

DESIGNING A COVER LETTER FOR A FACULTY POSITION

General Tips Regarding the CL:

- **Highlight and summarize your strengths and draw your reader to them in your materials. The CL should be a guide to your application package.**
- **Tailor the CL to your position - make a case that you fit the ad, that you are a match for the position, the department, the colleagues**
 - Make positive claims that will make the committee want to read your CV (to validate them),
 - Let your personality show in a positive light,
 - Show you can communicate in an organized, effective way,
 - Avoid conveying negative impressions (sloppiness, language),
 - Do not repeat the information in your CV and other materials,

Questions to reflect on before you start writing your CL:

1. **What are your strengths as a future faculty, independently of a given position?**
 - a. How can you demonstrate *productivity* (publication rate, impact factor)?
 - b. How can you demonstrate *fundability* of your proposed research (previous success at getting funding, past contribution to funded grant proposals in your lab, innovative ideas, relevance of your research for particular NIH funding programs)?
 - c. How can you demonstrate *leadership* in the field (clear vision for your research, extensive expertise in your area, ability to conduct research independently, recognition by peers, ability to recognize potential areas for collaboration, ability to mentor and manage others)
2. **What are your strengths as a candidate for this particular position?**
 - a. How well do you fit the needs of the department in terms of research focus (how well can you tailor your communication to the posting, and possibly to what you found out about the position through your research/discussions with colleagues at that institution)?
 - b. How well do you fit in as a colleague? (this may transpire through your CL - "do no harm")

Suggested Layout:

Paragraph 1: What position you are applying for, where it was posted, what you currently do and where.

Paragraph 2: What your area of expertise is, what you have accomplished to this date (details in CV), who you've worked with (details in CV). Highlight your strengths as a candidate for this position, make them want to read your CV.

Paragraph 3: What is your research vision (details in RS), why is this relevant (details in RS), is it fundable (details in RS), does it fit with the position, the department, the institution?

Paragraph 4: In what other ways will you contribute to the department (service, outreach, teaching - details in CV), what have you done that can demonstrate you will do any of this?

Paragraph 5: Express enthusiasm for the position, the colleagues, the department, the institution.