Prepared by Elizabeth Nance, updated June 2020 – these tips and tricks reflect her opinions and experiences

General Tenure-Track Faculty Application info

Most applications require:
- cover letter (~1 page)
- research statement (5 pages max)
- teaching statement (1-2 pages)
- CV (3 pages might be given as a minimum length)
- 3 writing samples (peer-reviewed publications)

More commonly included in applications: a 1-2 page diversity statement.

Other potential documents that can be requested: a statement that is a summary of your prior work, to have on hand for a few places that request it.

Keep your CV short, concise, and cleanly formatted. Review committees are often looking 200+ applications...

Teaching Statement
Attachment: a sample teaching statement from one of our recent faculty hires. This is one of the more detailed ones, but hits upon many of the key highlights to include in a statement

Content:
(1) teaching philosophy,
(2) your intended teaching pedagogy,
(3) teaching beyond the classroom, and
(4) classes of interest to teach.

Pont (4) should be specifically tailored to the program, listing individual courses with course codes and titles.

Discuss teaching relevant to the department you are applying to. For example, if you are applying to chemE, you discuss teaching chemE; if your background is not in chemE, this is even more important to briefly discuss how you will learn to teach chemE courses and how you will approach your teaching.

You can also include a summary of your past experience or any scholarly contributions to teaching you might have (webinars, workshops, training programs, editorials, blogs, podcasts, websites, papers, etc)!

Research Statement
Attachment: my research statement from 2014 (see notes below on things I would change)

General notes: Some schools vary the length of the research statement, but the shortest I've seen is 3 pages. Most are in the 3-5 page range, with 5 pages as the maximum!

Content: It should come across clearly: (1) what the motivation for each project area is; (2) what the goals of each project area are going to be; (3) why you are uniquely qualified to do the work. Most applicants include three research thrust areas that they will work on in their first 5-7 years.

Potential other aspects to consider:
- Funding mechanisms or organizations that will support your work - can list the target priority funding agencies within each thrust for each thrust.

- Within each thrust, are there key collaborators you would identify working with that would expand the research impact? Including some indication of who you would collaborate with could make it easier for the reviewer committee to see how you would "integrate" into existing infrastructure and resources in a particular department/university, even if its general statements like "I will seek collaborations with the Institute for Protein Design..." or "with clinical faculty in cardiology who have established models of PEG cardiotoxicity."

Formatting
Typically a committee is reading a lot of documents (over 200 applications – we had 350+ applications in our 2019 search), with each application being many many many pages in length.
- Keep your formatting clean and clear
- Make sure figures and text are all legible throughout the entire document.
- Figures should have a clear purpose and connection to the text.
- Don't overdo it on stylizing text (i.e. be critical about use of bold, underline, italics, font color, capitalizing, etc).
- Think carefully about spacing – if everything is crammed together to make more "fit" it's less likely to get read.

<u>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Statement</u>
Content:
(1) What diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) means to you
(2) Your experience with DEI best practices or DEI efforts you've been involved in and/OR your personal experience with DEI
(3) How you would further DEI in the department/field to which you are applying

Diversity can mean many things to many people – think about this holistically. It's not just about women and underrepresented minorities, but it can be. It can also be about verterans, student parents, first generation, queer, low income, non-native speakers, disability, access, etc.

Make sure you give solutions; the number one thing applicants haven't done is provided solutions to improve or address diversity and inclusion in, for example, chemical engineering. Saying you are just going to mentor students and doing K-12 outreach by providing demos to these schools is pretty standard, and has been done for many many years, and most people would consider this part of the job, so it's not actually proposing something you aren't expected to do.

<u>Recommendation letters:</u>
These are often requested for a down-selected set of candidates after the first triage round, but you should provide a list of your references in your initial application (end of CV, cover letter, direct entry into the application website, or as a separate document upload).

Expected letters: doctoral and postdoctoral advisers (if you've done a postdoc).

Other common letters: Key collaborators; teaching or outreach advisors; supervisor or collaborator on a leadership activity

Additional thoughts: Some schools required 5 letters, so for my purposes it was useful to include two medical doctors, both of whom I had collaborated extensively with over several years. If I didn't have the MDs and needed 5 letters, I would have used my close mentor from my undergraduate college, and one of my colleagues in the non-profit work I did, both of whom knew me well enough to speak to my ability to be a good colleague, at the least.

An applicant submitting rec letters from their rec letter writers is poor practice, and questionable ethics, at best. If rec letters are requested, rec letter writers will get an email sent directly to them for guidelines on how to submit a letter confidentially.

FAQ

- **My plan is to have a relatively general research and teaching statement, only briefly modifying both for each application and to include more department-specific information in the cover letter. Does this seem appropriate?** Yes, your most significant modifications will come on the teaching statement, where you often want to be as specific as possible in outlining what you will teach/are interested in teaching (list course codes and course names!). Your teaching philosophy and experience will likely stay consistent across applications. Unless you have a section in your research statement specific to each university not covered in your cover letter (about potential collaborators, infrastructure, institute culture etc) your research statement will likely stay pretty close to the same for all places you apply!

- **Regarding the cover letter, my general plan is: 1) explain why I'm interested in and a good fit for the department I'm applying to - available resources, synergistic collaboration opportunities with existing faculty, etc, 2) briefly summarize my research and teaching vision, 3) provide basic information (e.g., earliest start date, AIChE poster session info). Do you think I am on the right track?** That sounds good to me – it's good to give a few key highlights of your past research successes, which can come into the "being a good fit" for the department portion of the cover letter. I think the main thing I've seen go wrong in cover letters is (1) not touching upon why that department/university, and (2) over-formatting - i.e. bolding or italicizing or underlining too much stuff.

- **What would you change from your application, having now served on a search committee?** I went out on the market in 2014, and I would say that my docs are a bit out of date and I would certainly improve them if I were to apply again. I think my application could certainly have been better, although I ended up interviewing at 11 places (12 institutions in total). From serving on the faculty search committee in ChemE, here are a few things I would do in my research statement: (1) Keep my overview figure and my lab "branding" in my research statement to show my lab vision; (2) Be more specific about exactly what tools I would use in each project cluster - many people write specific aims or grant style research statements, which is ok, as long as you are making the big picture clear and your research proposal is understandable to a broad audience; often search committees in ChemE do not review applications based on overlapping areas of expertise