

Cover Letter Handbook



University of the Pacific
Career Resource Center
“Realizing Ambitions, Ensuring Success”

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BASIC COVER LETTER GUIDELINES

The main purpose of the cover letter is to introduce yourself to the employer and to supplement and clarify the experience that you have listed on your resume.

Do not underestimate the power of a good cover letter! A well-written cover letter can make a critical difference in an employer's estimate of your qualifications.

An applicant with average qualifications may gain many interviews with a good cover letter, while a well-qualified candidate may defeat him or herself with a poorly written cover letter. If the position requires writing skills, you must have a superior letter.

THREE SECTIONS OF A COVER LETTER

Your cover letter should include three sections: the opening or introduction paragraph, the body of the letter, and the closing paragraph.

Introduction

- ◆ State why you are writing the letter
- ◆ Name the position for which you are applying
- ◆ Mention how you heard about the opening or organization (i.e. Tiger Jobs, name of networking contact, etc.)
- ◆ Demonstrate your interest/enthusiasm for the position

Body

- ◆ Explain your interest in the position and/or company
- ◆ Highlight relevant education and experience – including academic work, job experience, volunteer and/or leadership roles
- ◆ Do not repeat your entire resume. Instead, state the value of your experiences, education, or personal qualities. Ask yourself “What have I learned from these experiences?” Then relate these experiences to the skills that you can provide to the employer
- ◆ Emphasize what you can do for the employer, not how you will personally benefit from being hired for the job
- ◆ Summarize your qualifications - Make sure to highlight and emphasize the particular skills, competencies and qualifications that relate directly to the duties and responsibility of the position
- ◆ This section can be more than one paragraph

Closing

- ◆ Refer the reader to your enclosed resume
- ◆ Reiterate your interest in the position and the employer
- ◆ Convey excitement and that you are looking forward to speaking with the employer at his or her earliest convenience
- ◆ You can indicate the action or steps

FORMATTING YOUR COVER LETTER

Appearance: Your cover letter should look like a professional business letter.

- Use a font size that is legible (no smaller than 11 point)
- Use a standard font such as Arial or Times. Use the same font as your resume to give a consistent and professional appearance
- Try to leave one inch margins on your page

Layout: A cover letter is written in business letter format.

- Most cover letters are in Block Style, which means they are aligned to the left margin of the page. There is also Modified Block style, where your return address is right aligned and the remaining letter is left aligned.
- You should list your name and contact information at the top of the page. Another option is to use the same header as your resume.
- Include the date you will be sending the letter.
- List the contact name, name of the company, and their full business address.
- It is best to address your letter to a specific person. Never use “To Whom It May Concern” or “Dear Sir/Madam.”
- End your letter with “Sincerely” or “Regards” followed by your typed name. If you will be sending a hard copy of the letter, you will be expected to sign your name. Remember to leave enough space before your typed name to do this. If you will be sending your letter electronically, you do not need to worry about signing your name and your typed name will suffice.

Length: Keep your letter to one page

- Don't make your letter into a book
- Keep your letter relevant to the position
- Only include information that is relevant to the job for which you are applying

Language: As this is a business letter, language should be formal and professional.

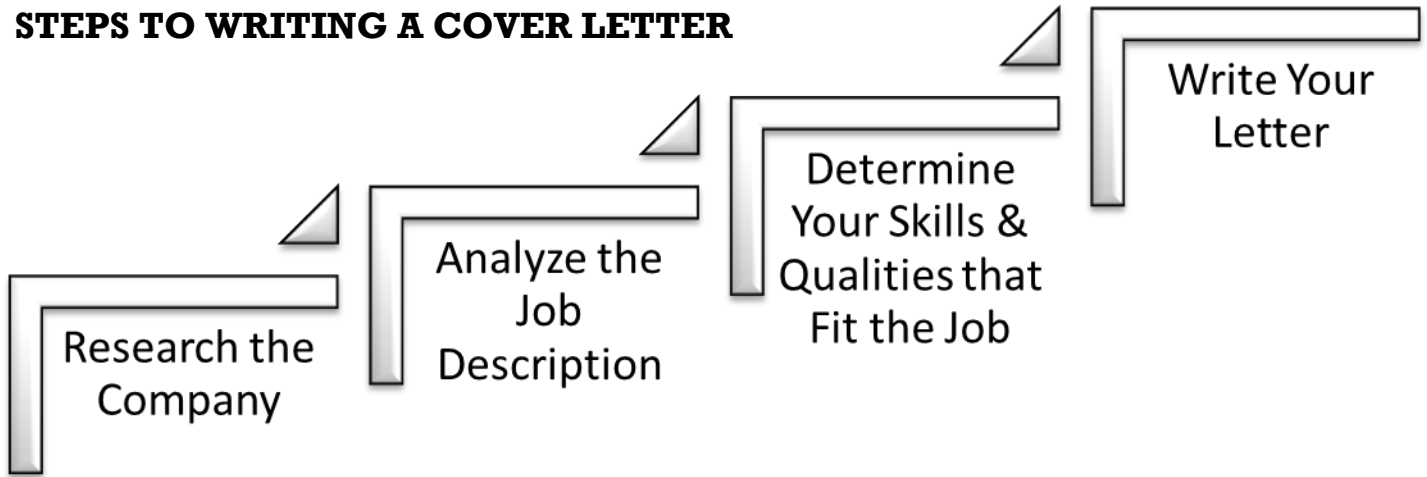
- Stay away from jargon, colloquialisms, acronyms and abbreviations
- Be clear, concise, and focused
- Avoid run-on sentences

Paper: If you will be providing a hard copy of your cover letter, make sure that you print it out on resume paper.

- Resume paper is usually white or off-white and a little thicker than regular paper
- Resume paper is sold at the CRC on a 10 cents per sheet basis

Remember to have several people proofread your cover letter and resume before sending it out!

STEPS TO WRITING A COVER LETTER



1) **Research the Company:** Research the organization and identify their mission, vision, values, awards, products and /or services, and the image they wish to project. What is one thing that you identified as important?

2) **Analyze the Job Description:** Determine what skills and qualities are explicitly stated in the description. What skills can you infer?

3) **Determine Your Skills and Qualities that Fit the Job:** Identify examples from your experiences that match the company's identity and exemplify the skills noted. What skills/qualities fit the job?

4) **Write Your Letter:** Tell your story.

WRITING A TARGETED COVER LETTER

Employers are much more impressed with candidates who have taken the time to write a letter specifically targeted toward their organization and the internship or job opening. You should always research the company and read the job description or job posting. Think about why you want to work for this particular employer and how your experience relates to the job.

- Write to a specific person. If you don't have a contact name, call the company and inquire or use Dear Hiring Manager: or Dear Selection Committee:
- Analyze the job description or job posting. Then you can choose which of your skills and experiences are most closely related to what the employer is seeking and write about them in the body of your letter.
- Emphasize your skills and qualifications that are most relevant to the position to show why you are a good fit for the employer.

EXAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Employer: University of the Pacific - Team Pacific

Title: Pacific Recreation - Tiger Trainer

Description: Looking for detail oriented students with strong interest in personal fitness, training, and nutrition.

General Job Requirements & Duties

1. Willingness to learn basic anatomy, kinesiology, and training adaptations
2. Provide strong customer service to the guests at our facilities
3. Inform clients of implied risks, gathers health screening information, and general waivers
4. Provide initial instruction for new users of the facility
5. Ensure the proper usage of the Baun Fitness Center and all contained fitness equipment
6. Ability to maintain client confidentiality
7. Monitor the safety of guests and execute the emergency protocols if necessary
8. Incorporates sound training and does not offer advice outside of their scope of practice
9. Great motivator, positive attitude, and punctuality
10. Willingness to complete Red Cross CPR/First Aid Certification

EXAMPLE COVER LETTER

The cover letter below was used to apply to the Tiger Trainer position on page 6. John describes his relevant qualifications and conveys his interest in the Tiger Trainer position.

John Vu

3601 Pacific Avenue • Stockton, CA 95211

(408) 416-7208 • j_vu@u.pacific.edu

January 23, 2018

Carly Rowland
Health and Fitness Program Coordinator
Baun Fitness Center
3601 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95211

Dear Ms. Rowland:

I am majoring in Athletic Training and I am very interested in the Tiger Trainer position at the Baun Fitness Center. When I heard about this opportunity through Jeremy Chan, I immediately became intrigued and drawn to the possibility of becoming a personal trainer.

I have a desire to work as a Tiger Trainer because I am a very active person and believe in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Every day, I exercise or work out to stay physically fit, relieve stress, and build a positive body image. In addition, I enjoy researching and exploring new exercises and techniques to further my knowledge of physical fitness. Using my passion for exercise and strength training, I would love to have the opportunity to help others achieve their fitness goals.

I am qualified for this job because I have had previous experience with strength and conditioning. During my four years of high school basketball, I learned and performed many basketball-specific workouts inside and outside of the weight room. Furthermore, I discovered the importance of reinforcement and motivation. Constant encouragement and support from my teammates and coaches inspired me to push through tough workouts and strive for improvement. I hope to bring this knowledge of constructive guidance into personal training to not only assist, but also challenge others in making consistent gains.

Additionally, I have had prior experience teaching others. Last spring, I tutored young children in the tutoring club at Abode Services, a homeless shelter in Fremont, CA. From working with students, I not only strengthened my communication and teaching skills, but also developed my patience. These skills were vital in forming trusting relationships with the students to engage them to learn. Also understanding that everyone has distinctive learning styles, I realized that adjustments in my approach and methods have to be made when instructing different people.

Enclosed is my resume for you to review. I know being a personal trainer is challenging, but it is something I would really find rewarding. I want to thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to speaking with you very soon.

Sincerely,

John Vu

BASIC COVER LETTER FORMULA

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code
Telephone Number
Email Address

Date

Name of Contact Person
Title of Contact Person
Company/Organization Name
Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Contact Person's Last Name:

Opening Paragraph: State why you are writing the letter. Name the position or type of experience for which you are applying, and mention how you heard about the opening or organization (i.e. Tiger Jobs, name of networking contact, Craigslist, etc.).

Middle Section: Explain why you are interested in the position with this organization and specify your reasons for desiring this type of work experience. If you have had related coursework in your major or relevant experience (including paid, volunteer or extracurricular) be sure to point it out, but do not reiterate your entire resume. This section can be more than one paragraph.

Closing Paragraph: Refer the reader to your enclosed resume. Have an appropriate closing to pave the way for an interview by indicating the action or steps you will take to follow up. Thank the employer for their time.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Your Name Typed

NOTES: _____

Sample: Full-time Career Position. Referred through a Networking Contact

Susan B. Anthony

3601 Pacific Avenue, Stockton, CA 95211
(555) 555- 5555, s_anthony@u.pacific.edu

Caitlyn Klein
Human Resources Manager
Frito Lay
600 Garner Road
Modesto, CA 95357

March 18, 2018

Dear Ms. Klein:

My classmate, Earnest Friend, spoke with you yesterday at University of the Pacific's Career & Internship Fair. He recommended I contact you regarding a sales internship position. Please accept my enclosed resume as application for this exciting opportunity with Frito-Lay. I am very enthusiastic about this internship with your company because of your commitment to innovation and to environmental responsibility. I am seeking a quality experience in a consumer products firm and believe I would be an exceptional candidate for a sales internship based on my leadership skills, my successful sales experience and my excellent academic preparation.

My work experience in sales has allowed me to refine my interpersonal and communication skills. Among my first jobs, I worked in sales at a tanning salon. I was consistently top in monthly sales, receiving "employee of the month" designation four times. In my recent position with ABC Leasing, my success in converting prospects to tenants led my supervisor to encourage me to continue with the company; however, I had to leave the job to study abroad in Spain. The experience in Spain allowed me to interact with diverse individuals, improving my Spanish language and cross-cultural skills.

As a junior at the University of the Pacific working toward a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, my curriculum has included a course that gave me a thorough understanding of sales management. I'm very interested in further developing my skills by applying this knowledge in a sales internship with your company.

Additionally, I worked to co-found a sales club at Pacific. My co-founder and I have established our goals, developed a structure and have been active in recruiting new members. Forming a new club has been challenging, exciting, and personally satisfying. Thanks to the leadership abilities that were instilled in me during my time in the California Leadership Academy, our efforts have been successful.

If invited to join your team, you will find I am a creative, goal-oriented person with the ability to take initiative and a strong drive to succeed. I am interested in joining your team at Frito-Lay and would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about my background in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Susan B. Anthony

Sample: Full-time Career Position. Applying via email, so header not required.

Dear Ms. Brown,

Mr. Roger Smith, Public Utilities Administrator with Amador County Government, spoke with you at the engineering convention on Marco Island and indicated you would be interested in seeing my resume for possible employment with your company. Having reviewed information about your company, I was excited to learn you are committed to ongoing training and development of your staff and very impressed with the many distinctions your company has received in the industry for your engineering, environmental, and construction services. I believe I would be an excellent fit for a position with ACE Contractors based on my academic preparation, leadership experience and proven ability to develop professionally and contribute to the success of an organization.

In my most recent internship with Quiznos & Associates, I was a key contributor to site inspections and documentation of project component certifications. The reports I wrote in conjunction with these tasks were submitted and accepted by respective regulatory agencies that oversaw compliance to code and ordinance as well as by private clients that were looking for consultation on variance inquiries. I also spent significant time on the Manatee County Airport expansion project assisting in the design of the utilities master plans as well as the storm water management plans using the ICPR software.

As a recent graduate of the civil engineering program at the University of Pacific, I am well prepared to contribute to the success of large-scale civil projects. During my final year at Pacific, I worked with a group to complete a course project designing all phases of a subdivision site development project. The engineering design process included potable water, sanitary, irrigation, storm water, transportation, and lot layout systems in accordance with local unified land development codes and California building statutes. In addition, as President of ABC Productions at University of Pacific, I honed my communication skills, gained valuable leadership skills, and refined my project management skills. Further, my academic program included a minor in engineering management, which gave me insight and skills relevant to the business side of engineering projects.

I am confident that my practical work experience and solid academic background would allow me to quickly become a valued contributor to ACE Contractors. I am enthusiastic about joining a firm with a commitment to excellence, integrity and value to the client. My communication skills, professional approach and strong work ethic will provide you with a highly productive engineer.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss how my education and skills will be helpful to you. I look forward to speaking with you about the possibility of an interview. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

James Dean

Sample: Full-time Opportunity Posted on Tiger Jobs

Rick Snyder
1214 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94118
(209) 563-9684
r_snyder4@pacific.edu

July 1, 2019

Margaret Ferrin
McMaster-Carr Supply Co.
9630 Norwalk Boulevard
San Francisco, CA 90670

Dear Ms. Ferrin:

I am responding to your posting in Tiger Jobs for a Marketing Researcher. I am currently a senior at the University of the Pacific, graduating in May with Bachelor's degree in English. What I offer to McMaster-Carr is curiosity, a passion for learning, and practical research and writing skills that would enable me to be an effective and dynamic member of your catalog production team. I welcome the creative challenge of promoting your company's commitment to customer service and to providing a comprehensive array of mechanical supplies in an efficient manner.

My experience relevant to market research and catalog creation includes taking difficult inconsistent and often technical information and turning it into clear, benefit-oriented copy that is useful to both the casual user and a more professional audience. During my years at the University of the Pacific, I honed my ability to conduct thorough research upon which to base concise and accurate written summaries.

Along with my academic writing pursuit, I have gained firsthand training and experience in a business environment through my internship with the Larsen Literary Agency. In this capacity, I corresponded with major clients in the publishing industry, maintained the agency's contract files, read and edited manuscripts from writers, and established a reputable contact list of such publishers as Random House, W.W. Norton, Chronicle Books LLC, and Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. In my three months with the agency, I received feedback that my professionalism and excellent follow-through skills contributed significant value and energy to the team.

The Marketing Researcher position with McMaster-Carr is a challenge I am prepared and enthusiastic to meet. I would like to further discuss my qualifications and will follow up with you next week. I look forward to learning more about his unique employment opportunity.

Respectfully,

Rick Snyder

Sample: Internship Position. Referred through a Networking Contact

141 March Lane
Stockton CA 95211

February 17, 2018

Toby Suckow
Talent Manager
Rockin' Roots Club
453 Columbus Ave
San Francisco, CA 94122

Dear Mr. Suckow:

I received your name and contact information from Lauri Mills, and I am writing to express my interest in the internship opportunity at the Rockin' Roots Club. I feel that both my academic and work experience make me an excellent candidate for this position.

I am a junior at the University of the Pacific earning my degree in Business Administration, Arts and Entertainment Management with a minor in Film Studies. My academic coursework has given me a strong foundation and understanding of both general business management and arts and entertainment. I am currently working on a project in my Market Research class on the use of online social networking sites as a means to market campus events.

In addition to my academic background, I have 3 years of experience working in various aspects of the entertainment industry. I am the Arts and Entertainment Programmer for the Associated Students, which involves scheduling and coordinating concerts, lectures, and other entertainment events on campus. This has given me the opportunity to enhance my leadership and organizational skills as well as increase my knowledge of marketing and promotion. I have also learned how to interact with guest performers and their representatives in a professional manner.

I feel my passion and knowledge of music will be an asset to your club. I have experience with radio, both as a DJ for my campus radio station and as a student representative for 209Vibe. I have worked in a retail music store where I gained a new perspective regarding the breadth of musical preferences and how to best advertise to a diverse clientele. Finally, I am the President of the Music Management Club on campus. In this capacity, I help fellow students connect with the music industry through guest speakers, fundraisers, concerts, and organized trips.

I have enclosed my resume for your review. I am very excited about this internship and I look forward to speaking with you further about my skills and qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Harper

Sample: Full-time Opportunity Posted on Tiger Jobs

Jean Louise Finch

jlfinch@gmail.com
<http://gallery.me.com/jlfinch/projects>

350 Third Street
Sacramento, CA 95020
916-632-7526

October 18, 2017

Thomas Robinson
Vice President of Operations
Wireless Solutions, Inc.
3578 Tucker Road
Sacramento, CA 95026

Dear Mr. Robinson:

It was a pleasure to meet you yesterday at the University of the Pacific Career & Internship Fair. As we discussed, I am extremely interested in the Technical Assistant position with Wireless Solutions, Inc. I am graduating in May with my Bachelor's of Science in Computer Science with a minor in Business Management.

A degree in Computer Science gives me distinguished domain knowledge in information technology. The first domain is software design and implementation. I am most proficient in C/C++ and Java, but my experience gives me the ability to pick up any software language and adapt to client solutions.

Over the last year, I have worked on two network applications that give the best demonstration of my skills. The first was my senior project, where I designed a multithreaded peer-to-peer instant messenger application, written in Java, using UDP protocols. The purpose was to allow users to communicate with other users on the same network and to chain different networks together. The second project included a network device driver and service for Independent Study credit. For this project, I modified an existing Microsoft project called VirtualWifi. The purpose was to improve Microsoft's experimental open source code for other wireless adapters and reduce packet loss. Both projects can be found on my website: <http://gallery.me.com/jlfinch/projects>.

The second domain knowledge I possess includes an understanding of business management and organization. The Computer Information Systems coursework included business classes which included semester projects for a team of students. These projects gave me an understanding of financial, project, and team management. For example, in my Corporate Finance course, my role in my group was to determine the weighted average cost of the capital of PG&E to determine how well the company is doing for 2008.

During my senior year, I have done seasonal contract work at CFC Insurance Marketing where I gained ASP, Microsoft Access, SQL skills. In this role, I designed web interfaces in ASP with SQL and Microsoft Access queries, for about five marketers. The purpose of the web interface was for the marketers to maintain a database of 4000 agents.

I also interned at Guess Inc. where I gained valuable troubleshooting and communication skills. In this role, I performed helpdesk support including password resets, general desktop and printer troubleshooting, and moving computer equipment across the GUESS campus.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to have the opportunity to discuss this opening with you in person.

Sincerely,

Jean Louise Finch

Sample: Music Alumna, Unknown Contact

April Wheeler
2497 Willow Dr. Apt. 32
Los Angeles, CA 90014
562.826.7432
awheeler@gmail.com

Human Resources
Laurel Players Theater Group
496 North Beecher Street
Los Angeles, CA 90020

November 2, 2019

Dear Selection Committee,

I am very interested in the position of Marketing Assistant with the Laurel Players Theater Group. I have a strong background in performing arts administration and am eager to seek employment that is in line with my career goals and experience. As a recent graduate, my interest in this position is unique in that I am not solely seeking a job but am hoping to gain knowledge and form a career path in theatrical marketing. I believe my recent graduation offers a fresh perspective on internet networking and can present new ideas for reaching a younger audience with similar interests.

I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Music and have over two years of experience assisting the Technical Director of the Conservatory of Music at the University of the Pacific. In this position, I took part in publicity campaigns for performances while providing administrative support to both the technical team and the Dean of the Conservatory. Through this experience, I have developed valuable skills in organization, advertising, meeting deadlines, multi-tasking, and prioritizing. I believe these skills are directly transferable to the Marketing Assistant position.

I will be an asset to your marketing team as I have significant experience and a strong passion for the performing arts. My motivation throughout college, earning high marks, being involved in performances, working in the administration, and taking part in extracurricular activities, is exemplary of my overall work ethic in the field of arts administration. Working in Patron Services for the Los Angeles Symphony, I have developed excellent customer service and communication skills; and my experience in the box office gives me a strong foundation in coordinating opening nights and other special events for the theater. Other basic qualifications include familiarity with Microsoft Office programs, knowledge of computer ticketing systems, fluency in Spanish, fast and accurate typing, and experience with database entry.

I am a valuable candidate as I am a quick learner, dedicated, proactive, and eager to gain knowledge and experience in theatrical marketing. Thank you for considering my application and I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

April Wheeler

Approach Letter

An approach letter is used when you want to reach out to an employer, but you don't know of a specific job opening. You can use this technique to communicate your specific skills and qualifications that you think may generate interest from the employer.

You can also use this type of letter to reach out to a potential networking contact. Typically these types of requests are to ask for an opportunity for an informational interview or an informal meeting to receive career advice.

2240 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA 94122

January 8, 2018

Timothy Jacobs
Associate
The Benjamin Group
400 Fremont Street
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Jacobs:

It was nice meeting you last weekend at the Public Relations Society of America seminar. I particularly enjoyed your presentation on networking strategies and have decided to put some of those suggestions to use for myself. As you know, I will be graduating from University of the Pacific with a Bachelor's degree in Communication in May, and I am just beginning my job search. I am most interested in beginning a career in public relations within a private firm, and I would appreciate any assistance you might be able to provide. Highlights of my background follow along with a resume for your review.

Currently, I am an intern at XYZ Software Inc. where I am responsible for communicating with vendors and clients over the telephone and in person. Several projects which I look forward to this semester include: writing a newsletter to inform company executives of our latest projects, performing research for a diverse group of clients including advertising and media, and leading a project for my Communication class combining resources from my internship and research data. In addition, I am working part-time as a Pacific Ambassador on campus where I lead tours for prospective students and parents.

I continue to be excited about beginning a career in Public Relations. My education, internship experience and campus work have prepared me with excellent oral and written communication skills as well as great attention to detail.

I will be contacting you soon to further discuss my job search. I appreciate any advice or contacts you may be willing to share.

Sincerely,

Jason Wong
j_wong@pacific.edu
209.332.3658

Thank You Letters

Thank you letters are an important part of the job search process and should be sent on a professional notecard or through email after an interview. This should be done **within 24 hours.**

Thank you letters should always have a sincere tone and should convey your appreciation for the other person's time. You can also use this as an opportunity to reiterate your interest in the position or clarify anything that you did not make clear during the interview.

You should also send thank you letters after informational interviews or to anyone that gives you advice, information or referrals. If you go to an information session or career fair and meet an employer with whom you would like to keep in touch, it is a great idea to write them a letter to show your appreciation for the time they spent speaking with you.

Note: the CRC sells thank you notes to students on a per notecard basis.

Christine Williams
21 Via Street
Stockton, CA 95308
cpwilliams@yahoo.com
209.552.0326

November 7, 2017

Ms. Jane Baxter
Vice President, Commercial Banking
Central Bank
25 South Street
Stockton CA 95206

Dear Ms. Baxter,

I really enjoyed meeting with you yesterday to discuss opportunities in your Commercial Banking Division. I was especially interested in hearing about your planned expansion and ideas concerning outreach to the small businesses.

My experience working for a number of small service businesses in Stockton while completing my degree has made me particularly sensitive to the unique needs of small business owners. As you learned from our conversation, I have also worked as a teller at Central Bank and thus understand the bank's commitment to high quality customer service.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me. I remain very interested in the Commercial Banking Representative position. I am confident that my skills and experience would be a valuable addition to your team. I look forward to hearing from you soon

Sincerely,

Christine Williams

PRESENTED BY
THE
CAREER RESOURCE CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC
CAREER RESOURCE CENTER
MCCAFFREY CENTER 2ND FLOOR
STOCKTON, CA 95211
(209) 946-2361
WWW.PACIFIC.EDU/CAREERS

Updated 06/2017