

# Graduate Student Symposium: Becoming Your Own Best Advocate: How to Expand and Communicate Your Skills and Qualifications

**239 Preparing an effective CV for an academic position.** M. T. See\*, *North Carolina State University, Raleigh.*

Your application for an academic job should be completed with the position description in mind. Position descriptions indicate what skills and experiences are valued and you want to present your information with that in mind. When applying for an academic position you will be asked to submit a cover letter that may include a statement of interest in teaching, research or extension, curriculum vitae (CV) and a list of professional references. Most institutions also have an online job application system. Thoughtful preparation of the cover letter should not be underestimated. An effective cover letter clearly and concisely answers 3 questions; 1) Why am I writing? 2) What do I have to offer in this position? 3) What are my significant achievements? A good cover letter summarizes the CV while highlighting your unique qualifications for the position you are applying to. Effective CVs are well organized and packed with relevant information that match and support your academic objective. The CV is a comprehensive record of what you have done. There is no set format for a CV and this allows you the opportunity to be creative. Also consider preparing the CV specifically for the job for which you are applying. The information that is most relevant for the position should be first. Don't make the search committee search through your CV to find out why you should be considered. State the reasons up front. Contact information goes first followed by education and work experience. You may include clear concise interest statements describing research or teaching goals. Categories to include in the CV are professional activities, teaching experience, memberships, honors and awards, grants, presentations and research publications. Within categories list each entry in reverse chronological order. Place references at the end, include phone numbers and e-mail addresses. It is good to show a breadth of connections with other people but stay within academia unless there is an excellent reason to list someone outside. Always have a variety of people proofread your CV before submitting. Remember there is no required length for a CV and this is an important first step to an interview and the position you seek.

**Key words:** student, CV, job

**240 Grantsmanship—How to write a successful grant proposal.** T. Davis\*, *Baylor College of Medicine, Children's Nutrition Research Center, Houston, TX.*

Writing a successful grant application for submission to any funding agency requires considerable planning and action. This talk will provide tips on how to get started writing a grant proposal. Each section of the application will be discussed, focusing on the importance of the various sections and the specific information considered necessary in the abstract, specific aims, background, preliminary studies, and research design and methods sections. The grant review process and the criteria used by reviewers to evaluate applications will be described. Common problems and how to avoid these will be presented. Options for what to do if the submission of an application is not successful also will be discussed.

**Key words:** grant, writing, academia

**241 Maximizing your graduate experience.** N. C. Whitley\*, *North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro.*

The description of individual graduate experiences can be as varied and colorful as those queried; however, most would likely agree that the expected product of a successful graduate experience would be a satisfying job or career. If you agree with Henley that we are the master of our fates, the captain of our souls, then you may also believe that we, as individuals, have a great part to play in maximizing our experiences to achieve the success we seek. The objective of this presentation will be to discuss the kind of things that can be done to play that role to its fullest. Making informed, educated choices about the University you attend, your program or focus area and your advisor or mentor(s) within that program or focus area is a major first step. If that step has already been taken, you should look for opportunities within or even outside of the program to allow you to excel. It is important to never underestimate the value of networking, collaborating or even professional socializing on your part, or on the part of your advisor and/or mentors in finding or developing opportunities (and future jobs). There are many types of people who might become part of your network, so being able to communicate on a broad level and show people you value them for their unique skill set is important. Keeping well informed about current research topics in your focus area will assist you in networking and also demonstrate your enthusiasm for your field of study. Future mentors and employers are always looking for bright, educated and independent thinkers; therefore you need to do your best to set yourself apart from the competition. There are many ways to maximize your graduate experience so that it leads you down the path to success; with knowledge of some of these, you can more easily navigate that path.

**Key words:** graduate program, success, job

**242 Becoming your own personal brand: How to market your talents and experiences for maximum results.** C. Johnson\*<sup>1</sup> and C. Luhman<sup>2</sup>, <sup>1</sup>*Director Talent Acquisition & Diversity, Land O' Lakes, Inc, Arden Hills, MN,* <sup>2</sup>*Land O' Lakes Purina Feed, LLC, Gray Summit, MO.*

To stand out as a competitive potential employee, you must be able to portray your experiences and enthusiasm in a transparent and convincing manner. This seminar will address how to portray your own personal brand to potential employers for maximum results. We will specifically address the 3 main components of marketing your brand: 1. standing out on paper, 2. allowing your references and reputation to set you apart, and 3. impressing in person. With online, email, and mail application processes, your CV is often your first impression, and therefore, content and layout are critically important. Ways to convey your precise experiences, talents, and abilities in a concise, well laid out CV will be addressed. Potential employers will also become familiar with you through your references and your reputation, often before meeting you. Careful selection of references along with providing them with adequate and current information regarding your experiences and how you would meet the company's needs will help distinguish you from other candidates. How to protect your reputation as a professional will be addressed. Finally, when you get the oppor-

tunity to interview, be prepared to impress the potential employer. Think about potential interview questions and be prepared to answer with concise and accurate experiences and insightful answers. Also,

become informed about the company and have thoughtful questions to ask the interviewer. By marketing yourself you improve your chances of successfully obtaining your perfect position.