

CAREER DEVELOPMENT *at Yale*



Maximizing Your
Cover Letter

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Introduction and Objectives

Introduction

Your cover letter is a marketing tool you'll use to promote your background and highlight skills when applying to jobs through STARS. A well-crafted cover letter distinguishes you from others and will entice the reader to want to learn more about you.

Cover letters are strategically tailored to present the accomplishments, skills and experiences that are transferable to a new position. A well-constructed cover letter increases your chances of garnering an interview. A cover letter with errors, misspellings or irregular formatting will usually dissuade a manager from seriously considering a candidate.

Objectives

This guide is designed to provide reference materials for both the format and content of your cover letter. It offers best practices, guidelines, and examples of how to make a *good* cover letter into an even *better* cover letter. We recommend the following:

1. Read pages 4 – 16 to become familiar with the concepts.
2. Print a job description from STARS so that you can tailor your cover letter to that position.
3. Complete the “Building Your Cover Letter Worksheet” on pages 17 - 18 and create/edit your cover letter.

Even though STARS does not list the cover letter as a requirement, we strongly recommend that you write one for EVERY job in which you apply.


Read the guide as you craft your cover letter and revisit it periodically as you transition throughout your career. Please reach out to us learning@yale.edu if you have questions.

What Makes a Good Cover Letter?

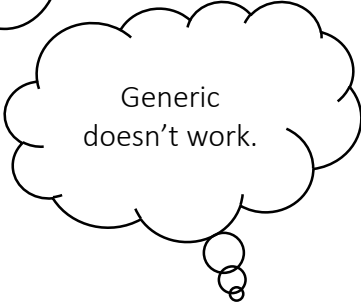
A good cover letter:

- Highlights how your skills and attributes tie to the needs of Yale, the department and the specific role
- Demonstrates effective communication skills
- Creates a lasting impression
- Explains the “why” (why this department, why this role)
- Tells a story and brings your resume to life (they complement each other)

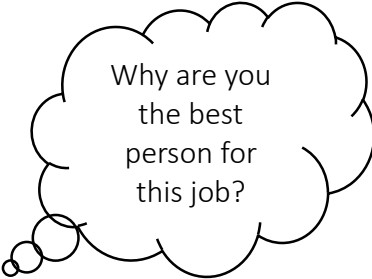
Below are a few quotes from the Yale Human Resources Staffing and Career Development team, with what a good cover letter addresses:



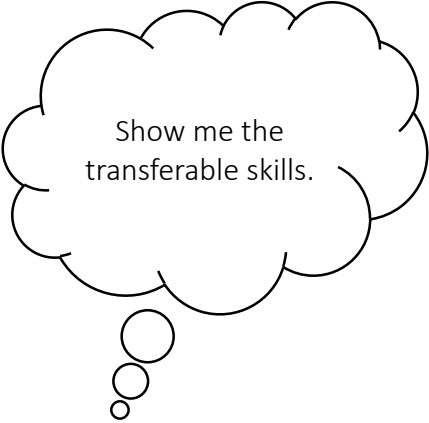
Why are you interested in this job? What can you bring to it?



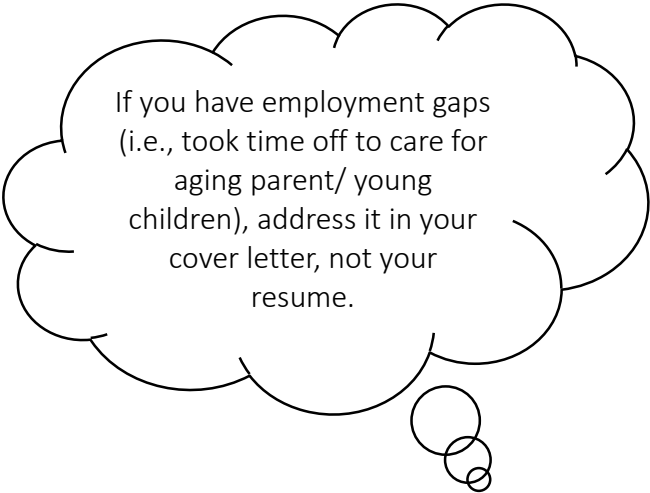
Generic doesn't work.




Why are you the best person for this job?



Show me the transferable skills.



If you have employment gaps (i.e., took time off to care for aging parent/ young children), address it in your cover letter, not your resume.



Read the job requisition and address what the hiring manager wants.

Cover Letter Guidelines

Please use the following checklist as a guide for writing and editing your cover letter.

GENERAL	Y/N?
Make a clear statement of what value you will bring to the department and role.	
Make it easy for the reader. Identify what key skills, experiences, and attributes you offer.	
Convey your passion for the University, department, and role.	
Tailor the content throughout, not just in the introduction.	
Provide information beyond what is found in your resume.	
RESEARCH	
Use specific information garnered from online research, informational interviews, and other sources to demonstrate your interest and fit with the department and role.	
Mention individuals you've had <i>meaningful</i> conversations with when appropriate (i.e., informational interviews vs saying that you know someone who knows someone).	
MATCH TO JOB DESCRIPTION	
Draw connections between the job requirements and your skills, experiences, and attributes.	
Use specific examples. Quantify or qualify results in alignment with their competencies.	
Address the key requirements listed in the job description.	
Translate prior experiences to demonstrate preparedness for the desired role.	
FORMAT	
Do not exceed one page ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a page is enough).	
Use an 11 or 12 pt font.	
Ensure margins are at least 1" all around.	
Use proper business formatting and spacing.	
Include your contact information and the hiring manager's contact information. if not known use "Dear Hiring Manager" instead.	
Incorporate a good amount of white space.	
WHAT TO AVOID:	
Do not use the same generic cover letter for multiple jobs (customize one for each role).	
Do not have the same skills/experiences in each letter (tailor to the specific job requirements).	
Do not write from the "me" perspective (this focuses on what the opportunity will do for you and doesn't tell the reader what value you bring to their organization).	
Do not restate what is written in your resume. Do not copy and paste your job description into the cover letter either. Your cover letter should not be a list of your past experiences and jobs.	
Do not include spelling errors, jargon, grammatical errors, or other mistakes.	
Do not lack the relevance or level of interest to make the reader want to learn more.	



*Since STARS has a specific field for your cover letter content, it is best to write your cover letter in WORD so that you can use the spell check feature. Then, copy and paste the content into that field in STARS.

Cover Letter Formatting

Cover Letter Formatting

Before we discuss content, let's take a look at format. Using the samples below, look at the pattern the words create, the use of whitespace, the centering or left justifying of the text, and the appropriate use of bullets. These are examples of well laid out cover letters.

Sarah Connor
659 Blue Street - Detroit, MI 73823 - (343) 267-7889 - Sarah_Connor1234567776@yahoo.com

February 24, 2013

Ben Johnstone
Human Resources Manager
ABCD Company Inc
123 The way Blvd
Atlanta, GA 30211

Dear Mr. Johnstone:

I am interested in applying teacher position in your school for Junior High School level. As a 2008 graduate of Cambridge University, I have several teaching experiences for your consideration. I have been teaching for first grade and second grade in school districts.

Now, I am teaching at Happiness Junior High School near my district. This position makes me use several basic teaching skills. I am creative, hard working, love children, nurturing, and patient. In my first year of college I really love everything about horse and it makes me worked in a racing museum. This job helped me to get specific experience especially on how to coordinate field trips with classroom instruction.

I want to use my experience and ability to grow with your school. I want to be an enthusiastic, smart, and creative teacher and give great contribution to your school. I would welcome an interview and I hope to get your confirmation at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Sarah Connor

Enclosure: Resume

Julianna Lanely
40 First Avenue, Apartment 214
New London, CT 54923

June 26, 2010

Ms. Lynnmarie Prosky
Vice President of Sales
Miller + Shane Event Group
9241 Old Town Road, Suite 401
Darien, CT 54992


Dear Ms. Prosky,

I attended an event planning career panel last year at Northeastern College where I heard you speak about Miller + Shane Event Group. Something you mentioned has stuck with me—to be successful, you must have passion for what you do. I believe I have the passion it takes to pursue a career in event planning. I am writing to express interest in an event planning position at Miller + Shane Event Group. I graduated from Northeastern College in May with a degree in marketing communications. As a recent graduate I believe I can bring new ideas, personal energy, and a fresh perspective to your company. Some highlights of my background include the following:

- **Event Planning Experience**—As a marketing and events intern at *The Best of Connecticut* magazine I assisted in planning and running events with attendance ranging from 400 to 1,000 people. I also helped conceptualize and create promotional material for all events, as well as prepared recap and sponsorship portfolios for clients with 100% accuracy.
- **Academic Excellence**—I graduated magna cum laude from Northeastern College and was named to the Dean's List in 2009–10. I have also been named to the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Beta Gamma Sigma International Business Honor Society, and Mu Kappa Tau Marketing Honor Society. In addition, I was selected as one of the Connecticut Young Business Leader Club's "Rising Stars" and was featured in the January/February issue of *Leadership Today* magazine.
- **Creative Mind-Set**—I have worked as a creative designer at a hotel flower shop for for two years. I met with clients and developed ideas and created floral arrangements for over 35 major events.

I would appreciate opportunity to show you some samples of my work and discuss any open positions. I will contact you next week so we can set up a meeting time that is convenient for you. You can reach me at 570-444-2124 or jlanely001@gmail.com. I look forward to discussing your opportunities.

Sincerely,


Julianna Lanely



Cover Letters should not be more than one-page long.

Cover Letter Content

Structure

Let's look at the basic structure of a cover letter. Think of it as a meal; the appetizer is the first paragraph, the meat and potatoes are the second paragraph, and the desert is the third paragraph. For example:

First Paragraph – the Introduction- WHY you are writing

GET THEM TO KEEP READING

- Clearly state who you are and why you are writing.
- Give any compelling reasons why you are applying to the position. e.g., "I was excited to see XYZ posting on STARS as it speaks to my background in X and my passion in Y."
- Incorporate the research you have done, including employees you have spoken to via networking and informational interviewing.
- Remember: this is the appetizer (teaser). At a restaurant, if the appetizer is fantastic the odds that you will have a great meal are pretty good, so people stay and keep eating! In a cover letter, you want to think about your hook and get them to keep reading so that they want to know more.

Second Paragraph – the Body – WHAT you have to offer

GET THEM TO CONNECT THE DOTS

- Make your case, draw connections between the job requirements and your own skills, experiences, and attributes.
- Highlight 1 or 2 specific accomplishments but do NOT repeat your resume.
- If you are making a career switch, state your case.
- Show what you have to offer. Describe the skills and experiences that make you a match for the job and the attributes and qualities make you a good fit with their culture. GIVE EXAMPLES of these.
- Remember, this is the meat and potatoes, the heaviest/largest part of the meal. The most memorable part, where you will convince the reader you are worth interviewing.

Third and Last Paragraph – the Closing – WHAT you want and HOW you will follow-up

GET THEM TO TAKE ACTION

- Restate your interest and enthusiasm.
- Recap what YOU can do for THEM and how the department will benefit from hiring you.
- Make a specific ask (usually an interview) and outline your follow-up.
- Thank the reader for their time and consideration
- Remember: this is the dessert. End the meal on a great note to land an interview. Make a lasting impression.

Customization

Each cover letter should be customized. Tailor it to the department *AND* the specific requirements of the position. Remember: Departments and roles are NOT interchangeable. The cover letter addresses each position individually.

There are two primary tools you can leverage to tailor your cover letter; conducting research and reading the job description. Let's take a look at conducting research first:

Conducting Research – this should be done in order to:

- Learn information beyond the basic work (e.g., values and culture of the department, leadership styles, etc.).
- Identify the roles and career tracks of interest.
- Demonstrate that you have had meaningful conversations (informational interviews).

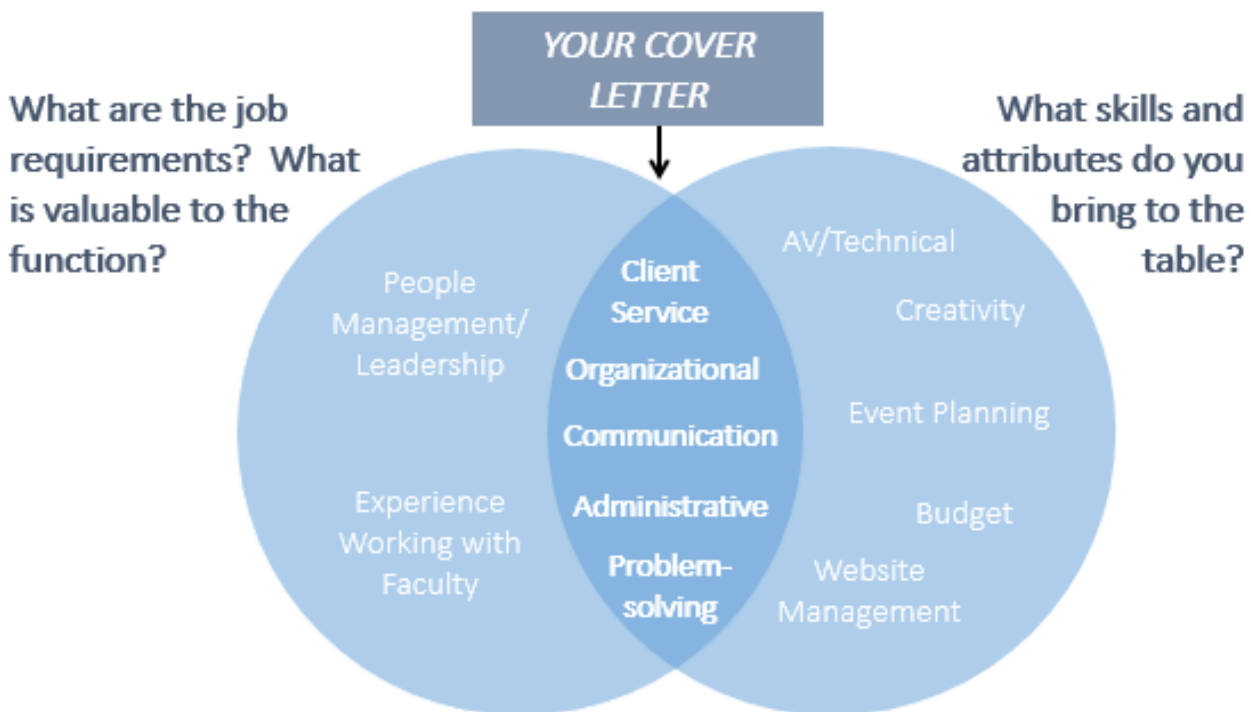
Here are a few ways to find some of the information above:

- Search the department website or Workday to identify the name of the department lead. Review the makeup of the team (how many employees, their job titles, etc.). Find someone to conduct an informational interview with. Learn more about the backgrounds and career paths of each of the team members.
- Google the department and or department lead and see what you can learn. For example, google “Yale Cell Biology” and click on “department news” you will see that James Rothman won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2013, this is great information for a cover letter and an interview!
- Look on LinkedIn- the previous person may have noted what he or she did in that role and you may gain an idea of their career progression or background.

Customization

Job Descriptions

Job Descriptions can be a great source of information. Look for key words and phrases that match what the Recruiter or Hiring Manager is looking for. Determine where the overlap or gaps are in your experience and skills. This is a great way to keep your eyes on the prize.



In the example above, the employee is currently an Administrative Assistant for one of the museums at Yale. He is applying to a Senior Administrative Assistant role which is coordinating the work of other Administrative Assistants that support a group of faculty members. The circle on the left shows the requirements of the job while the circle on the right shows his skills and attributes. The intersection of these two circles should be the focus of his cover letter.



Let's try it!

On the next page you will find a Job Description taken right from STARS. The Role is "Leadership Giving Officer". Read through the job description.

What are the top 3 skills mentioned?

NOTE: Answers are listed on p.14.

Customization

STARS Job Description

Title: Leadership Giving Officer

Position Focus: Develops and implements solicitation programs for unrestricted leadership annual and reunion gifts to Yale University from a specified portfolio of potential donors.

Essential Duties:

1. Qualifies, cultivates and solicits alumni capable of making leadership annual and reunion gifts to the School.
2. Devises and implements cultivation and solicitation strategies and meets activity and revenue goals by planning, managing and maintaining an aggressive travel schedule. Executes cultivation methods to solicit gifts. Raises unrestricted leadership annual gifts to fund core school priorities.
3. Conducts appropriate stewardship activities ensuring leadership donors are personally thanked to further enhance the relationship between assigned donors and the school. Initiates and maintains contact to promote positive donor relations.
4. Develops and implements retention strategies to upgrade donors.
5. Participates in execution of events and programs in support of development activities. Engages key volunteers and effectively utilizes events and other activities to move solicitations forward.
6. Solicits leadership annual gifts working with donors directly and working with department colleagues and volunteers.
7. Qualifies prospects for potential major gift capacity and interest. Provides appropriate background on prospects to be assigned to Major Gift portfolios.
8. Coordinates with Alumni Relations and Reunion Giving programs to develop leadership volunteers for the school.
9. Effectively communicates progress of cultivation efforts and results of visits to appropriate personnel.
10. Exercises good judgment in discussing alumni, issues and results. Maintains composure and calm demeanor in difficult situations.
11. Acts as liaison between various university departments and donors.
12. May perform other duties as assigned.

Required Education, Experience and Skills:

1. Bachelor's Degree and three years of fund raising or an equivalent combination of education and related experience.
2. Strong relationship building skills.
3. Strong written communication skills.
4. Experience with donor and alumni databases.
5. Demonstrated self-reliance.
6. Ability to multi-task, meet deadlines, and work in a fast-paced environment.

Preferred Education, Experience and Skills:

1. Global orientation, experience working across countries and regions, and fluency in more than one language.

Customization

So how did you do? If you chose any of the following, you are right on track.

1. Fundraising
2. Cultivating and building relationships
3. Event management
4. Strategic thinking (finding prospects and retaining donors)
5. Collaboration/Communication between other departments



Let's try it, again!

Take a look at the job description for a position you are interested in on STARS.

Can you identify the top 3 skills?



Let's try it!

Review the cover letter on pages 15-16, ask yourself:

1. What did the employee do well?
2. What could the employee have done better?
3. Did the employee address 3 of the top skills listed in the corresponding job description on p.13 (fundraising, cultivating and building relationships, event management, strategic thinking, collaboration/communication between other departments)?
4. Would you invite this employee to an interview?

NOTE: Answers are listed on p.22 and an improved version of the same cover letter is on p. 23.

Cover Letter Critique

Jane Smith
123 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06500

June 26, 20XX

Human Resources
Yale University
221 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to apply for the Leadership Giving Officer position at Yale University (STARS requisition #31959BR). I have been at Yale working as an Advancement Officer for two years, so that should position me well. This fits my career goals perfectly, as I want to stay at the University.

Here is what I do each day, and what I have achieved thus far:

- Managed a portfolio of 100-200 Annual Fund and Major Gift prospects through successful qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship stages.
- Secured over \$300,000 in commitments with over \$225,000 being paid in the current year.
- Exceeded fundraising goals, including number of prospect visits, number of leadership gift solicitations, cash and commitments secured, and percentage of increased gifts.
- Managed the largest Annual Fund program, consisting of 60 volunteer solicitors, which generated over \$1.1M of unrestricted revenue— the largest amount ever generated by this program.

As an Advancement Officer at the same institution, I have had the opportunity to prove myself as a skilled fundraiser. In my first year at Yale, I surpassed all of my individual fundraising goals and I got a 4 on my performance review. I have also had the opportunity to build relationships with campus leaders and fundraising prospects, which will enable me to quickly adapt to a new position in the same space.

I started my career in the Army, where I obtained and refined the skills that have made me successful in the field of development. I served as a Civil Affairs Sergeant both stateside and

in Afghanistan. My job involved building relationships with local civilians, domestic and foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations. I was responsible for leveraging those relationships to obtain resources such as money, expertise, and cooperation. I have found that my responsibilities in the military are directly applicable to my responsibilities as a fundraiser. I have been able to use this training in my current position to build and leverage relationships with prospects to help achieve the highest priorities of the Institute.

Outside of work and school, I strive to give back to my community by volunteering with local nonprofit organizations. I have served in leadership capacities with several different organizations. This has given me the opportunity to build fundraising and marketing initiatives with very limited resources, which has helped me in my career.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed for this position and to discuss how my education and experience fits the needs of Yale University. Please feel free to contact me at (203) 432-5555 or jane.smith@yale.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

NOTE: While p. 22 lists the answers to what worked well and what needs improvement, p. 23 shows the revised version of this cover letter.

Building Your Cover Letter -Worksheet

Think about your next position at Yale. NOTE: it is ideal to use an actual job description for this exercise. However, if nothing is posted in STARS at this time, please think about the skills and requirements needed for the type of position you wish to pursue. Complete the worksheet below. This will help build content for your cover letter. There is an example on the next page for reference.

Introduction: The Hook	
1. What is the position?	
2. How will you introduce yourself?	
3. Have you spoken with any contacts or conducted any informational interviews? If so, with whom?	
4. What is your unique "hook" that will compel the reader to want to learn more about you?	

Body: The Sell	
5. What are the top 3 - 4 skills mentioned in the job description (if a description is not posted, what are the top skills that are typically required for this type of position)?	
6. For skill #1, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	
7. For skill #2, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	

<p>8. For skill #3, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?</p>	
<p>9. For skill #4, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?</p>	

Closing: The Ask	
<p>10. Recap why you are a good fit for the role. Reiterate your interest and enthusiasm.</p>	
<p>11. What is your “ask”?</p>	
<p>12. Thank the reader for considering your application.</p>	

Building Your Cover Letter – Worksheet Sample

The following sample was crafted in response to a STARS job description posted for an Events Coordinator position.

Introduction: The Hook	
1. What is the position?	Events Coordinator – STARS requisition #31940BR
2. How will you introduce yourself?	Current Yale employee in Undergraduate Student Life with 10 years of experience in planning large scale student events throughout the year.
3. Have you spoken with any contacts or conducted any informational interviews? If so, with whom?	Jane Doe, Event Manager – learned about the highly collaborative culture in the department.
4. What is your unique “hook” that will compel the reader to want to learn more about you?	Efficient organized event leader with a make-it-happen attitude. Publically recognized at graduation in student speech.

Body: The Sell	
5. What are the top 3 - 4 skills mentioned in the job description (if a description is not posted, what are the top skills that are typically required for this type of position)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Oversee logistics for alumni events 2. Manage event vendors 3. Draft event-related communications 4. Create event-related marketing materials (online and in print)
6. For skill #1, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	<p>No – for alumni events Yes – for student events (transferable skill to alumni events)</p> <p>Currently oversee all logistics for Student Life events including multi-day orientation for approximately 1,300 students and graduation for greater than 4,000 guests. Also worked with student clubs to give student leaders the tools to plan their events effectively.</p>
7. For skill #2, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Currently collaborate with vendors for catering, equipment rental (i.e., tables and chairs), music, etc. Manage vendor RFP process, contract negotiation, budget, and ongoing logistics.</p>

8. For skill #3, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	Yes Drafted parent and student communications for orientation and graduation for the VP of Student Life.
9. For skill #4, do you have this skill? If so, what have you accomplished or what experiences have you had that ties your skills to the job requirement? If not, how have you been addressing the skill gap?	No However, while I do not draft or create the marketing materials, I do have exposure to them since I update our website (all of our marketing materials are online). Additionally, I volunteer for the Animal Shelter and help design the posters for our annual fundraising gala each year.

Closing: The Ask	
10. Recap why you are a good fit for the role. Reiterate your interest and enthusiasm.	10 years of experience planning student events at Yale University. Understanding of the values and memories that students take with them when they graduate (as they become alumni). I have a great passion for the Yale community and would be thrilled to channel that towards alumni returning to their beloved alma mater for events.
11. What is your “ask”?	To be interviewed for the Events Coordinator position where I can further discuss my background and qualifications.
13. Thank the reader for considering your application.	Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sample Cover Letters (Before & After)

Sample Cover Letter – Before

Jane Smith
123 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06500

June 26, 2015

Human Resources
Yale University
221 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to apply for the Leadership Giving Officer position at Yale University (STARS requisition #31959BR). I have been at Yale working as an Advancement Officer for two years, so that should position me well. This fits my career goals perfectly, as I want to stay at the University.

Here is what I do each day, and what I have achieved thus far:

- Managed a portfolio of 100-200 Annual Fund and Major Gift prospects through successful qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship stages.
- Secured over \$300,000 in commitments with over \$225,000 being paid in the current year.
- Exceeded fundraising goals, including number of prospect visits, number of leadership gift solicitations, cash and commitments secured, and percentage of increased gifts.
- Managed the largest Annual Fund program, consisting of 60 volunteer solicitors, which generated over \$1.1M of unrestricted revenue— the largest amount ever generated by this program.

As an Advancement Officer at the same institution, I have had the opportunity to prove myself as a skilled fundraiser. In my first year at Yale, I surpassed all of my individual fundraising goals and I got a 4 on my performance review. I have also had the opportunity to build relationships with campus leaders and fundraising prospects, which will enable me to quickly adapt to a new position in the same space.

I started my career in the Army, where I obtained and refined the skills that have made me successful in the field of development. I served as a Civil Affairs Sergeant both stateside and in Afghanistan. My job involved building relationships with local civilians, domestic and foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations. I was responsible for leveraging those relationships to obtain resources such as money, expertise, and cooperation. I have found that my responsibilities in the military are directly applicable to my responsibilities as a fundraiser. I have been able to use this training in my current position to build and leverage relationships with prospects to help achieve the highest priorities of the Institute.

Outside of work and school, I strive to give back to my community by volunteering with local nonprofit organizations. I have served in leadership capacities with several different organizations. This has given me the opportunity to build fundraising and marketing initiatives with very limited resources, which has helped me in my career.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed for this position and to discuss how my education and experience fits the needs of Yale University. Please feel free to contact me at (203) 432-5555 or jane.smith@yale.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

Commented [LD1]: GOOD: format looks nice, clean, easy to read
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: this should not be two pages

Commented [LD2]: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: Better to have a specific name and title or use "Recruiter" or "Hiring Manager".

Commented [LD3]: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: Better to have a specific name or say "Dear Recruiter" or "Dear Hiring Manager".

Commented [LD4]: GOOD: hook showing that she is already working in the field.

Commented [LD5]: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: she shouldn't say "that should position me well". She should show how she is well positioned and prove it.

Commented [LD6]: GOOD: like seeing the bullet points of the top accomplishments (just be careful not to repeat what is on the resume).
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: shouldn't say "here is what I do each day".

Commented [LD7]: GOOD: "I surpassed my individual fundraising goals"
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: by what %?
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: not appropriate to talk about annual review rating.
GOOD: "Opportunity to build relationships" – which is a key skill in the job description.

Commented [LD8]: GOOD: tying military to career
NEEDS IMPROVEMENT: this paragraph is a bit repetitive, she says twice that her responsibilities in the army related to her responsibilities in fundraising (first sentence and fourth sentence).

Commented [LD9]: GOOD: showing how extracurricular is related to career

Commented [LD10]: GOOD: nice close

Sample Cover Letter – After

Jane Smith
117 Monmouth Way
New Haven, CT 06511

June 26, 20xx

Ms. Anne Jones
Recruiter
Yale University
221 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am writing to apply for the Leadership Giving Officer position at Yale University (STARS requisition #31959BR). As an Advancement Officer at the same institution, I have had the opportunity to prove myself as a skilled fundraiser. In my first year at Yale, I surpassed all of my individual fundraising goals. Some of my most notable accomplishments are: leading a team of 60 volunteers to raise over \$1.1M in unrestricted funds, achieving an 82% proposal commitment rate and raising over \$325,000 in gifts and multi-year pledges. I have also had the opportunity to build relationships with school leaders and fundraising prospects, which will enable me to quickly adapt to a new position with enhanced responsibility and greater campus collaborations.

I started my career in the Army, where I built relationships with local civilians, domestic and foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations. I was responsible for leveraging those relationships to obtain resources such as money, expertise, and cooperation. I have been able to use this training in my current position to build and leverage relationships with prospects to help achieve the highest priorities of the University. In addition to my professional experience, I am currently pursuing my Ph.D. part-time in Higher Education Administration and Policy with a focus on philanthropy in higher education. My dissertation will examine the impact of public recognition in the decision-making process of major gift donors. Outside of work and school, I strive to give back to my community by volunteering with local nonprofit organizations and helping plan yearly fundraising events. I have served in leadership capacities with several different organizations. This has given me the opportunity to build fundraising and marketing initiatives with very limited resources.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed for this position and to discuss how my education and experience fits the needs of Yale University. Please feel free to contact me at (203) 432-5555 or jane.smith@yale.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Smith

Sample Cover Letters

Sample Cover Letters

James Jones
1111 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 555-5555

July 14, 20xx

Mr. Daniel Crane
Executive Director, Dining
Yale Dining
246 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510

Dear Mr. Crane,

I am a strong candidate for the Director of Catering position due to my diverse background and the skills I have mastered over the course of my career. To expound upon some of my unique qualifications, I would like to highlight them below.

- **Deep understanding of culinary operations** - From the hands-on skills I learned as a line cook, to my bachelor's degree from the Culinary Institute of America, to my ability to craft and execute menus for thousands of guests, I have had food and beverage leadership at the core of my background. Continuing education in this area is something that I have pursued over the past several years to ensure I am versed in catering, food, and beverage trends.
- **Strong team leadership and development of over 1,000 associates** - The events and projects that I execute touch nearly every associate in the organizations of which I've been a part. I take associate development and training as one of the most important duties as a leader. Educating the team on food and beverage, technology, and customer service represents a critical component of each and every job I've held. By developing and leveraging the strengths of my teams, it helps create success and opportunity for all.
- **Solid foundation in strategic planning, budgeting, and profit chain management** – I have developed and succeeded in evaluating and producing solutions for procurement and expense opportunities. Taking the savings from unnecessary waste and inefficiency, I've been able to reinvest in my teams and in higher quality products and services.

My strengths as a recognized leader, effective manager, and food and beverage expert position me well for the Director of Catering role.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

James Jones

Sample Cover Letters

June 7, 20xx

Ms. Erin King
Senior Director, Marketing and Communications
Yale University Office of Development
157 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06521-2038

Dear Ms. King,

It is a pleasure to submit my application for the Associate Director of Stewardship for Leadership Donors position. My significant experience in nonprofit communications and development, combined with my interpersonal and leadership skills, attention to detail, and deep knowledge of Yale, make me the best candidate to build and launch this important new initiative.

During my five years on Yale's Stewardship team, I have gained abundant knowledge of communications in support of the University. In my current job, I collaborate university-wide to produce materials that are personal and engaging while supportive of current initiatives. I have championed more frequent use of student and faculty voices, found ways to utilize student thank-you letter quotes, and started a new program to incorporate color images in our reporting. I am an articulate writer, excellent public speaker, careful listener, and thoughtful problem solver, and I use these traits to partner with members of the Yale community. My relationships in these networks are strong, and they will benefit me in building consensus around the Top Donor Stewardship Program.

Prior to Yale I was in fundraising and the arts, so I know what it takes to work closely with donors and sponsors as well as designers and vendors. I also serve on the board of the New Haven Free Public Library Foundation and manage public relations for local nonprofits, which have given me unique ways to grow as a development and communications professional.

I have been inspired to devote my energy to sharing the University's stories with the people who make them possible. The opportunities to impact Yale's celebration of leadership philanthropists, and to work with you to build a new program from the ground up, are thrilling prospects. I look forward to continuing conversations with the Stewardship and Principal Gifts teams.

Thank you for your consideration. Best wishes,

Danielle Steele

Sample Cover Letters

Nicole Ditoro
1111 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 555-5555
Jane.Jam@yale.edu

April 6, 20xx

Hiring Manager
Yale University Office of Development
157 Church Street
New Haven, CT 06510-2100

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to express my strong interest in the Development Coordinator 1 position listed on STARS (requisition #29888BR.) I am well-suited for the job because of my unique combination of experiences as a freelance journalist, Administrative Assistant at Yale University, and finally as a part-time supervisor at Choate Rosemary Hall's Office of Development.

I am excited about this position because of its emphasis on writing and editing. I have always been a passionate writer and have written professionally as a freelance journalist for Hersam Acorn Newspapers. As a freelancer, producing quality writing on a deadline was necessary for securing future jobs. I learned to hone my research skills, drawing information from different sources while fact-checking my work for accuracy. My experience working at Yale has given me a familiarity as well as a respect for the institution and all that it has provided to its students, staff, and the New Haven community. During my time at Yale, I have helped coordinate events that enabled students to engage with top thinkers in their fields and corresponded with senior executives from companies all over the world.

Since I have worked in a school development office before, I know that Yale as it exists today would not be possible without the support of the Office of Development and its many generous donors. I would be honored with the opportunity to work alongside the development team as a Development Coordinator, a position that would enable me to use my best skills to continue making a meaningful contribution to Yale.

Sincerely,

Nicole Ditoro

Sample Cover Letters

Brooke Smith
1111 Main Street
New Haven, CT 06510
(203) 555-5555
brooke.smith@yale.edu

July 23, 20xx

Recruiter
Human Resources
221 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Recruiter,

I'm writing to express my interest in the position of Senior Program Manager at the Department of Internal Medicine (STARS requisition #31674BR). Over the past eight years, I have been employed at the Yale School of Public Health during which I received a promotion increasing my responsibilities to include strategic planning, program management and team leadership. As the first point of contact for Public Health students, I am most proud of the fact that our program was recently ranked 14th by US News & World Report, a ranking that is dependent on alumni feedback around their student experiences.

I began working with the Public Health program shortly after its launch and have been an integral part its development and evolution. This fall, we experienced a recent growth of 32% in student enrollment and have expanded to include two new focus areas: global health and health care management. As a result of the program expansion, I have been tasked with examining many of our processes to discern what we are doing and how we can do it better. As the first point of contact for programming, I develop and cultivate relationships with students, faculty, alumni and staff. The end goal: to deliver a premier program and an incredible student experience.

Throughout my career, I have gained extensive program development and management experience in very diverse settings. My years of professional work in this arena has created opportunities to deliver and provide experiences in a collaborative culture. The most important lesson learned: the success of a program is not the sole responsibility of one individual, but in fact, depends on leadership that reflects a collaborative style and a team that is mission driven.

It would be a tremendous privilege to bring my training and program development skills to your position. Thank you for considering my application. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (203) 222-8989 or brooke.smith@yale.edu.

Sincerely,

Brooke Smith