Overview of the faculty job application process

Launching your academic job search and application material preparation overview

Bill Lindstaedt, MS
career.ucsf.edu

Acknowledgement:
Cynthia Fuhrmann, PhD
Assistant Dean, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Log on to socrative.com
Select “student login” at the top
Room number: OCPD
Answer 5 questions!
Click “Finish”

This workshop is offered as part of OCPD’s PAC-UP Programs
Planning your Academic Career for Upcoming Professors
For more programs: bit.ly/eventspacup
Agenda

- Overview of academic job search
  - Academic job market in US
  - Academic job search process/calendar
  - Application components

- Crafting your CV and cover letter:
  - Content, format, layout
  - Exercise: You are on the search committee!

- Planning exercise

- Tailoring to refine your documents

- Tips for:
  - Research statements
  - Teaching statements
  - Letters of recommendation
## Academia in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Higher Ed Institutions in the US</td>
<td>3941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral/Research Universities “R1”</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford, UC Berkeley, other UC’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flagship campuses within state univ’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(UW Madison)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Colleges and Universities</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal State Univ system (SFSU, SJSU, CSU-EB)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNY system, former state “teachers’” colleges (UW-Stevens Pt)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Colleges “PUI”</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills College, Amherst College, Haverford College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Colleges</td>
<td>1669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Colleges (CCSF, Skyline)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized Institutions</td>
<td>766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Schools and Centers (ex, UCSF)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other separate Health Professions Schools</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools of Engineering and Technology</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Art, Music, Design; Law; Bus and Mgt, etc)</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal Colleges</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Carnegie Classification
Different types of institutions = Different application materials

Classifications - Carnegie Foundation
carnegieclassifications.iu.edu
Useful for tailoring applications
-What balance of teaching/research at SF State vs CSU-EB?
-What are all the research 1 institutions near NYC?

What types of institutions are you prepared for?
UCSF Academic Career Readiness Assessment (ACRA)
career.ucsf.edu/acra

What are search committees looking for at Research (R),
Research-Teaching (RT) and Teaching (T) universities?
Academic Career Readiness Assessment

Research-Intensive Institutions

Academic Career Readiness Assessment Framework

Level 1  Level 2  Level 3  Level 4

Publications
- Has produced a few papers throughout career regardless of authorship or impact
- Has produced 1st author papers of moderate impact to field
- Has produced 1st author papers from PD and PhD, of high impact to field but not necessarily in Cell, Nature, or Science
- Has produced 1st author papers from PD and PhD, of high impact to field, at least 1 of which is in Cell, Nature, or Science

Recommendations
- Enthusiastic recommendations from both PD and PhD advisors
- Enthusiastic recs from PD and PhD advisors and from other respected scientists who know candidate well
- Recommendations emphasize candidate's ability to be successful as a PI
- Enthusiastic recs by leaders in the field saying candidate shows the potential to become a leader in the field

Scientific Independence
- Not clear candidate is capable of being main driver of research program
- Has the experience, tenacity, resourcefulness, and the collaborators they need to get the proposed experiments done
- Also displays the intellectual agility and creativity needed to develop rigorous experimental designs, envision alternative approaches, evaluate the results, and set new directions for the project.
- In addition, the candidate's proposed research program will occupy a niche distinct from that of their postdoc advisor

Scientific Vision
- Proposes a next set of experiments, but does
- Proposed research program is not ambitious enough for an RO1 grant; either directed at
- Proposed 5-10 year plan identifies important and exciting questions in the field and 5-10 year plan identifies important and exciting questions in the field
Academic Job Search Calendar

Summer-Fall
• Make choices on types of positions and institutions to pursue
• Network! Speak at conferences!
• Previous winter/spring – all publications submitted
• Assemble application materials; peer/mentor review
• Seek advice, support of advisor(s) (what can be taken with you?)

August – Oct.
• Look for postings weekly; begin to apply
• Request letters of recommendation

• Continue applying
• Ask advisors to call on your behalf
• Prepare for screening interviews
• Prepare for job talks

Jan. – May
• Campus interview visits
• Negotiate offers

Manage your time!
• Rifle approach (10-20 apps carefully tailored)
• Shotgun approach
• Splatter approach
How do I find out about faculty openings?

- Major scientific journals such as Science, Nature
- FASEB careers site
- Specialty journals in your field (ASBMB, C&E News, etc.)
- Chronicle of Higher Education (teaching-focused)
- California Community College Registry
- Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (“HERC”; regional)
- University/college websites
- Meetings/conferences
- Your network
How do I find out about faculty openings?
What application components will be requested?

- Curriculum Vitae
- Cover letter / Letter of Application
- Letters of reference (or list of references)
- Description of future research plans/interests
- Description of research accomplishments/experience
- Representative reprints
- **Statement of teaching philosophy / “teaching statement”**
- Teaching interests / Descriptions of possible courses
- Evidence of effective teaching
- Transcripts
What does the search committee do with these materials?

- Applications reviewed by individuals, consensus in committee

- Many documents are skimmed to make the first cut
  - **Pedigree**: see CV
  - **Fit – clinical/teaching/research**: see CV and Cover Ltr
  - **Reputation, Ability, Collegiality**: see References
  - **Productivity**: see CV (pubs, degree rate, teaching)
  - Already vetted as having potential: see CV (funding)

- Next, research/teaching statements may be read carefully

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

- Formatting, Order of sections, Size of sections
- Follow standards, but **tailor to your own job search priorities**.
How can you design CV’s, letters, statements, that present you in the best possible light?

- What 2 – 4 factors about your background, accomplishments, skills should make a search committee want to talk to you?
  - How can you organize your documents so that these items stand out?
    - Order, size, placement, formatting to draw attention, repetition, level of detail)

- What is that you are concerned about? What are you afraid that hiring committees will perceive to be weaknesses of your background?
  - How can you counter these weaknesses within your documents?
    - Directly countering the weak point, using recommenders to counter, spacing, size, level of detail)
Agenda

- Overview of academic job search
  - Academic job market in US
  - Academic job search process/calendar
  - Application components

- Crafting your CV and cover letter:
  - Content, format, layout
  - You are on the search committee!
  - Tailoring to refine your documents

- Tips for:
  - Research statements
  - Teaching statements
  - Letters of recommendation
What is a CV?

Curriculum Vitae –
“the course of one’s life, or career”
• Document used to apply for faculty positions
• Complete professional history

Other uses for your CV: these might be different CV formats
■ Supporting document for grant proposal
■ Required document for departmental reviews (promotion/tenure)
■ Audits or accreditation reviews

KEEP IT UPDATED!
Sample CV’s from successful applicants

Samples:
career.ucsf.edu
- PhDs - (AC) Academic Careers - Samples for Academic Positions
Sections of a CV

- Name, address, phone, email, website

- NOT personal information! (birthdate, marital status, etc.)

- 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”)
Sections of a CV (cont.)

- Research Experience
- Teaching Experience
- Mentoring Experience
- Clinical Experience
- Honors and Awards
- Grants and Fellowships
- Publications:
  - Refereed Articles
  - Book Chapters
  - Abstracts
- Presentations
  - Posters, talks, invited talks
- Memberships or Professional Societies

- Last page: List of references (with title, relationship to you, contact info)

**Name & page #** in header or footer each page (except pg. 1)
Sections of a CV (cont.)

Not applicable to everyone, but could be useful to you:

- Research Interests (if no research statement is requested)
- University Service or Leadership Experience
- Community Service and Outreach
- Contributions to the Profession (contributed to reviews)
- Additional Training or Professional Development
- Languages
- Licensure, Certification, Registration (clinical/technical)
- Community Involvement
The ORDER of these sections, WHICH sections to include, and level of DETAIL differs for research- vs. teaching-intensive positions.

- Research-intensive applications:
  - List research experience section (or grants/fellowships) first

- Teaching-intensive applications:
  - List teaching experience before research experience
  - Describe all teaching-related activities
Academic cover letters

- 1-1.5 pages in length

- Conservative sales document *tailored to each position*
  - Writing quality important
  - No bullets or other organizational formatting
  - Perfect grammar and sentence structure
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 Kofi Annan 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 Rouchefoucauld
 Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry
 University of California at San Francisco
 600 16th Street, Box 2240
 San Francisco, CA 94143
 (415) 123-4567

Sample available at: career.ucsf.edu
Dear Dr. Cutler:

I am glad to have the opportunity to apply for a faculty position in the Biology Department of Bard College. I am writing in response to your advertisement in the November 9 issue of Science Magazine, which announced a position vacancy for a Quantitative Biologist. I am Molecular Biologist using quantitative methods to examine the relationship between…. I am currently finishing a postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Ima Goddess, at the University of California at San Francisco.

My approach to teaching undergraduates and conducting research with undergraduates has developed over several years, through my experience developing and delivering innovative course materials to undergraduates in both laboratory and classroom settings. In my experience, the best teaching is done through hands-on experience, so I will try to engage students in my courses by encouraging the maximum possible laboratory participation…

The research project I would like to pursue at Bard College involves the development of… This is a project which I feel will interest and inspire undergraduates while allowing me to continue to produce high profile work together with existing and new collaborators.

Included in this packet, please find my curriculum vitae, statements regarding my research and teaching in…

I appreciate being considered for your faculty position. Please let me know if I can provide additional information in support of my application…
Activity:

You are the Search Committee!

First:
2.5 minutes to read each statement
(I’ll time you!)
Who do YOU think should be the winning candidate and WHY?

Then:
Form committee, select a “chair.”
Chair: Facilitate discussion, hear from everyone,
committee should reach consensus within 5 minutes.

(and: what did you like/dislike about letter or CV?)
Formatting Your CV: Highlight what’s important

- **Bold**
- **Italics**
- **Underline**
- **ALL CAPS**
- **Larger font**
- **Spacing**
- **Bullet point**

**Page 1 is prime space!!**

Define acronyms!
Formatting your CV: Research Experience

- **Research Experience**
  - Your title, department, dates (years or months)
  - University/Institution, location
  - Advisor name
  - Research project title (or bullet points)

**Postdoctoral Fellow**, Biochemistry Department  
**University of California, San Francisco**  
Advisor: Samuel Jackson, Ph.D.

- **Discovered** that polymerase binds DNA at the XO site by comparing three structures solved by x-ray crystallography.
- **Designed** a gel-based assay for DNA binding, which will be used by four other researchers in the lab.
- **Findings** published in *Science* and highlighted in *C&E News*.

- Each bullet describes your contribution to the field or lab, or major achievements (begin each with a *verb*)
Formatting your CV: Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience

- University, location, department, dates (list each semester/quarter)
- 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

University of California, San Francisco

**Lecturer, Fundamentals of Nursing Course** Fall 2010
- Delivered weekly lectures to core course for 15 MS-level nursing students
- Course evaluation process singled out my ability to etc…

**Teaching Assistant, Community Nursing Course** Spring 2009
- Coordinated small discussion groups of 8-10 nursing students…
Formatting your CV: Publications

Publications

- **bold** your name (easy to find where you are in author line-up)
- Indicate if article was featured in “news” of a journal

---

**PUBLICATIONS**


Agenda

- Overview of academic job search
  - Academic job market in US
  - Academic job search process/calendar
  - Application components

- Crafting your CV and cover letter:
  - Content, format, layout
  - You are on the search committee!
  - Tailoring to refine your documents

- Tips for:
  - Research statements
  - Teaching statements
  - Letters of recommendation
Teaching Statements

What do they ask for?

Teaching Statement?
Teaching Philosophy Statement?
Statement of Teaching Interests?

Appropriate length – 1 page, 2 max

Support your teaching philosophy with real examples from teaching

Provide reader with mind-picture of you in class

Visit career.ucsf.edu for instructions and samples
Research Statements

Purpose

- Your research is exciting, important
- Your research will be of interest to funders
- You are able to communicate impact
- Your research is a good fit to the hiring department
- You are the right person to do this research
- At PUI’s: Your research is appropriate for undergraduates

A research statement is…

“…a readable, compelling agenda that fits well with the needs, facilities and goals of the department and answers the question, ‘Why must this work be done?’”

- sciencecareers.org academic careers toolkit
Research Statements - Basics

Expectations vary by discipline!

Ask questions & look at successful samples from colleagues.

Length: follow guidelines in job ad.
Life Sciences = 2 pages; Chemistry = 4+ pages.

Much less detail than a grant. Plan for next 5 years, PLUS a sense of your longer-term vision.

Evaluating you as a candidate – use “I” (first person).

Emphasize what you will do and why; less emphasis on how you will do it.

“You are now moving from bench worker to leader/visionary.”

- Francoise Chanut, science writing specialist
Research Statements – Content & Structure

- **Title** (forces you to define a succinct theme to your research)
- **Lead paragraph** acts as a summary/preview of overall statement:
  - Who are you, and in brief what will you focus on?
  - (“I am a structural biologist who uses x-ray crystallographic and computational methods to identify drug targets in ….”)
- Your **prior research experience**, especially as it relates to your future plans.
  - Are you the right person to do the research?
  - How are you uniquely qualified?
- **Research aims** for next 5 years
  - Is it interesting and important research? Fundable?
- **Long-term research goals**
  - (“Ultimately, I see this work leading to…”)
  - Do you have a vision? Are your goals aligned with the department?
Research Statements - Formatting

Make it easy to read!

- Headings
- Figures
- Build signals in to simple, clear writing
  - “I am a computational biologist focused on…”
  - “While much is known about ____, a gap remains: ____”
  - “It is critical to understand __________ in order to…”
  - “My graduate and postdoctoral training have uniquely prepared me to tackle these questions. In my doctoral work… In my postdoctoral studies…”
  - “The long-term goal of my research is to…”
Research Statements - Tailoring

**Tailor it!** (You may have a few versions)

- **To institution type**
  - Research vs. Research-Teaching vs. PUI
  - Scope, difficulty, describe fit to undergrads when appropriate

- **To department**
  - Perhaps keep the same aims, but modify what will interest the department in the executive summary (why it’s interesting) and long-term goals
  - Example: Molecular Biology dept at comprehensive university vs. Pharmacology dept at academic medical campus
Research Statements – Get feedback in stages!

**Now (pre-draft):** Feedback on your *ideas*

Write aims & long-term vision as bullet points, and get feedback before time invested.

**Strong draft:** Feedback on your *writing*

Feedback on writing, by people within sub-field and in other fields (use Research Statement Checklists).

**Encourage reference letter writers to indicate:**

- Your future research plans are strong, and you are the right person to do the work.

- Your current PI: OK for you to “take project with you”, will not compete with you

- Will collaborate with you (if applicable)
Step 5: Develop your Research Statement and/or Teaching Statement

Research Statements:
- Download the OCGP Tip Sheet and Checklist: "Developing a Winning Research Statement."
- Read "Writing a Research Plan" a 2002 article by Jim Austin in Science Careers.
- Read "Developing Your Research Statement" a webpage that demystifies what a research statement is and offers some brief do's and don'ts.
- Watch a video: "Crafting the Research Statement." This narrated Powerpoint presentation by Jim Paweleczek from Penn State describes what a research statement is, why committees ask for them, how committees ask for them, and the best practices for putting one together (20 mins).

Teaching Statements or Statements of Teaching Philosophy:
- Use the Rubric for Statements of Teaching Philosophy (Kaplan, O'Neal, Moizlish, Cantilo, and Kardia, 2000) to develop your teaching statement.
- Browse the "Teaching Philosophy webpage" for sample teaching statements & how-to articles targeted to scientists, by the University of Michigan’s Center for Research on Learning and Teaching.
- Download "Writing A Teaching Statement" by the University of Washington's Center for Instructional Development and Research. Contains good writing prompts to help you get started writing your teaching statement.
- For more samples, visit our Academic Samples page.

Go back to Creating your Application Materials page
Developing a Winning Research Statement

Checklist for Science Content

☐ Is the proposed research sufficiently important? (“This work must be done!”)
☐ Is it sufficiently novel?
☐ Is it sufficiently different from the candidate’s past work? Advisor’s work?
☐ Is it too ambitious? Too broad? Ambitious enough? Too narrow?
☐ Is it customized for the position? Can it realistically be carried out in the department/school?
☐ Is it detailed enough to be convincing? (Yet not boring?)
☐ Does it convince the reader that the work is fundable?
☐ Does it convince the reader that the candidate can complete the work? Are backup approaches mentioned?

Checklist for Layout and Structure

☐ Is the statement too long? (1-3, perhaps 4 pages)
☐ Does it follow a clear, logical outline or roadmap?
☐ Is it divided into short sections focused on major themes, with explicit headings? Plenty of white space between sections?
☐ Are lists bullet-pointed?
☐ Are sentences easy to read?
☐ Is there good flow between and within paragraphs?
☐ Are data presented in a format that is easy to review?
☐ Are graphs/pictures used to maximum advantage?
☐ Is the “attitude” right? (i.e., not overly hyped language? Others credited? Focused on contributions to field, rather than personal experiences or skills?)
Letters of Recommendation

Hugely important to many search committees!

Generally 3 letters/references:
PhD Advisor, Postdoctoral Advisor, Collaborator, or other Research Mentor
(If applicable: someone who can speak to your teaching)
Letters of Recommendation

Timeline: Several weeks minimum, plus reminders

How do I ask for a letter?

The initial ask, to ensure a positive letter

“…Can I count on you to provide a *positive* letter of recommendation for me?”

“…Would you be willing to write a supportive letter for me?”

Provide at follow-up meeting:

- Job posting(s)
- CV
- Research statement (teaching statement)
- Paper(s)
- Key items to address
Letters of Recommendation

**Offer points** that he/she should emphasize!

- “I’d be happy to provide an outline”
- List: What points do I want to stress about myself?
- List: What will be perceived as the weaknesses of my app?
- Divide up between recommenders based on their ability to address those issues or counter particular weaknesses

PI says, “Write your own letter” -- An opportunity!?  
- Search for “HHMI letter of recommendation”
Summary

- Get started early: Prepare a basic application
  - CV, research statement, teaching statement, cover letter
- Tailor applications to each institution/department
- This is a team effort!
  - Mentors, assistants, etc.
  - Build relationships, give enough time, express gratitude to those who help you
- Be very organized!
- Enjoy it: learn from the experience, grow as a professional

Resources

- career.ucsf.edu -> academic careers
Overview of the faculty job application process

Launching your academic job search and application material preparation overview

Bill Lindstaedt, MS
career.ucsf.edu

Acknowledgement:
Cynthia Fuhrmann, PhD
Assistant Dean, University of Massachusetts Medical School

Log on to socrative.com
Select “student login” at the top
Room number: OCPD
Answer 5 questions!
Click “Finish”

This workshop is offered as part of OCPD’s PAC-UP Programs
Planning your Academic Career for Upcoming Professors
For more programs: bit.ly/eventspacup