What kind of academic do you want to be?

Research Scientist at an R1/research lab
Professor at an R1 (research-intensive) school
Professor at an R2 (research-focused) school
Professor at a Selective, Liberal-Arts College (SLAC)
Professor at a Community College/Private High School

http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu/classification_descriptions/basic.php

Cover Letters

In large and popular searches, it may be only the cover letter and CV that get read for the first cut

Purpose: To give the committee additional information not in the other materials and to present your personality and enthusiasm:

- are you laid-back and informal in your writing?
- did you spend some time looking at your interests connect to faculty there?
- can you address potential shortcomings?
  "While I enjoyed teaching at Bigtime University, I did not receive tenure there. As you can see from my recommendation letters written by my former colleagues, this decision was not supported by my department."
- Gives you a place to put your enthusiasm. They want to know that all those years of grad school did not wear you down completely

Cover Letters

In large and popular searches, it may be only the cover letter gets read for the first cut

General:

- Use letterhead – if possible, otherwise create your own letterhead
- ~ 1-2 pages
- summarize your accomplishments concisely, focusing on facts and evidence
- be formal and professional
- be able to articulate your work to non-specialists
- **tailor each letter to fit each job ad – you will have a lot of versions of your cover letter**
- **draw words from the ad itself**

Cover Letters

Outline: INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:

- include position title (number) and college you are applying to
- state your current status (e.g. ABD, defending in April…make sure your adviser agrees with this)
- include a sentence indicating that you hope to be given serious consideration because of the strong fit between yourself and the institution

Cover Letters

Outline: BODY

- use 2-3 paragraphs to expand upon your claim of why you are perfect for this job
  - provide evidence through specific academic credentials and teaching experiences you've had
  - demonstrate that you are interesting, creative, and highly motivated, without using those words
  - present examples from your unique life experiences that make you stand out
  - own the gaps in your CV so that there is no digging the committee needs to do

Cover Letters

Outline: BODY (if teaching is large part of job)

- indicate specifically why you enjoy teaching to give the committee some idea that you are aware of their needs and mission

- describe why you want to be at this specific school:
  "I am especially attracted to a job at Smalley College because of my dedication to teaching and access to high quality students in a small classroom setting"

- if the institution is unique, e.g. very small, you may want to address the concern that you may want to eventually leave:
  "I am especially interested in finding a job where I can put down permanent roots" or "I was raised in a small town in Vermont, so I think I would be very comfortable in Petiteville" or *"I enjoy the sense of community of a small department"*

Cover Letters

Outline: BODY (if research is a big part of the job)

- provide a description of your research/thesis that answers the question: “So what?”

  ”My main research goal is to understand how the physical climate system works, and how it will respond to anthropogenic influences. I firmly believe that robust understanding comes by combining theoretical and numerical insights of the coupled climate system with empirical constraints from observations and paleoclimate proxies. Thus, I use a structured approach, building conceptual models, testing them in complex numerical simulations, and developing the statistical tools required to empirically constrain them. My attached research statement details past work in the area, as well as my vision for a future research program”

- spend some real estate convincing people that you know something about the place you are applying by describing why you want to be at this specific school:

  “I am enthusiastic about being able to build strong collaborative ties to numerous faculty members within your department including….”

Cover Letters

Outline: ENDING

- create a call to action in a closing statement

“I am very excited to learn more about this opportunity and share more specifically how I will be a great fit for XXX”

“If I am offered this position, I will be ready to hit the ground running in making the Dept. of Everything meet its goals”

Cover Letters

A (very long) cover letter to a SLAC (Joe Levy)

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:
- includes position title
- states your current status
- describes basic qualifications

BODY
- provide evidence of excellence and fit to the position/school
- own gaps
- write to the ad (copying organization and language)

JOHN A. AND KATHERINE G. JACKSON SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Department of Geological Sciences • Bureau of Economic Geology • Institute for Geophysics
P. O. Box B • Austin, Texas 78713-8902 • (512) 471-6048 • FAX (512) 471-5585

Dear Professor Wongand Members of the Search Committee,

I am responding to your AGU advertisement for an assistant professor in sedimentology and surface processes. I completed my PhD in 2009 at Brown University with Dr. James Head, where I studied the sedimentary signature of climate change recorded in Antarctic permafrost, in part, as an analog for understanding the geomorphology of polar regions on Mars. I then served for two years as an NSF Office of Polar Programs postdoctoral fellow at Portland State University, where I collaborated with Dr. Andrew Fountain and the McMurdo Dry Valleys Long-Term Ecological Research program (MCM-LTER) researching permafrost geomorphology and ecology and the stratigraphy of ice age paleolakes. Currently, I am a research associate at the University of Texas Institute for Geophysics, where I am working to understand the interactions between land surface evolution and climate change Antarctica, the U.S. mountain west, and even on Mars and Titan. My research has focused on modern sedimentary processes, but I have a long-term interest in the deep-time sedimentary record, and much of my research addresses sedimentary processes.

I have been dedicated to undergraduate education and research at every career stage, despite being affiliated with research extensive universities. I regularly take undergraduate student scientists to study cryosphere hotspots from Antarctica to Alaska, and lead field-based classes in the western cordillera. Over the past several years, I have striven to bring the insights and opportunities for discovery from the field back into the classroom to enrich the geomorphology, hydrology, and sedimentology courses I have developed and teach. I have built a student-focused sedimentology and surface processes program that combines field education, undergraduate-led research, and classroom learning grounded in data analysis and scientific writing, which I believe is an ideal match to Colgate Geology's ethos and role in both earth sciences and liberal arts education.

My research and teaching efforts focus on understanding how ice, soil, rock, and water interact to shape the Earth's surface. I investigate how changing surface processes shape polar and alpine landscapes and ecosystems, and how we can read the record of past climate change from cold-climate landforms. Working across disciplinary boundaries at the intersection of geomorphology, hydrology, ecology, and climate science, I use a wide range of tools, including remote sensing, field experiments, meteorological and soil sensor networks, shallow geophysical instruments, and geochemical techniques. Consequently, in addition to being able to teach courses in sedimentology and geomorphology, I can also develop courses in remote sensing, hydrology, low-temperature geochemistry, shallow-level geophysics, and critical-zone science. Given the current constitution of the Colgate faculty, there may be exceptional opportunity for collaboration both in teaching and research. The Earth science skills I use and teach serve as "force multipliers" across many disciplines. This helps me collaborate not just with other geoscientists, but also with ecologists, microbiologists, historians, and artists. My current primary field site, the McMurdo Dry Valleys of Antarctica, is a simple, natural laboratory in which we can observe changes to the physical, chemical, and biological components of Earth's sedimentary systems in response to long and short-term changes in climate conditions. These investigations span a range of scales: from individual hillslopes to the entire southern hemisphere, and from days to millions of years. My most recent projects in Wyoming and Alaska aim to bring these surface process studies out of the polar laboratory and into watersheds affecting some of the largest cities in the American west.

I am a PI or a co-PI on several ongoing investigations in the McMurdo Dry Valleys. These projects have supported undergraduate research assistants who have conducted Antarctic fieldwork, developed their own projects, and published and presented the results. The first award is working to reconstruct the terrestrial

Cover Letters

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Cover Letters

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BODY

- provide evidence of excellence and fit to the position/school
- reference potential collaborators
- own gaps
- write to the ad (copying organization and language)

record of climate change and ice sheet stability in Antarctica. I am studying climate-diagnostic permafrost and paleolake delta deposits using remote sensing and LiDAR in concert with geochemical, geochronological, and climate monitoring tools. The second project aims to understand chemical weathering of sediments in the Antarctic cold desert using shallow EM induction geophysical surveys, satellite mapping, and biogeochemical analyses of seasonal groundwater. This latter project focuses on water tracks, which are "zero order" streams that feed larger polar channel networks. Water tracks dominate the carbon dynamics of Arctic and Antarctic soils and are the key landform through which climate shapes polar soils and terrestrial ecosystems.

These polar projects share techniques with domestic geomorphology and environmental sedimentology, and I am currently developing new lines of research that explore the physical, chemical, and biological evolution of mountain permafrost in the western U.S. These recent domestic projects focus on rock glaciers and provide a relatively close-by venue for students to gain experience conducting geomorphic investigations before moving on to participate in polar expeditions. **I am excited about exploring and teaching in New York's ice age landscapes (the tills of which Colgate is practically built upon), because they provide an ideal natural laboratory for teaching and studying polar and periglacial geology, while still allowing students to be home in time for refreshments at Gilligan's.**

I believe that my wide-ranging research and teaching interests would complement and expand the Geology Department's existing strengths in surficial and environmental geology and geochemistry while building momentum in emerging fields such as polar and alpine sedimentary systems and hydrology, remote sensing, and planetary science. **Like Bruce Selleck, Richard April, and Di Keller, I am interested in understanding the relationships between surface processes, water, climate, and the humans who live at the interface between these agents of climate and landscape change. My planetary geology and astrobiology interests are also very compatible with Connie Soja's interests in extinctions and evolution.** Understanding the geological underpinnings of alpine glacial systems would be enhanced by collaboration with Colgate's hard rock geologists, providing an opportunity to co-lead field trips focused on both mountain building and erosional processes. Across campus, I look forward to building collaborations with colleagues in Environmental Studies who will provide new perspectives on linking earth systems science to its social, ecological, and economic impacts.

My training and education took place at the intersection between the liberal arts and intensive field research, and I believe fervently that teaching and public outreach have a symbiotic relationship with discovery. Even at my current position in a large research university, I have carved out a space for student-focused inquiry by developing and teaching small classes, and by recruiting undergraduate student scientists who pursue their geological interests in the field and in the lab. Over the past two years, I have developed two new undergrad courses: Field Methods for Polar and Planetary Science (a field-trip based primer in alpine sedimentary systems, LiDAR/photogrammetry, geomorphology, and shallow geophysics, which gives groups of ~10 students hands-on experience in surface processes) and Introduction to the Cryosphere (a writing-intensive course focused on global climate change, polar geology, and ice age science for 15 students). I co-taught Introduction to the Solar System this past fall when a faculty member needed emergency teaching relief, and as a postdoc, I taught Global Environmental Change at Portland State University. These two larger courses (~30 students) challenged me to instill key geoscience literacy concepts as well as scientific values in students who might not ever take another science class.

At Colgate, I am excited about teaching a variety of introductory and advanced courses, which would provide a new cryosphere spin on existing surface processes courses. These build on geomorphology, climate, and field-based courses I have developed and taught at UT-Austin and Portland State. My Teaching Philosophy and Experience statement also describes the new field-based courses that I hope to develop at Colgate. These would benefit tremendously from access to the surrounding state forests and from the local wealth of ice age deposits. Finally, through my continuing collaboration with the McMurdo Dry Valleys LTER and ongoing planetary research activities, I am well positioned to connect

Cover Letters

A (very long) cover letter to a SLAC (Joe Levy)

CLOSING
- summary of fit
- call to action

research projects with polar or planetary datasets relevant to cutting-edge (but tractable) geological problems to explore as part of their theses.

Successful teaching and mentorship requires diligent efforts to expand the participation of underrepresented groups in the geosciences. The most important lesson I have learned to this end is that we all share the responsibility to be a good mentor, a promoter of geological ideas across communities, and a force for introducing students from different backgrounds to the excitement and importance of Earth science. In teaching and mentorship, as well as in professional and university life, I try to lead by example—by being conscientious, welcoming of different points of view, and accommodating of individuals' diverse needs and experiences. I look forward to expanding this track record of inclusive education at Colgate using the strategies outlined in the attached teaching statement.

In closing, fit is one of the most important considerations in a search. I believe that my research and teaching experience at the intersections of geomorphology, sedimentology, ecology, and planetary science help make me a uniquely broadly interested, broadly capable, and broadly collaborative applicant who would mesh ideally with the Geology Department's combined specialties in field-based teaching and undergraduate-enabled research. I have a track record of energizing students in the classroom, in the lab, and in the field, and have experience empowering them to pursue, accomplish, and publish original research in settings ranging from local parks to the ends of the Earth. Many thanks for your consideration. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Joseph S. Levy, Ph.D.

Cover Letters

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH:
- include position title and institution
- state your current status
- describe fit

BODY
- provide evidence of excellence and fit to the position/school
- reference potential collaborators
- own gaps
- write to the ad (copying organization and language)

CLOSING
- call to action

INSTITUTE FOR GEOPHYSICS
JACKSON SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES

July 11, 2018

Dr. Waleed Abdalati
INSTAAR Director Search Chair:

Dear Waleed,

I am writing to apply to the position of **Director** of the **Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR)** at The University of Colorado-Boulder. I am currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Geosciences (DGS), with a joint-appointment as a Research Scientist at the Institute for Geophysics (UTIG) at The University of Texas-Austin. I am under consideration for promotion to Full Professor in Fall 2018.

I am very interested in the position of Director and believe that I have some unique qualities that I can bring to INSTAAR. First, my research is primarily on ice sheet dynamic change. I use any and all observations to understand the physical processes that control ice motion. Lately, this includes taking advantage of the plethora of satellite observations currently in operation (or soon to be launched). I also have a growing interest in ice sheet modelling. I believe that my discipline-specific knowledge and skill set bring a unique additional scientific scope to INSTAAR and CU in general.

In addition to my research credentials, I believe that I have forged a path at UT that distinguishes my capabilities as a leader. Some of my leadership has been through formal means as leader of the Water, Climate and Environment Program within the Dept. of Geosciences where I manage the activities of 14 faculty, lead staff meetings, and handle a number of issues related to teaching, hiring and budgets. I have also Chaired the Faculty Annual Review committee within both DGS and UTIG and am the first at the Associate rank to do so, illustrating the confidence that upper-level administrators have in my ability to be fair. Some of my leadership has arisen without being appointed to a leadership role, simply because I saw the need for change. You can read about these activities in my leadership statement but often I have led groups of faculty to act on revising policies and creating change when things were not working well. I think these illustrate my “can-do” attitude to improving the academic workplace.

As Director of INSTAAR, I would bring my collaborative spirit to leading the institute. This means engaging students, faculty, staff and scientists in leadership efforts. Not only would this enable for broad community support and understanding of any changes made, but I would learn a great deal about the needs of the Institute across multiple disciplines and ranks. My goal for INSTAAR is to continue to advance the interdisciplinary science that makes INSTAAR so special. While most of my work focuses on glaciology, I have recently been working with an interdisciplinary team on ice-ocean interactions. Through these efforts I have learned that true interdisciplinary teamwork takes significant time and effort to be successful. This stresses the importance for INSTAAR to maintain its interdisciplinary focus and the need for INSTAAR to become a collaborative place that people are drawn to. I hope to foster that spirit as Director.

I am very interested in learning more deeply about the people and research at INSTAAR and welcome any opportunities to do so. I think that you will find that I am a good fit for INSTAAR and across the broad range of allies within CU-Boulder. Please reach out to me at your earliest convenience. My cell is 512-636-0034 and my email is gcatania@ig.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,

Ginny Catania

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
10100 Burnet Road (R2200), Austin, TX 78758-4445
Phone: (512) 471-0464 Fax: (512) 471-2370

Cover Letters...questions?

CV Basics

GENERAL:

- you will have several CVs - one for each job type you apply for
- during your career you will need to maintain your main CV on a regular (~4x annually) basis
  - used for annual review
  - used to demonstrate credentials for committees/nominations/etc.
  - used for proposals
  - used for recruiting students
- document *every single thing* that you do including updating curriculum, nominations for awards (even if not awarded), student mentoring, etc.
- as you gain more career experience you may end up trimming some of this, but the point is to be able to demonstrate that you're ambitious, hard-working, successful, and a sure-bet

NUTS/BOLTS:

- reverse chronological order makes it easier for people to see what you've done lately
- avoid mixing too many fonts and font styles (bold, italic etc.)
- people read left to right so put important stuff on the left (title, organization) and less important stuff on the right (date, city)

CV Basics

Name and contact info. including website
Education/Academic Preparation

- include degree type, school, location and graduation date
- if you are ABD, include 'expected' with your anticipated completion date and consider a brief statement regarding the status of your thesis so the committee understands how close you are (e.g. Defense scheduled for XX, three of four chapters completed, etc.)

Positions Held

- Only list professional employment under "Employment" not grad school employment
- if you've had legit jobs, put this section at the top

Publications

- Be honest – if the paper is in prep. don't include it. Instead, consider a Work in Progress Section
- put your name in bold in the author list so one can quickly assess your contribution

Awards Received

- include name of award, granting institution, date awarded
- include science proposals awarded (if any). If you have a lot, create different sections for different types of funding received

CV Basics

Presentations

- if you have lots of different types of presentations consider different subsections devoted to invited talks, conference presentations, guest lectures
- include name of organization, title of presentation, date
- Invited talks should take place OUTSIDE of your present institution

Teaching Experience

- Include formal teaching experience: job title, course title, university, dates or terms taught, level of audience, size of class
- consider briefly describing your duties if applying to SLAC
- consider subcategory on classes you are interested in/capable of teaching
- include your teaching eval. scores with context (e.g. 4.5 out of possible 5)
- include mentoring experience here – esp. undergraduate research

CV Basics

Other Professional Experience

- special training received that demonstrates your commitment to a skill that is important to the job description
- pertinent industry experience
- field training (include locations and dates)
- consulting experience

Professional Service

- committee involvement in dept. or professional community (include role, name of group, dates)
- outreach/press
- reviews of journals/proposals – give name of program or journal
- panel membership for proposal review

Membership in Organizations

- name of organization and status (i.e. member)
- consider merging with Professional Service

References

- be sure your referees know they are on your list
- pick wisely and consider asking people who have discussed your work with you at meetings etc.

CV Basics (my CV)

For Next Week….

EXERCISE: Using class notes, an example CV, and the following job ad (or one that you find) complete your cover letter and CV and put a single pdf of both of these on the Canvas site (link in Canvas Assignment) for in-class peer review.

Prestigious University (PU) invites applicants for a tenure-track position in the broad area of geosciences at the level of Assistant Professor. PU is the kind of university that you dream of working at with priorities in research, teaching, and service that align with your ideal work environment. We have awesome colleagues and are proudly committed to academic excellence and to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

A complete application includes a cover letter, curriculum vitae, a 1- to 2- page statement on research and one on teaching and mentoring. In addition, recognizing that educational experiences of all students are enhanced when the diversity of their backgrounds is acknowledged and valued, we ask candidates to articulate their views on inclusivity and equity as they pertain to teaching, mentorship, research, and service.

- Or find your own real job ad -