



CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROFESSIONALS

THE LETTER OF APPLICATION

When writing your letter of application, it's important point to remember that the college search committee and the internal and external constituents have developed the position profile to help them select their new administrator that meets the needs and culture of their organization.

If the profile states, “Applicants should state in their letters of application how they would address the issues identified,” your letter of application should address those issues in a clear and concise manner. The committee wants to know what you have accomplished and how they can relate those accomplishments to their position. Most letters are five pages or less, unless otherwise specified in the profile.

Use bullets and address the points in the order they appear. Be brief and refer the reader to the resume where detailed information is highlighted. Demonstrate in your cover letter that you are qualified, so that they can easily determine how your experience matches their needs.

Although some committee members will read a narrative letter of application and “check off” the statements that seem to relate to the profile, most prefer a candidate’s letter to list the items and the candidate’s response, in order. The committee is reading a lot of material, and one of your goals is to make yours as easy as possible for them to read and analyze.

Always check over your letter of application to assure that you haven’t overlooked spelling, typographical or grammatical errors or inadvertently included the name of the previous institution to which you last applied. Candidates are regularly eliminated because of such slip-ups.

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THE RESUME

The details regarding your specific responsibilities and accomplishments should be in the resume. The letter of application describes how you meet the profile characteristics and can be done in two or three sentences for each item in the profile. The resume documents specifically what you have accomplished.

- Put your name and page number on the top of each page, using a plain, white background in 12 point, black, Cambria or Times New Roman font. In most cases electronic submission is preferred, but double check the profile for the committee's preference.
- If a hard copy of your materials is requested, use plain white 24# paper. In addition, do not staple or bind your resume and cover letter. It creates additional work for the college staff who will be duplicating and organizing your materials.
- Never use your college letterhead stationery.
- Aim for a crisp, clean, professional look. Avoid adding graphics and colors to your materials.

The following is most effective for a senior administrator's resume (*see Sample Resume*):

Section 1: Name, including maiden name, Home and Work Address, Home and Work Telephone Numbers, including office extension numbers. The maiden name is used for degree and past employment verification.

Section 2: Professional Experience in reverse chronological order, with your current position listed first.

Provide basic information about your current and two or three most recent college employers. Include total headcount and FTE, total budget, number of faculty (both full time and part time), geographical area/population served, etc.

For your position, include the total budget for which you are responsible, number of staff supervised, etc. You want the search committee to understand your institution and to see it as comparable to their institution. You also want them to know how your position fits into your institution as a whole.

In addition to “Responsibilities,” create an “Accomplishments” section for each of your three most recent positions and list activities that can be credited to you and your team under your leadership. It’s all right to give yourself credit where it is due. Be brief and highlight significant accomplishments.

- Section 3: Formal Education;
- Section 4: Faculty or Teaching Experience;
- Section 5: Community Activities;
- Section 6: Awards;
- Section 7: Grants or Proposals Funded;
- Section 8: Professional Activities;
- Section 9: College Committees;
- Section 10: Consultancies, Workshop Presentations;
- Section 11: Publications;
- Section 12: References.

If you have a significant list of presentations, awards, publications, or activities, label the section “selected” and either choose those most relevant to the positions you are seeking or list details for a five to ten-year period.

