Cover Letter Writing
Cover Letter

• Concise, professional document tailored to a specific position, organization, and industry

• Purpose:
  – Express your interest
  – Highlight the skills, knowledge, and qualities that show your fit
  – Demonstrate how you will contribute
Agenda

- Analysis & Research
- Structure
- Demonstrate Fit
- Examples
Analysis & Research

• Analyze the role description

• Research the organization
Analysis & Research: Industry Expectations

- **Nonprofits, Education**: Speak to your match with their mission.
- **Finance, Business, Consulting**: Results-oriented, conservative, brief.
- **Engineering**: Sometimes optional. Keep it concise and focus on the technical.
- **Journalism, Creative, Arts**: Make sure your writing style shines. Show passion here.
Structure

- **Introduction**: Make your strongest argument

- **Body**: Connect experience to qualifications/requirements (acquired through analysis & research)

- **Next Steps**: What’s YOUR next action
Demonstrate Fit: Skills

• Focus on relevant qualifications/requirements

• **Gallup’s 21st Century Skills:**
  – real-world problem-solving, knowledge construction, collaboration, self-regulation, skilled communication, technology, and global awareness

• Gallup defines real-world problem-solving as (Actual Survey Questions):
  – “Worked on a long-term project that took several classes to complete”
  – “Used what you were learning about to develop solutions to real-world problems in your community or in the world”
Demonstrate Fit:
Elaborate on Experience

• Identify specific experience that exemplify qualifications/requirements

• Connect directly to role/organization
Examples

Cecil Company
124 Maple St.
Stamford, CT 06902

January 11, 2013

Dear Ms. Tanya Brookings,

I am writing to express my interest in the Associate Consultant position with the Cecil Company. Your unique, one client per industry business model sparked my interest. I believe this model enables the Cecil Company to develop a level of expertise and longevity with the client that serves as a foundation for mutual success. It is because of this relationship that Cecil Company professionals can devote all of their energy and expertise to providing long-term strategic solutions for clients. I am passionate and enthusiastic about everything I do and would thrive in a challenging environment that takes advantage of these characteristics.

I graduated with a B.S. in Economics from Duke University in December, and am currently working as a full-time Research Associate with Duke economist Dr. Debo Payne. As a Research Associate, I have gained experience in rigorous quantitative research by using both STATA and ArcGIS to describe and model the market for manufactured homes. My enthusiasm for applying quantitative work in creative and pragmatic ways, as I have had the opportunity to do this fall, aligns well with the Cecil philosophy. My educational background is a well-balanced combination of theory and application. I have three years of analytical and quantitative coursework in economics, statistics, calculus, econometrics, and accounting, and am committed to understanding the real-world applications of quantitative data and models.

As an undergraduate at Duke, I taught a social entrepreneurship course that helped to strengthen the bond between the university and the community. At the end of the semester, I led our team in deciding how much money to allocate to each business and what terms. This experience challenged and improved my leadership skills and my ability to exercise them to make an impressive local impact. During the summer of 2012, I executed a market pricing survey for Chase’s mortgage services to assess and compare market prices for residential mortgage services with those charged by our client. Based on my research, our client expanded its services and changed its product pricing. I improved my communication and presentation skills and experienced the satisfaction of seeing a project through to its successful conclusion. Through my work experience, I have cultivated a strong interest in understanding how businesses operate and how these operations can be improved.

I feel strongly that it is my passion to leverage both my interpersonal and analytical skills to make a difference that will make me a valuable asset at the Cecil Company. In closing, the list of candidate attributes on the Cecil Company website includes a quality that I consider paramount to my own personal and professional success: the power of persuasion tempered with humility. If you have further questions regarding my candidacy, please contact me at (335) 234-2457 or dukestudent@duke.edu.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to the opportunity of an interview with the Cecil Company.

Sincerely,

Duke Student

Abigail T. Cheng
5234 Erwin Road
Durham, NC 27701
(919) 555-1324

January 11, 2013

Ms. Jane Clifton
Vice President of Operations and Federal Relations
The Capitol Association for Internships & Academic Seminars
4567 M Street, NW
9th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20039-1234

Dear Ms. Clifton:

I am writing in response to the email from the National Internship Organization (NIO) regarding summer internships with The Capitol Association for Internships & Academic Seminars. As a junior at Duke University majoring in Political Science, I am very interested in applying my academic studies while gaining relevant skills. I believe the combination of my education and campus leadership roles make me a strong candidate for the internship.

As the Fundraising Committee Representative for Campus Life, I have demonstrated the ability to operate in a complex environment. My primary responsibility is to manage the $20,000 operating budget by tracking purchases and ensuring timely payments to vendors. In addition, I have developed a volunteer recognition program to encourage members to participate in fundraising activities. This position has taught me budget management and how to contribute successfully to a team.

Balancing school work, along with serving the community, has provided me many valuable lessons about multi-tasking and self-motivation. In addition to budgeting time for Campus Life responsibilities, I also delegate time for my academic commitments. These experiences have made me responsible and reliable—a combination that is highly valued at The Capitol Association for Internships & Academic Seminars.

I will call you next week to follow-up, and I look forward to talking with you to discuss my candidacy with The Capitol Association for Internships & Academic Seminars. Until then, if you have any questions, please email me at acheng@duke.edu or call me at 919-555-4321.

Sincerely,

Abigail Cheng

Abigail T. Cheng
Contact Us
(919) 660-1050
http://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career

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