bold (highlight)** your name so that it is easy to find in the line-up
- Indicate if article was featured in “news” of a journal

PUBLICATIONS

L. Qian and E. Winfree (2011). Scaling up digital circuit computation with DNA strand displacement cascades. *Science*. 322: 1196-1201.

- Featured in *Science* Perspective: “Scaling Up DNA Computation”, by J.H. Reif.

R. Goodman, **L. Qian**, E. Winfree (2009). Another impressive article. *J. Comp. Bio.* 57: 140-148.

Teaching Emphasis

Order of sections matters:

1. Teaching Experience
 2. Research Experience
 3. Mentoring Experience
- Point out undergrads who co-author publications
 - Pedagogical training (if you've done this)
 - Teaching interests (keywords or course names)
 - At least 1 reference should speak to teaching/mentoring

Formatting Tips

Consistency

- Same font throughout entire application
- Headings, dates, etc. placed/formatted the same throughout
- List all sections in ***reverse chronological*** order
 - If “older” experience is more impressive, consider whether you can create a sub-category that would put that experience at the top.
- Put most important info toward the left
- Avoid long lines of content (try to break into multiple lines)

More on Formatting

- **Bold**
- *Italics*
- Underline
- ALL CAPS
- Larger font
- Spacing
- Text alignment

Page 1 is prime space!!

Satyendra Nath Bose, Ph.D.

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University of California, San Francisco
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415-826-7500 (office)

1230 Stardust Lane
San Francisco, CA 91111
123-456-7890 (home)
123-456-7890 (cell)
SNB@gladstone.ucsf.edu

EDUCATION

- | | | |
|--------------|---|------------|
| Ph.D. | University of California, Davis
Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology Program
<i>Advisor: Srinivasa Ramanujan, Ph.D.</i>
<i>Committee: C.V. Raman, Ph.D., J. Sarabhai, Jr., Ph.D.</i>
<i>Thesis: Name of thesis here.</i> | March 1998 |
| B.A. | Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH
Biology, <i>cum laude</i> | May 1991 |
| | University College, Oxford University, Oxford, England
Study Abroad Program
<i>Specialized tutorial in Philosophy of Science</i> | Fall 1989 |

HONORS & AWARDS

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| GAANN Fellowship, UC Davis | 1993–1995 |
| Phi Beta Kappa | 1991 |
| Thom Prize in Biology, Xavier University | 1991 |
| Senior Service Award, Xavier University | 1991 |
| Lydia Jones Library Prize, Xavier University | 1991 |
| Sigma Xi | 1990 |
| Best Seminar in Plant or Microbial Biology
West Coast Undergraduate Research Conference in the Biological Sciences | 1990 |
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Control What You Can Control

You can control the first impression w/CV & letter.

- Do your research
- Tell your story with your cover letter
- Create a CV that supports that story
- Follow standards, but ***tailor to your own job search.***

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