Developing a Cover Letter

The purpose of your cover letter is to get your resume read by the employer. It is often the first document the employer sees and their first impression of you. It is important to show your passion, enthusiasm and unique qualifications. The cover letter is also valuable because it illustrates your writing ability. You will want to personalize your letter to each employer to show why you are a good fit for the organization. Mass-produced letters will not get you noticed. Your letters are marketing tools that should address the needs of employers and should inspire a desire to learn more about you. Always limit your cover letter to one page. It is standard practice to send a cover letter with each resume.

Your Street Address
City, State   Zip Code
Phone Number/E-Mail

Date

Name of Recipient (Mr./Ms.)
Title
Company/Organization Name
Street Address
City, State   Zip Code

Dear Mr., Ms., Dr.:  ("Avoid using To Whom It May Concern.")

1st Paragraph: Explain why you are writing, using a way that creates interest and hooks the reader. State the specific position for which you are applying (an internship/ full-time employment, etc.) and why you are interested in the position. Identify how you heard about the opening, or mention how the employer’s name was obtained (a career fair, GAMP, a visit to their company on the Seattle or Portland Trek, etc.). If you aren't able to use a specific individual for your introduction, then display your knowledge and enthusiasm for the reader’s organization/company and your familiarity with their mission.

2nd Paragraph: What can you offer the employer? Describe how your qualifications match those that are required for the position. Use the employer’s mission statement and job description to guide your writing and to identify key words and terminology. Relate your Gonzaga education (both in and outside the classroom) to the position that you are applying. How are you qualified for this position from what you have gained at Gonzaga (education, leadership and service)? Additionally, point out your practical work experience, specific achievements and unique qualifications. Try not to repeat the same information the reader will find in your résumé. Sell yourself! Convey enthusiasm!

3rd Paragraph: Answer the question: Why should I hire you? Relate yourself to the company or group. How are the two a good match? Describe your ideals, principles and things that move you passionately.

4th Paragraph: Express your confidence that you are qualified for the position. State your next step, whether it's that you look forward to the opportunity to discuss your qualifications, or suggest that you will call to follow up on your letter. Tell them how to get in touch with you (phone number and email), and thank the person for taking the time to consider you for this position.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Name