

**M**pace



# **Creating Peer Writing Groups for Faculty Applications**

*Presenters: Ramkumar T-Annamalai, Elsje Pienaar*

*Kathleen McEnnis, Amirhossein Ghasemi*

# 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

## Pros

- Better understanding of each others research.
- More technical feedback on quality of research ideas.

## Cons

- May be applying for same positions (potential conflict of interest)
- Diverse disciplines might give different insights (e.g. higher level insights) from a non-expert point of view.

**Weigh the pros and cons and divide groups accordingly.**

# Research Statement Resources

## 1. From Universities:

1. [vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/researchstatements.php](http://vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/researchstatements.php)
2. [Careers.uw.edu/ifiles/all/files/docs/gradstudents/pdfs/AcademicCareers-Research\\_Statements\\_07-08.pdf](http://Careers.uw.edu/ifiles/all/files/docs/gradstudents/pdfs/AcademicCareers-Research_Statements_07-08.pdf)
3. [Postdocs.cornell.edu/research-statement](http://Postdocs.cornell.edu/research-statement)

## 2. Blogs

1. [Theprofessorisin.com/2012/08/30/dr-karens-rules-of-the-research-statement/](http://Theprofessorisin.com/2012/08/30/dr-karens-rules-of-the-research-statement/)
2. [chemistry-blog.com/2013/04/20/get-a-job-ken/](http://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](http://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 devpmt*
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](http://crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpts))
2. Center of teaching university of Vanderbilt ([cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-subpages/teaching-statements](http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-subpages/teaching-statements))
3. Writing your Teaching Philosophy: “A Step-by-Step Approach.” Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Minnesota. ([umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html](http://umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html))

# 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?**