

## **THE COVER LETTER**

Your initial contact with a prospective employer or networking contact is usually by letter. Most students, however, spend a great deal of time on their resume, and ignore the importance of their written correspondence. *Can the letter you wrote in five minutes really be a sample of your best writing?*

Before you begin writing your cover letter, it is important to know what purposes it serves. The following lists what a well-written cover letter can accomplish. All are highly important for you to remember as you begin to write your own.

- To introduce yourself to an employer and convey your interest in the organization
- To match your skills and experiences with the requirements of the vacant position
- To demonstrate your writing skills and display your personality
- To communicate your value to an employer
- To entice the employer to read your resume
- To get invited for an interview

*Indiana University Job Search Strategies For Liberal Arts Students*

Remember that your resume works in conjunction with a cover letter and an interview - all are designed to market your skills, interests, and experiences in the most positive and professional manner. This guidebook will take you through the steps of building a series of letters that enhance and supplement your job search.

## **CORRESPONDENCE GOLDEN RULES**

As you proceed through your internship or job search, there are several guidelines that apply to each and every piece of correspondence you send out. These “golden rules” should be utilized every time you contact a potential employer.

### **All Correspondence:**

- Should be in business format
- Should be on 24 pound business stationary/resume paper
- Must be typed (with the exception of hand-written thank you notes)
- Might become part of your permanent personnel file

Use the cover letter checklist on page 6 to be sure that you are ready to start your cover letter. It is important to do this checklist **before every single cover letter** you write! *Why?* You ask. Quite simply, the answers will vary for each letter as you tailor your application to meet the individual employer’s needs.

## **COVER LETTER MISTAKES TO AVOID**

Too often, a job or internship search is derailed before it even gets going. **Why?** Simple, careless, avoidable mistakes. The shortcuts that seem to move a search forward actually can cost you a job or an internship. Some of the most frequent mistakes seen in Career Services include:

- **Using a generic cover letter for all applications.** While it may seem helpful to send out a large number of applications using the same cover letter (addressed to different companies, of course), this is perhaps the least effective job search method in existence. Also, your lack of knowledge about each specific company as well as a lack of enthusiasm for the individual opportunity at that company will be immediately evident to prospective employers. *If you do not take time to send them a quality application, why should they take time to read your resume?* A more effective strategy is to tailor your strengths to the exact opportunity you are applying for. Chances are many of your cover letters will sound similar but no two letters should ever be exactly alike.
- **Focusing on what *you* want and not on what you have to offer the company.** A cover letter is your first opportunity to help a prospective employer understand how they can benefit by having you as an employee, this is not the place to outline what you are looking for in a position. Give them the hard facts about what you bring as a candidate and avoid statements that emphasize what personal and professional goals the company can satisfy for you. The only exception here would be for a cover letter for an internship. An internship is your opportunity to gain experience in a certain career field, therefore it is acceptable for you to indicate what skills you are hoping to gain.
- **Submitting an unprofessional cover letter.** To write a cover letter which truly highlights your skills and gets your resume noticed, avoid these simple yet frequent unprofessional slip-ups:
  - Exceeds one page in length
  - Misspelling the recruiter's name, title, or company – in the address, greeting, letter, or on the envelope
  - Addressing the letter to one company yet mentioning a different company in the body of the letter
  - Applying for one position yet referring to another position in the body of the letter
  - Using paper other than business stationary – regular white copy paper is NOT an option! (wrong color, too personalized, too flimsy)
  - Incorrect date – sending out a letter in January that you originally wrote and dated back in September
  - Using a casual tone in your writing. (Always be professional, polite, and serious.)
- **A dull introduction.** Considering the average employer only spends 15-30 seconds reviewing your search materials, it is in your best interest to catch their interest immediately. Your opening paragraph is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of the company and to distinguish yourself from other candidates. Effective strategies may include referring to mutual acquaintance, highlighting one of your recent accomplishments, or addressing a salient issue affecting the prospective employer. (Hermann and Sutherland, 1994, p.126)
- **Failing to define your next steps.** Will you be calling for an interview? If interested, should the employer contact you? Do they have your phone number? Not clarifying these details for a prospective employer can complicate any application.
- **Restating your resume.** A cover letter *complements* your resume. It should highlight only the most related skills and address any points not covered on your resume. If you are simply restating the same information in both documents, then your cover letter is not ready to be sent to anyone.
- **Not keeping records of your correspondence.** If a prospective employer calls to discuss the special skills you have to offer, will you remember what special skills he or she is referring to? ALWAYS keep a copy of any materials you send to a prospective employer.
- **Lack of follow-up on applications.** Don't ever assume that a resume and cover letter has arrived at a company until you have confirmation. Both traditional and electronic applications can get lost along the way.

There is nothing worse than losing out on a job or internship simply because they never knew you existed as a candidate. Career Services recommends that you follow up each letter with a phone call (Again, if the company specifically states “No Phone Calls” please contact a career advisor for assistance). Follow-up is critical and shows initiative.

- **Missing those final details.** Did you sign your letter? Did you enclose your resume and ***all*** other materials they have asked for? Double-check your application before sending it out.
- **Not quantifying your accomplishments.** Don’t just tell a prospective employer you tutored students, assisted with lab practices, or led tours for prospective students. **Give them numbers!** This helps to make your accomplishments come alive and it also provides a context for your experiences. Don’t forget to think in terms of sales, dollar amounts, clients, or other such categories.

#### Sources:

Adams, Robert L. (Ed.). (1995). The Adams Cover Letter Almanac. Holbrook, MA: Adams Publishing.

Hansen, Katharine (1998). Dynamic New Cover Letters For New Graduates. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Hermann, Richard L. and Sutherland, Linda P. (1994). The 110 Biggest Mistakes Job Hunters Make (And How To Avoid Them). Washington, D.C.: Federal Reports Inc.

## COVER LETTER DO’S

- **Know your strengths, abilities, and career goals!** Use this information to formulate the text of your letter.
- **Take your time!** Letter writing is an art, not something to be undertaken minutes before a deadline. Formulate your ideas before sitting down at the computer, and use professional language.
- **Always write to a person!** Make an extra effort to locate the person you wish to contact. If you are unable to find a contact person, then do not use a salutation. Skip two lines, and begin your letter after the address.
- **State the position for which you are applying.** It is common for companies to be hiring for more than one position simultaneously, so it is important that you indicate your position of interest.
- **Tailor each letter to the opportunity you are applying for.** This cannot be said too much. While you may use the same accomplishments in many letters, perhaps your related courses or campus activities have changed. Certainly your “company hot points” should be different in each letter. Need help defining these? Make an appointment with a career advisor for assistance.
- **Be brief!** Keep your letter to one page in length, and use 8 ½ X 11 inch paper.
- **Be professional!** All employment related correspondence should be word-processed and laser printed. Handwritten letters are unacceptable. Use high quality paper that matches your resume.
- **Remember punctuation.** After the greeting in your letter, use a **colon (:)** and **not** a comma (,) or a semi-colon (;). (Remember that this is a formal piece of business correspondence.)
- **Indicate enclosure or resume.** After your signature, hit enter two times and be sure to list ***Resume or Enclosure*** if you are including your resume and absolutely nothing else or list ***Enclosures*** if you have several enclosures (ex. resume and list of references or transcript or writing sample)
- **Proofread, proofread, and proofread!** Your correspondence must have no typographical or grammatical mistakes. Make sure to check all spelling including the correct contact name, title, and company name and address.
- **Complete your package.** Always send a resume and cover letter together. Never send one without the other!

## **COVER LETTER CONTENT**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION AND SALUTATION**

This portion of your cover letter is the first thing on the page and should include four parts; your address (and name if you choose), the date, the employer's name and contact information, and a greeting. You have a few choices for how to display this information.

**Block Format** – In block format, everything should be left justified

CMR 2222  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617  
August 14, 2005

Mr. John Smith  
Director of Human Resources  
ABC Publishing Company  
1122 Bruce Road  
Graves, NY 22233

Dear Mr. Smith:

Sincerely,

Enclosure

**Letterhead Format** – It is becoming more common for applicants to include their name in the heading of their cover letter, creating something similar to personal letterhead. If you use this format, the heading you use should match the heading on your resume.

**Elizabeth Jones**  
CMR 2222  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

August 14, 2005

Mr. John Smith  
Director of Human Resources  
ABC Publishing Company  
1122 Bruce Road  
Graves, NY 22233

Dear Mr. Smith:

Sincerely,

Enclosure

## INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

**First Sentence** - As you begin to write your cover letter, put yourself in the employer's shoes for a moment. Imagine that you are sitting at your desk, and in front of you lies a stack of 123 cover letters and resumes. You have already been through 18, and all have begun with "I am writing to apply for the position of ...". Now imagine how refreshing it would be to read one that begins with something different. Be the applicant that serves as a breath of fresh air for the employer and entices them to read your full letter.

**Important Information** – After you have caught the employer's attention in your first sentence, there are some key pieces of information you need to include in the introductory paragraph. They include: the position you are applying for, where you learned about the position (so they know what forms of their advertising are working, and so that you can mention the name of someone who referred you), why you are interested in the position, and why you are specifically applying to their company/organization (use what you learned in your company research here).

## BODY OF LETTER (ONE OR TWO PARAGRAPHS)

**Your Experiences** – The body of your letter should make clear connections between the experiences and skills that you have, and the qualifications for a successful candidate. You **do not** want to restate your resume here, but give details of experiences that support your qualifications for the position. Tell them how and why you will be a productive member of their organization. Sometimes two paragraphs are used so you can list work and internship related experiences in one paragraph and related academic and co-curricular experiences in a second paragraph.

## CLOSING PARAGRAPH

**Restate Your Interest in the Position** – In the final paragraph you should refer the employer to your enclosed resume that further outlines your qualifications for the position, state your desire to meet with the individual to further discuss the position, give them your email and phone number again and invite them to contact you, tell them how and when you will follow up with them, and **thank them** for their time and consideration of your application.

## CLOSING

Type 'Sincerely' or another professional closing. Hit enter four times, type your name. Between 'Sincerely' and your typed name you will sign your name. After your typed name, hit enter twice and type 'Enclosure' to indicate you have enclosed your resume and possibly other materials.

### *Example of Closing*

Sincerely,

(your handwritten signature)

Elizabeth Jones

Enclosure

## COVER LETTER CHECKLIST

- ☐ *Is your resume complete, including a review by a professional staff member?* YES NO

You should never send a cover letter without a resume; therefore it is important to make sure you have finished your resume. Your resume and cover letter will be your introduction to prospective employers and require both time and attention before they are submitted.

- ☐ *Can you identify three or more unique features about the company and/or the job opportunity that you are applying for?* YES NO

It is important to know about the companies to which you are applying so you can accurately express your interest in them.

- ☐ *Can you identify your three greatest accomplishments?* YES NO

It is necessary for you to know what your accomplishments and attributes are so you can express them effectively.

- ☐ *Do they directly relate to the position you are applying for?* YES NO

To effectively sell yourself as a candidate, you must be able to articulate what you have done that is **related** to this opportunity. Also, the prospective employer is looking for people who understand their industry and have related experiences or transferable skills to bring to the table. If you are not able to convey your abilities and talents to the employer, then s/he will not see your potential as a future employee.

- ☐ *Is there a specific position to apply for?* YES NO

If you do not know what you are applying for, do not expect the employer to know if s/he should hire you.

- ☐ *Do you have a specific contact person to address the letter to?* YES NO

A successful cover letter is **always** sent to a specific individual in the company. Letters with no name have a direct route to the recycle pile. Also be sure you have the correct spelling of the person's full name, his or her title, and the gender appropriate greeting (Mr. or Ms.). If you are uncertain, check this out. Call the company and ask for clarification or use the internet to review their web site or latest annual report.

**Note:** There may be a rare ad which gives no address or contact person and says "no phone calls please". See a career advisor for assistance with this type of cover letter.



If you answered YES to all of these questions, then you are ready to begin writing your cover letter/letter of application. You have done your homework and it is time for you to start marketing your abilities to that prospective employer.



If you answered NO to any of these questions, then finish your homework! Any piece of missing information will only hurt your search and weaken the correspondence that you send. The staff at Career Services will be happy to help you complete this checklist.

**Frank Joseph**  
2244 CMR  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

*0August 15, 2005*

Ms. Sara Martin  
Managing Editor  
The Herald Star  
2244 State Street  
Watertown, NY 00055

Dear Ms. Martin:

As a long-time resident of Watertown, a long-time reader of the Herald Star, and as a college senior majoring in journalism, I was excited to discover on theheraldstar.com that you have an entry-level reporting position available. I have always been highly impressed with the quality of news The Herald Star publishes, and would be honored to work for a paper that has received the *Excellence in Reporting* award from the State of New York three consecutive years.

In addition to my academic preparation for this position, my qualifications also come from my internship experiences and co-curricular activities. I received a high-quality college education and was taught by faculty that have worked extensively in journalism, and are therefore able to use their experiences to effectively teach their courses. As you will notice on my resume, I have served as the editor of The College Times for the past two years, and prior to that was the lead reporter for the paper. My experience as editor gave me a clearer understanding of what is important in newspaper reporting and increased my awareness of the logistical components of print journalism. This awareness, in addition to my strong written communication skills and ability to find and cover a top story, would make me a highly valuable employee for The Herald Star. I am a motivated individual with a passion for the news and would be a hard-working member of your news team.

I have enclosed the writing sample you requested as well as my resume, which further outlines my qualifications for this position. I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss my candidacy at a time that is convenient for you. I will contact you on August 27 to check on the status of my application. If you need to contact me before that time, I can be reached via the above address, via email at fjoseph@stlawu.edu, or at (315) 229-0000. Thank you for your time and the consideration of my application materials.

Sincerely,

***Frank Joseph***

Frank Joseph

Enclosure

**Rachel B Peterson**

345 Cross Road  
Pittsburgh, PA 19406

July 12, 2003

Ms. Helen Chung  
Account Executive  
123 Avenue of the Arts  
Suite 1980  
Philadelphia, PA 19109

Dear Ms. Chung:

As a liberal arts major at St. Lawrence University hailing from Pittsburgh, I was extremely excited to discover a Marketing/Public Relations summer internship opportunity on my university's database, Career SLUth. I have always had a great interest in creative methods of advertising, and after searching through the Domus website, I was extremely impressed by the progressive nature of the corporation and by the names of some of its major clients.

My qualifications for the position include experience as Public Relations chairperson for several organizations on my university's campus, as noted on my resumé. I have launched advertising campaigns for my a cappella group's numerous concerts as well as for campus wide events sponsored by the university's Panhellenic Council, utilizing the resources offered by St. Lawrence University's Communications Office. Through the use of posters, mass emails, press releases, and strategically placed chalk messages, I have kept the campus community informed of my organization's events. I am a dedicated and motivated individual with a great interest in learning how marketing and advertising work on a professional level. My experience as a liberal arts major has allowed my creativity to flourish. I am a reliable and passionate undergraduate with excellent communication skills, and I would be honored to have the opportunity to aid Domus in its advertising endeavors.

I have attached my resumé, which further describes my experience. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you in person my candidacy at a time that is convenient for you. I can be reached via the above address, via email at [rbpeterson@stlawu.edu](mailto:rbpeterson@stlawu.edu), or, most conveniently, at (123) 456-7890. Thank you for your time and the consideration of my application materials.

Cordially,

*Rachel B Peterson*

Rachel B Peterson  
Resumé



# Josh Wyman

Jwyman@mailbox.stlawu.edu

## HOME ADDRESS

451 Swanzey Lake Road  
Swanzey, NH 03446  
(603) 352-8115

## CAMPUS ADDRESS

CMR 651, St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617  
(315) 229-6714

April 15, 2003

Rachael Leiserson  
Production Assistant  
Engel Brothers Media Inc.  
535 Eighth Avenue, 19<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10018

Dear Ms. Leiserson:

I've been telling stories with film ever since I was a child. In high school I would persuade teachers to allow me to make videos that recreated sections of novels, in place of book reports. Through an advertisement from St. Lawrence University's Career Services I was excited to discover that your company is offering a production internship position. Looking at your website, I discovered that you are an alumnus from St. Lawrence University, and that you obtained a Bachelor of Arts in English while attending the University. I am also an English writing major, and feel that my skills could be used to benefit the company in the same way that yours currently do.

Engel Brothers Inc. seems to produce interesting documentaries about subjects that I'm interested in. One project title that jumped out at me was: *Mosquito: The Ultimate Vampire*. This title caused me to laugh when I read it, and gave me the impression that your company is able to maintain a sense of humor while remaining serious about what it does. One of the greatest strengths I would have coming into this internship would be the researching skills I've learned from being a writing major. I am constantly doing research for papers and literature projects and have become efficient at finding my way around a library and quickly locating usable sources. I enjoy the sense of accomplishment that comes from compiling information and using it to give a story substance. From what I've read on your website, Engel Brothers Inc. appears to have a very qualified and diverse staff. I would like to add to the diversity of your staff this summer by bringing my screenwriting experience and love of the outdoors to your office. I'm willing to sacrifice the earning of capital and my country lifestyle in order to pursue a dream, a dream to become part of a company that turns stories into film.

In a sense, those early projects I did in high school were tiny documentaries, and I'd love to continue making them as an adult. I find nothing more satisfying than putting a story to film, and getting a positive reaction from an audience. Once again, I am very interested in working at Engel Brothers Inc. as a production intern this summer. I am available for an interview at your convenience. I will be making a follow up call on April 23 to check on the status of my application. I can be reached via the above campus address, via email at jwyman75@stlawu.edu, or at (315) 229-6714. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Josh Wyman

**Courtright T. Beard**

ctbear03@stlawu.edu

**Campus Address**

**Home Address**

CMR 0687, St. Lawrence University  
Hill Road  
Canton, NY 13617  
Center, VT 05677  
(802) 272-8760  
(802) 244-7165

1606 Barnes

Waterbury

February 24, 2005

Adrienne Porzio  
TH Lee Putnam Ventures  
200 Madison Ave., Suite 1900  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Ms. Porzio:

For the past two years of my undergraduate experience, I have become increasingly interested in the world of finance and investment. I was very excited when I came across your deal sourcing summer internship opportunity through St. Lawrence University's Career Services office. Venture capitalism is an area of finance that immediately caught my attention and is something I plan on pursuing as a career path.

Last fall, I became a member of the University's Crown Royalties Investment Club. This has given me a great opportunity to learn more about finance and to build a basic understanding of investment knowledge. This experience has led me to dig deeper into my own passion for finance. It has been a suitable supplement to my own research and reading on the subject of investing. Our current portfolio size is \$27,000 which has grown from the \$24,000 of the University's endowment that we started with. After visiting your website, I found it interesting that at the beginning of April you acquired Sentient Jet. I am a private pilot and my cousin flies for Net Jets, a competitor of Sentient Jet. From talking with fellow pilots and contacts that are in the aviation industry, I agree that private jet membership is an expanding sector of air travel and therefore firmly believe this acquisition was a profitable investment. As a motivated student who has a deep interest in venture capitalism, I would like the opportunity to learn from your knowledgeable team of advisors. I am disciplined, reliable, and have a strong drive to challenge myself. I realize that success may not come immediately, but through hard work, persistency, and teamwork, goals that once appeared as dreams can develop into realities.

I have enclosed my resume, which will allow you to assess my academic fortes and further evaluate my candidacy. Please feel free to contact me through phone, e-mail, or the above campus address. I am available for an interview at your convenience. Thank you for your time and the consideration of my application materials.

Sincerely,



Courtright T. Beard

Enclosure

*Sample Cover Letter 5*

**Emily Stahl**  
CMR 2319, St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

February 5, 2005

Ms. Kelsey Burns  
Leadership Coordinator  
Putney Student Travel  
345 Hicory Ridge Road  
Putney, VT 05346

Dear Ms. Burns:

As a student with a multi-cultural background and a long running interest in language and travel, I was extremely excited to read about the opportunity to be a student travel leader with your company on my university's database, Career SLUth. Although I come from a small town, I feel that I have always had a unique understanding of the interaction of cultures in an increasingly global world and I have pursued and expanded this understanding both through my experiences and through my education.

Growing up as the daughter of a Mexican mother and a very *gringo* father in an almost exclusively white, sheltered town, was not always easy. Although my mother's culture was a part of my daily life, I did not choose to embrace it until my fifteenth birthday, when I celebrated my *quinceaños* in Cuernavaca with my mother's family. The following year I traveled back to Cuernavaca without my parents for five weeks to familiarize myself more with the culture and the language. Although I was still only a high school student, I felt as if a door to the world had been opened to me. Independently, I began to research study abroad opportunities and in the fall of my senior year I lived with a host family and studied at a local high school in Taubaté, Brazil through Cultural Homestay International. During this time I was able to learn Portuguese through immersion and I also had the opportunity to travel to São Paulo, São Jose dos Campos, Curitiba, and Minas Gerais.

My experiences in high school greatly influenced my pursuits at St. Lawrence University. I have studied French and German and have taken several advanced Spanish courses. During my semester studying at the Austro-American Institute in Vienna, I received a travel enrichment grant through St. Lawrence's Center for International and Intercultural Studies to travel independently to St. Petersburg, Russia and complete a research project titled "Traces of the Last Romanov Family." I also had the opportunity to travel to many places in Europe, both with the program and on my own. I further expanded upon my study abroad experience by working closely with the Center for International and Intercultural Studies upon my return to promote study abroad and to improve the Vienna program. I have further demonstrated my leadership ability through positions held within my sorority and through my campus activities and various job experiences.

As I have been actively involved with Habitat for Humanity and as a member of the community service committee within Chi Omega, an organization based on ideals of community service and involvement, I am particularly interested in Putney's Community Service programs, although my experiences could also be valuable for the Cultural Exploration program. Overall, as it was my travel experiences in high school that sparked my interest in global pursuits and I would love to have the chance to assist other young people in a similar way. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my candidacy with you at a convenient time. I can be reached via the address above, via e-mail at [esstah01@stlawu.edu](mailto:esstah01@stlawu.edu), or by phone at (315) 229-7169. Thank you for your time and for the consideration of my application materials.

Cordially,

**SIGNATURE HERE**

Emily S. Stahl

Resumé

**Sample Cover Letter 6**

**Daniel Leonidas**  
CMR 2132  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

February 9, 2005

Ms. Stacy Berliner  
Senior Manager, Staffing  
Random House, Inc.  
1745 Broadway  
New York, NY 10019

Dear Ms. Berliner:

I have loved books my entire life. As soon as I learned to read, I began devoting hours to losing myself in the fictional worlds that my favorite writers created so brilliantly. Over the years, my love for books has developed into a desire to be involved in publishing. Thus, I was excited to learn through the Eastern College Career Days website that you have an entry-level editorial assistant position available. Many of the acclaimed writers that Random House works with—such as Stephen King, Randall Kenan, Dean Koontz, and Lorrie Moore—have been favorites of mine for years. I would be honored to work for the company that has published many of these writers' books.

I feel that my experiences as a poetry editor for *The Laurentian*, St. Lawrence University's student-run literary magazine, and working with writers to organize readings, have prepared me to make high-quality contributions to Random House. By working with student and professional writers, I have developed interpersonal communication skills and become familiar with the tasks involved in an editor's job. In addition, as an English writing major, I understand the writer's perspective as well. Seeing editor-writer relationships from both sides has enabled me to understand how the needs of both editor and writer should be balanced in order to benefit everyone. Coupled with my desire to find new writers and give them an opportunity to be heard (and read), my experiences would make me an effective member of the Random House team.

I have enclosed my resume, which further details my qualifications for the position. I feel that working as an editorial assistant would be highly satisfying, and I believe I can harness my experiences to contribute to the further success of Random House. I look forward to discussing my candidacy with you in person on March 18. I can be reached at the above address, via email at [dpleon01@stlawu.edu](mailto:dpleon01@stlawu.edu), or via telephone at (524) 518-6587. Thank you for your time and consideration of my application.

Sincerely,



Daniel Leonidas

Enclosure

*Sample Cover Letter 7*

**Oumou Khaïry Leye**  
CMR 995, 23 Romoda Drive  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

February 15, 2005

Intern Coordinator  
European Union  
Delegation of the European Commission  
2300 M Street NW, Third Floor  
Washington, DC 20037-1434

Dear Intern Coordinator:

The European Union is one of the greatest examples of successful economic and political cooperation in modern history. The Delegation of the European Commission in the United States is an illustration of the leading role that the EU plays in global political and economic integration. It is for this reason that I am applying for a summer internship.

Being from Senegal, I am greatly interested in the living standards of people, especially in the developing world. I have a true interest in the issues of international economic development and cooperation. To pursue my interests even further, I have decided to major in Spanish and economics, in addition to being fluent in French. The development section of the summer internships offered by the European Commission will be a great opportunity for me to further my interests. The possibility of working on World Bank and EU reports will make it even more rewarding as it will broaden my knowledge of development initiatives on behalf of developing countries like mine.

Through my involvement in the Global Concerns Committee while studying in Norway, I have acquired background information on the issues that really matter to the people of developing countries and how policies, both at the national and international levels, affect their lives. I was able to organize and participate in fund raising events to help support humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in countries like Sierra Leone, Angola and Iraq. I am very dependable and I have great communication skills, thanks to the liberal arts education that I am now acquiring and also my exposure to different cultural settings.

I have attached my resumé for further information on the experiences and skills that will allow me to make a beneficial contribution to the work conducted by the European Commission. I look forward to talking to you more about this opportunity. I can be reached at the above address, by email at okleye@yahoo.fr or at (315) 229-6106. Thank you for taking the time to consider my application.

Sincerely,

*Oumou Khaïry Leye*

Oumou Khaïry Leye  
Résumé

## **ADDITIONAL FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE**

### **THANK YOU LETTER**

It is very important to send a thank you letter after an interview, whether you're interviewing for an internship or full-time position, or conducting informational interviews with networking contacts. Not all applicants will remember this important tip, so sending one will set you apart from the field.

#### ***Thank You Letter Checklist***

- A *different* thank you note has been written for **each** person you met with individually. (\* Be sure to collect business cards during your interview to help you keep names and titles organized.)
- All letters have been written and all will be mailed within **48 hours** of your interview.
- In each thank you letter you have followed up on specific things you talked about with the interviewer. You have mentioned something or someone that was particularly helpful, and/or highlighted experiences or skills you failed to mention in the interview.
- You have reaffirmed your interest in the opportunity and the company.
- You have followed the rules for general job correspondence, including the use of professional language and a business like presentation. If you choose to hand write a thank you letter, be sure that your handwriting is neat and legible.
- Your letter is no longer than one page and is between 10 and 12 pt. font.

*Sample Thank You Letter*

**Francis Black**  
CMR 9999  
St. Lawrence University  
Canton, NY 13617

August 15, 2005

Mr. William Brown  
Human Resources Manager  
Brown Consulting  
5588 Main Street  
Chicago, IL 99988

Dear Mr. Brown:

It was a pleasure to meet with you and your staff on Monday, August 14. I was very impressed with your organization and am extremely interested in the consultant position at Brown Consulting. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for arranging such an informative and productive visit during which I was able to see the firm and meet with many of your colleagues.

The consultant position at Brown is both exciting and challenging, and I am confident that my background and qualifications would enable me to contribute effectively to the consulting team. Through my internship experience at Greenwood Consulting, and my work with the economics department at St. Lawrence University, I developed strong communication and leadership skills in both academic and corporate environments.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to arrange my visit. If there is any additional information required supporting my candidacy, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

**Francis Black**

Francis Black

## LETTER OF INQUIRY

Not all jobs are posted, so if you know of a company or organization you want to work for, you can contact them on your own to inquire about positions they might have available. A letter of inquiry allows you to contact an organization you would like to work for and express interest in a position you would like to obtain. The main difference between a letter of inquiry and a cover letter comes in the first paragraph. Instead of saying the position you are applying to and where you heard about it, you are letting the employer know your interests, and inquiring about available positions.

*Adapted from Choices and Challenges: Job Search Strategies for Liberal Arts Students (Indiana University)*

### ***Sample First Paragraph of Letter of Inquiry***

Dear Mr. Bethell:

Recently, I have been researching the leading data companies in data communication. My search has been for companies that are respected in the field and who provide ongoing training programs. The name DataLink Products keeps rising as a top company in this field. I have had experience in voice and data communication through an internship with IBM. I am writing to inquire if you have any opportunities for someone with my background and qualifications.

## JOB OFFER ACCEPTANCE LETTER

*Congratulations!* This will be the most enjoyable letter for you to write. Even if you discuss your acceptance over the phone or via e-mail, it is important that you document your offer and acceptance in writing.

### ***Acceptance Letter Checklist***

- In the letter you formally accept the position.
- You confirm specifics of the offer. You have documented: the agreed terms of starting salary and benefits, job title, assigned department, geographic placement, starting date and travel requirements.
- **Now that you have accepted the position, you will not interview for other positions and will contact the other places you applied and let them know you would like to remove your name from their candidate pool.**

### ***Sample Job Offer Acceptance Letter***

Dear Ms. Wenger:

It is with great pleasure that I accept the position of Design Specialist with Wenger Design working out of the New York City branch office. As per our telephone conversation, I will begin work on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. I am looking forward to starting my employment and joining the design team at Wenger.

As we discussed, my starting salary will be \$32,500 and will include the benefit package available to all full-time professional employees.

I have enclosed the completed contract agreement forms. Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information. Once again, thank you for an enjoyable job search experience, I look forward to working with you in the upcoming months.

Sincerely,



## **JOB OFFER DECLINATION OR WITHDRAWAL FROM CONSIDERATION LETTER**

If you decide to decline an offer of employment that has been extended to you, or you want to withdraw your name from consideration for a position you are no longer interested in, you must notify the employer in writing.

### ***Important Tips***

- Send a letter to every employer you applied with, even if you have not heard from him or her in quite some time.
- If you have accepted an offer elsewhere, be sure to include that information in your letter.
- The importance of this courtesy to employers and your peers cannot be underestimated. You don't want to burn bridges for future career opportunities.
- Remember: be appreciative, tactful, and focused.

### ***Sample Withdrawal From Consideration Letter***

Dear Ms. English:

This letter is to inform you that I wish to withdraw from further consideration for the position at your school. After careful consideration, I have decided to accept a teaching position with the Hamlet School in Boston, Massachusetts.

As I have expressed to you during our previous conversations, the quality of curriculum and the overall environment at West Middle School have impressed me. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting your staff, and appreciated the information that you shared regarding your teaching philosophy and methods. Once again, thank you for inviting me to interview at your campus.

Sincerely,

## **PROFESSIONAL EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE**

During the course of your job or internship search you might be required to use email to correspond with employers. To err on the safe side, it is recommended that you only use email if the employer initiates email contact or if they make it clear that it is an acceptable method of correspondence.

The convenience of email can often lead people to be much less formal in their writing than they would be if mailing a letter through the U.S. Mail. Be conscious of this when you are communicating with employers via email to ensure that you are using professional writing throughout. If you are asked to send your cover letter and resume electronically, follow the employer's instructions for how they want this done. If acceptable to the employer, always attach your cover letter and resume as separate documents so they can be opened and printed as they would look if sent through U.S. Mail. Come to Career Services for help creating an electronic signature file. In the text of your email write a brief, professional message to the employer letting them know that you have attached your resume and cover letter. Ask them to please contact you if they have any trouble opening the attachments and give them your contact information. Most importantly, follow the instructions and preferences of the employer regarding email correspondence and always maintain a high level of professionalism.

### ***Email Correspondence Checklist***

- You have made sure that email is an acceptable form of communication for the employer
- You have spell checked **and** proof read your email
- You are sending email using a professional email address
- You have included your contact information in your message
- You have used capital and lower case letters in the text of your message
- You will follow up with a phone call, or by sending your resume and cover letter through U.S. Mail (be sure to mention that you have already sent your materials electronically)

# **SLU MENTOR NETWORK LETTER**

St. Lawrence University students and alumni often use the **SLU Mentor Network** to identify individuals working in specific industries or geographic locations who are willing to give advice and to offer general suggestions about career planning issues. These individuals share the common bond of having also attended St. Lawrence, or having a student at St. Lawrence, so are excited and motivated to offer suggestions and support.

SLU Mentors can help by offering *informational interviews*. These conversations provide you with information and insight into career fields, their positions, and the organization for which they work, and act as a referral for full time career opportunities, summer jobs, or internships. [Note, they are not offering to provide you a job offer or an internship placement.]

Career Services asks that you adhere to the following guidelines when utilizing this network to ensure the most positive and productive experience for both job seekers and alumni volunteers.

- Introduce yourself immediately as a St. Lawrence University student or alumna/us. Mention that you found their name through the use of the SLU Mentor Network.
- The volunteers are to be used for *information gathering*. **DO NOT ask for a job or internship.** If they feel they can offer something else, let them initiate these ideas.
- Discuss your background, skills, and career interests. Let the volunteer know what you have done in the summers, what activities you are involved in on campus, and emphasize your key leadership experiences.
- Never assume the volunteer will contact you. Generally, students should phone the volunteer to make arrangements for an informational interview, conversation, or meeting.
- In your letter, mention the mode of follow up you are going to use (phone, e-mail, etc.) and then make it your responsibility to do so within **2** weeks of sending your letter.
- Be prepared to make several attempts to contact the SLU Mentor before you connect; these individuals are busy professionals who have many commitments to juggle. Don't be discouraged if you experience a delay.
- If you make an appointment, ***be there, be on time***, and dress appropriately.
- Always write a thank you letter in response to help that you have received from the mentor.
- Select only the number of volunteers that you will actually have time to write to and follow up with. (Career Services suggests 10 - 15). You are free to use the network as often as you'd like.
- Remember that the SLU Mentor Network is just ***one*** way to gather career-related information. Contact Career Services, parents, friends, faculty, past employers, community members and other individuals working in areas that you're interested in for additional information and for possible interview opportunities.

## **Outline of Letter for the SLU Mentor Network**

**First paragraph:** Introduce the purpose of your letter and remind the alum of their willingness to be a volunteer. Mention your major and area(s) of career interest.

**Second paragraph:** Summarize your related past experiences including internships, course work, part time jobs, and campus activities. Be certain to offer specific highlights of projects you have completed or been affiliated with as well as any special skills you may have acquired.

**Third paragraph:** Request the opportunity for an informational interview or meeting. Inform them that a copy of your resume is enclosed for their review. Indicate your plan for following up with them. Express your appreciation and interest in speaking with them soon.

*Sample Letter for Use with the Mentor Network*

**Jane Nelson**

CMR 9449

St. Lawrence University

Canton, NY 13617

August 15, 2005

Mr. Harold Boersma  
Media Planner  
New Media Industries  
5467 Peach Lane  
Burlington, VT 22334

Dear Mr. Boersma:

During a recent visit to Career Services at St. Lawrence University I was able to utilize the SLU Mentor Network. It was through this program that I became acquainted with your offer to discuss your career as a media planner. I am an English writing and sociology double major and am interested in a career in media.

I have had some exposure to media planning through my courses and a summer internship I completed last year at an advertising firm. I have been responsible for marketing and advertising for a variety of student groups on campus and have assisted the office of Co-Curricular Education and Programming with locating and utilizing the media that will best market their events.

Enclosed you will find my resume, which includes more information about my experiences and abilities. I will call you within two weeks time to follow up on this letter. I will be in the Burlington area on October 10 and 11 during Mid-Semester break and would like to schedule a time to meet with you if possible. Please contact me if you would like any additional information, I can be reached at (315) 229 – 0000 or via e-mail at [jnelson@stlawu.edu](mailto:jnelson@stlawu.edu). Thank you for your time and for your participation in the SLU Mentor Network, I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

*Jane Nelson*

Jane Nelson