

## Preparing for the Academic Job Hunt

**Cynthia Fuhrmann, PhD**

Assistant Dean, Career & Professional Development

Assistant Professor, Biochemistry & Molecular Pharmacology

University of Massachusetts Medical School

 @CnFuhrmann

Thank you to Bill Lindstaedt (UCSF)



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## Agenda

- Overview of academic job search
- Pulling together your materials
- Things you can do now to position yourself



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## Academia in the US (circ. 2010)

<b>TOTAL Higher Ed Institutions in the US</b>	<b>4,634</b>	
<b>Doctoral/Research Universities</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>6%</b>
Harvard, UMass Amherst, UW Madison, etc. WPI		
<b>Master's Colleges and Universities</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>16%</b>
Worcester State University Former state "teachers" colleges (CUNY; Framingham State; Cal States)		
<b>Baccalaureate Colleges "PUI"</b>	<b>810</b>	<b>18%</b>
College of the Holy Cross, Amherst College, Haverford College		
<b>Associates Colleges</b>	<b>1917</b>	<b>41%</b>
Community Colleges (Quinsigamond CC); for-profit or non-profit		
<b>Specialized Institutions</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>19%</b>
Medical Schools and Centers (ex, UMMS, UCSF) 54 Other separate Health Professions Schools 165 Schools of Engineering and Technology 64 Other (Art, Music, Design; Law; Business/Mgt, etc.) 571		
<b>Tribal Colleges</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>0.7%</b>

Source: 2010 Carnegie Classification; National Center for Educational Statistics, IPEDS Fall Enrollment (2009)

## Academia in the US – Learn more

### Carnegie Classifications

<http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/>

### About careers at each:

Chronicle of Higher Education, careers section

[www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)

AAAS' s sciencecareers.org

[www.sciencecareers.org](http://www.sciencecareers.org)



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Prepared by Cynthia Fuhrmann (UMMS)  
and Bill Lindstaedt (UCSF)

## Academic Job Search Calendar

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Before August<br/>(prior year)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make choices on types of positions and institutions to pursue</li><li>• <b>Network! Speak at conferences!</b></li><li>• Previous winter/spring – <b>all publications submitted</b></li><li>• Assemble application materials; peer/mentor review</li><li>• Seek advice, support of advisor(s) (<b>what can be taken with you?</b>)</li></ul> |
| <b>August – Oct.</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look for postings weekly; begin to apply</li><li>• Request letters of recommendation</li></ul>  |
| <b>Oct. – Jan.</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue applying</li><li>• <b>TRACK letters/applications</b></li><li>• Ask advisors to call on your behalf</li><li>• Prepare for screening interviews</li><li>• Prepare for job talks</li></ul>  |
| <b>Jan. – May<br/>(or Oct.!)</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campus interview visits</li><li>• Negotiate offers</li></ul>  |

### 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
- Specialty journals in your field (ASCB, C&E News, etc.)
- Chronicle of Higher Education (teaching-focused)
- Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (“HERC”; regional)
- University/college websites
- **Meetings/conferences**
- **Your network**

## What will they ask for?

- Curriculum Vitae
- Cover letter / Letter of Application
- Letters of reference (or list of references)
- Research
  - Description of future research plans/interests
  - Description of research accomplishments/experience
  - Representative reprints
- Teaching
  - 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?

- 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.***

## What is a CV?

**Curriculum Vitae –**  
“the course of one’s life, or career”

Uses for your CV → *each should have a format that serves its purpose*

- **Postdoctoral or academic job search**
- Supporting document for grant proposal
- Required document for departmental reviews (promotion/tenure)
- Audits or accreditation reviews

KEEP IT UPDATED!

Samples: <http://career.ucsf.edu>

## CV: Tailor to the type of position/institution

**For an institution dedicated to mentoring undergraduates**

- ◆ Order of sections:
  - ✦ Teaching Experience may go first
    - Provide bullet points describing course & your role
  - ✦ Research Experience next
  - ✦ Mentoring Experience next (if you’ve done this)
- ◆ Point out (\*) undergrads who co-author publications
- ◆ Pedagogical Training (if you’ve done this)
- ◆ Teaching interests (keywords or course names)

## Academic cover letters

- 1 or 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

## Cover letter: Anatomy for a Research-focused Position

- Position you are applying to
- How you heard of it
- 1-sentence overview

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.

### RESEARCH:

- Your current/past research (why important, results)
- Future research plan

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*.

### MENTORING/TEACHING:

- Short—let research be main emphasis/passion
- Purpose = you will contribute to education mission of dept
- Scope of experience (let CV provide details)

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.

- What is enclosed
- Who is sending letters
- Cordial ending

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.

Sample available at: [12](http://career.ucsf.edu)  
[career.ucsf.edu](http://career.ucsf.edu) -> Life Sciences -> 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 department
- **You** are the **right person** to do this research
- At PUI' s: Your **research** is appropriate for **undergraduates**

**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

**Before drafting:** Get feedback on your *ideas*

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

**Strong draft:** Get feedback on your *writing*

Feedback on writing, by people within sub-field and in other fields.

**Encourage references to indicate:**

- Your future research plans are strong
- You are the right person to do the work
- OK for you to “take project with you”, will not compete with you
- Will collaborate with you (if applicable)

## Teaching Philosophy

**Purpose:** You are **thoughtful** about how you teach.  
Your teaching philosophy fits with dept.

- Write in first person (“When teaching, I...”)
- Support philosophy with...
  - ◆ **Specific examples** from courses you have taught
  - ◆ **Specific examples** of what you will do in the future (if you haven’t had much teaching experience)

## Teaching Philosophy

How to further develop your philosophy

- Teach, mentor, shadow
- Reflect (take a “scientific teaching” approach)
  - ◆ What methods will you use when teaching, and *why*?
  - ◆ **How do you know** these methods were effective? What might be done better next time?
- Keep a teaching “lab notebook” ~ Teaching Portfolio

## Letters of Recommendation

Hugely important to many search committees!

### Generally 3 letters/references:

PhD Advisor / Postdoctoral Advisor (or both)

Someone who can speak @ your teaching/mentoring

Collaborator / other Research Mentor

## Letters of Recommendation

**Timeline:** Several weeks minimum, plus reminders

### How do I ask for a letter?

The initial ask,

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

### Provide at follow-up meeting or by email:

**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”
- Consider what the search committee may want to know about you
  - ◆ What are your strengths or experiences that this recommender may have observed?
  - ◆ If anything in your application might be perceived as a weakness, a recommender may be able to address this.

## What should I do now to position myself for a faculty position?

- What type of position / institution is right for you?
- RESEARCH
  - ◆ Publish!
  - ◆ Get your own funding
  - ◆ Begin to form a vision
  - ◆ Will your future work fit with the position / institution you seek?
- REFERENCES
  - ◆ Build relationships (locally and beyond)
  - ◆ Identify multiple people who can speak about your work, skills, collegiality
  - ◆ Be visible in the field - attend conferences; offer to give talks

## What should I do now to position myself for an academic position?

- TEACHING
  - ◆ Get training, shadow
  - ◆ Get experience
  - ◆ Track your growth via a teaching portfolio
  - ◆ Be observed / mentored (*reference!*)
  - ◆ Be knowledgeable, current about SoTL (social media)
- Hone your PRESENTATION skills; discussing with non-scientists
- Develop WRITING skills
- Develop MANAGEMENT skills - *people*, projects
  - ◆ “Making the Right Moves” (HHMI / Burroughs Wellcome Fund)
  - ◆ Get training in communication, managing conflict, etc.

## What should I do now to position myself for an academic position?

- Get experience doing PI-like things:
  - ◆ Mentor/supervise student
  - ◆ Teach a course
  - ◆ Review papers
  - ◆ Contribute to grants
- Join professional societies
  - ◆ In your discipline
  - ◆ Council on Undergraduate Research

## Summary

- Get started early: Prepare a basic application
  - *CV, research statement, teaching statement, cover letter*
- Tailor it to institution/department – selected “rifle approach”
- This is a team effort!
  - Mentors, assistants, family, etc.
  - Build relationships, give enough time, express gratitude
- Be very organized!
- Enjoy it: learn from the experience, grow as a professional



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