Creating Peer Writing Groups for Faculty Applications

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Goals: Peer Writing Group for Faculty Applications

Establish a community in the form of small groups to:

1. Critique each other’s application documents
2. Provide support and accountability throughout the application process
3. Connect to faculty mentors for input on application documents such as:
   a) Research Statement
   b) Teaching Statement/Teaching philosophy
   c) Chalk talks/Interviews
Peer Group Formation:

Postdoc sign-up and grouping:
1. We assign to small groups (2-4 people)
2. Each small group will frame their own plan of work
3. Designated writing/meeting time and place (accountability!)
4. Online collaboration/communication
5. Regular writing habits
6. Support structure to help motivation
7. Whatever you like....

Once groups have a presentable draft we connect each small group with a faculty mentor to offer expert advice on the statements.
Research Statements

• Many different styles across disciplines/type of schools
  • Length may vary
  • Past research: Future research ratio may vary
• Compiled list of blogs/online resources with examples
  • see handouts
• Other options
  • Ask your advisor/mentor/others in your field for examples
  • Talk to new faculty – may be willing to share their statement/experiences with you
  • Ask about the search committee point of view about selection process, expectations and potential redflags!
## Dividing into groups: Sort by Disciplines

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<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<td>• Better understanding of each others research.</td>
<td>• May be applying for same positions (potential conflict of interest)</td>
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<td>• More technical feedback on quality of research ideas.</td>
<td>• Diverse disciplines might give different insights (e.g. higher level insights) from a non-expert point of view.</td>
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Weigh the pros and cons and divide groups accordingly.
Research Statement Resources

1. From Universities:
   1. vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/researchstatements.php
   2. Careers.uw.edu/ifiles/all/files/docs/gradstudents/pdfs/AcademicCareers-Research_Statements_07-08.pdf
   3. Postdocs.cornell.edu/research-statement

2. Blogs
   1. Theprofessorisin.com/2012/08/30/dr-karens-rules-of-the-research-statement/
   2. chemistry-blog.com/2013/04/20/get-a-job-ken/

3. Professional writing groups
   1. Academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/academic-writing-blog/vi-writing-the-research-statement-how-and-why-you-research-what-you-do
Conclusions/Impressions/Issues:

1) Some feedback about writing/group experiences, what questions came up? What worked/didn’t, which pitfalls were common?
2) We can start building resources for next year’s postdocs since we’ll all get awesome faculty jobs...😊
3) Start similar process for teaching statements (many universities have writing centers with great resources on this topic!)
Statement of Teaching Philosophy

What Constitutes a Good Teaching Statements?
1. They offer evidence of practice.
   Personal examples and experiences rather than vague references
2. They convey reflectiveness.
   Discuss your approach to instructional challenges and your plans for future pedagogical development
3. They communicate that teaching is valued.
   Show your enthusiasm and commitment to teaching
4. They are well written, clear, and readable.

Rubric to Evaluate the Teaching Philosophy
1. Goals for student learning
2. Enactment of goals
3. Assessment of goals
4. Creating an inclusive learning environment
5. Structure, rhetoric, and language
Teaching Statement Resources

1. Center of Research and Learning and Teaching (CRLT)  
   (crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpts)
2. Center of teaching university of Vanderbilt (cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-statements)
Closing Remarks

• Accountability
  • Small group model lends itself to accountability. Without accountability, easy to put off writing. Helps set consistent writing habits
  • Each group can cater needs to its members:
    • Frequency of meeting
    • Ways of communicating, providing feedback (video conferences, shared writing time, face-to-face meetings, google docs

• Support
  • Daily/weekly writing reports (did I write, what approaches worked for me, where and why did I get stuck etc.)
  • Mindful group strategies (check in with your communication/writing strategies for the group, is it working? Should you change things up to keep you on your toes?

• Faculty Mentors
  • Valuable source of information. Offer insight into search committee process
  • Feedback on statements & interview advice
Questions?