ON A CLEARDAY JOB APPLICATION PACKAGE

memorandum

DATE: February 16, 2017
TO: Paul M. Kellermann
FROM: Ona Clearday
SUBJECT: Job Application Package Memo

The purpose of this memo is to provide a concise description of the summer internship I am applying to at Dow Chemical Company (Collegeville, PA) and to rationalize the decisions I made when creating my cover letter and resume. You will read about Dow (Audience Analysis), the responsibilities and expectations of this internship (Job Description) and an analysis of the choices made in my resume and cover letter (Rhetorical Analysis).

Audience Analysis
According to Dow’s website, the Dow Chemical Company was established in 1897 by H.H. Dow. The company primarily focused on using electrochemistry to separate bromides from brine. Prior to Dow Chemical Company, the founder had attempted two previous chemical start-ups—both of which failed. His persistence and, “do it better” attitude are still emphasized by Dow today. While the company initially focused on inorganic chemistry, after World War I, Dow began organic chemistry research (specifically polymer chemistry and plastics). From the 1960s on, Dow became a global company. Their website proudly states that Dow was, “the first foreign industrial company listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange.” The emphasis on global expansion and international collaboration is still stressed today. In 2015, Dow merged with Olin. Dow’s website declares that later this year, Dow and Du Pont will be combining in a, “merger of equals” to create the joint company, “DowDuPont.” I am applying to Dow Chemical Company’s summer internship in Collegeville, PA. This location opened in 2013 and is one of Dow’s larger R&D facilities.

Research Areas at the Collegeville Site
The projects at the Collegeville site are very interdisciplinary and range from industrial coatings, home and personal care products, microbial control and materials for electrical and telecommunication applications. The materials lab in the Collegeville site is dedicated to polymers and polymer characterization methods (rheology, calorimetry and mechanical analysis). In addition, the lab also conducts failure analysis using different microscopy and spectroscopy techniques.

Importance of Outreach and Diversity
From Dow’s website, it is clear that this company puts great emphasis on serving the community and creating a unified, collaborative and diverse workforce. They have various outreach programs, including Dow STEM Ambassadors and Building the Workforce of Tomorrow. Dow is dedicated to minority inclusion (particularly African-Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, LGBT, people with disabilities and women).
**Job Description**
The summer internship involves working on one or two research and development projects within the materials science lab. Interns are expected to be highly trainable and work on a team. The company is flexible with both the duration of the internship and its location. Positions are available in Freeport, TX, Midland, MI and Collegeville, PA.

**Job Qualifications**
Undergraduates applying for this internship must be pursuing a bachelor’s degree in STEM fields and have a minimum GPA of 2.70/4.00. Lab experience is desired; however, training will be given.

**Internship Expectations**
Interns must agree to make safety their top priority by wearing personal protective equipment, adhering to all safety protocols and participating in Dow’s safety programs. Interns will learn how to properly prepare samples for various analytical instruments and will receive training to operate these instruments. Summer interns will be responsible for properly documenting their results in notebooks and reports. All interns should have basic laboratory skills and be proficient in Microsoft Office (in particular, interns must be proficient in Excel, as it will be used in data reduction). Interns must be both active team members and independent workers. High motivation, ability to multitask and interpersonal skills are other essential characteristics.

**Rhetorical Analysis**
The following section explains the choices I made when creating my resume and cover letter.

**Resume**
As this resume is for an internship in a technical field, I tried to maintain a fairly conventional format. I did decide to slightly personalize my header by including a horizontal line to separate my name and contact information from my experiences. I wanted to have a clear beginning to my resume. In addition, I needed a break between my address and “Objective” heading, as prior to incorporating the line, this section appeared quite cramped. I chose to bold my name and use a larger font size for emphasis, as one’s name is one of the most important elements in any resume. I did not want the reviewer to become lost when reading my resume due to poor formatting. Therefore, Times New Roman font was used, as twelve-point serif fonts are easily read. I provided visual emphasis on the headings, titles and dates through bolding. Furthermore, the font size of the headings (Objective, Research Experience, etc.) was increased and underlined to clearly separate each section. In addition to these font choices, I paid special attention to white spaces. My peer reviewers both noted that my initial resume appeared cramped and encouraged me to move the dates of my experiences away from the corresponding descriptions. Therefore, I right justified the dates and confined the descriptions of each position to the center of the page. Moreover, as Dow does not require a one-page resume, I decided to submit a two-page resume, so my information could be spread out and easily referenced. One sentence follows the title and location of my experiences to provide a brief overview. Bullet points were then used to go into greater detail and to emphasize key points of my experiences. This format also helped me keep research descriptions short and concise. Hopefully these actions helped break my resume down into clear parts and will allow readers to scan it easily.
As my primary “job” is that of a student, I placed my “Education” section immediately after my objective statement. I decided to include my scholarship from the chemistry department under “Education,” as creating a separate heading titled, “Honors and Awards” or “Scholarships” would have caused my “Research Experience” to be split between two pages. Too much white space would have been present at the end of the first page and my resume would not have been aesthetically pleasing. When reading other resumes, I found it was common for students with a single scholarship from their home institution to list it immediately after their intended degree. I chose to follow this format.

I wanted to include the technical language of my research, so employers would know that I am a serious candidate who has experience with various characterization techniques. I felt that this would enhance the chances of my resume being passed on from the general HR screening of applicants to the scientists who are more familiar with this technical language. Common materials characterization and thermal analysis equipment were left as acronyms, while more specific instruments, including broadband dielectric spectroscopy, were first mentioned by name and subsequently referenced by its acronym. I made all of my descriptions as concise as possible by allowing myself a maximum of three lines when describing my experiences. This allows employers to easily scan the key parts of my research without becoming lost in the details. It also provides me with the opportunity to discuss my research in greater depth during an interview.

I arranged my research experience, publications and presentations in reverse chronological order. I did this because the most recent research I have done is the most important and relevant research for an internship with Dow. I want Dow to see these experiences first. In addition, when formatting my publications and presentations, I used the citation style outlined by ACS. Since I am applying to a chemical company, they also use this citation style. The material in these sections is spread across the page, as the dates are included in the ACS citation. Listing the dates twice would have been redundant.

My teaching experiences within the physics department and my involvement with PAW highlight my soft skills and dedication to outreach. This aligns with Dow Chemical Company’s commitment to science outreach and creating a diverse workplace by including minorities. I wanted to emphasize my dedication to this shared goal by including these experiences.

**Cover Letter**

In my introductory paragraph, I tried to be as direct and concise as possible by explicitly explaining why I was writing, where I found the opportunity and why I was motivated to apply. In addition, I ended this paragraph with a clear statement outlining what will be present in the following letter, so Dr. Gallagher would know what to expect. I wanted to include that I had toured Dow during my REU experience, as this is a unique connection that not many other applicants will have. I did meet Dr. Gallagher on the tour, so I am hoping that this reference to the tour will make my application stand out.

In the body of my cover letter, I focus on two areas—my technical skills and passion for outreach. I wanted to give further details on my research, as I am applying for an R&D position. From the REU Dow tour, I remember each of the senior scientists emphasizing that one of the
biggest qualities they look for in potential employees is trainability. Therefore, in my first body paragraph, I tried to emphasize that I enjoy learning new instruments and characterization techniques, that I am a fast learner and that when exposed to new technologies and techniques, I am easily trainable. I wanted to show Dow that I would not be disheartened or overwhelmed by their expectations for me. In addition, the job description emphasized that proficiency in Excel is needed for all interns; therefore, I explicitly mentioned my training in Excel and Origin analysis software.

Both peer reviewers encouraged me to go into greater detail about the leadership and soft skills I acquired through my experience as an outreach officer and learning assistant. Therefore, I tried to emphasize that these opportunities developed my ability to organize, manage and encourage those I work with. I would have gone into even greater detail, however the one-page limit prevented me from doing so. Regardless, I wanted to include this section to show Dr. Gallagher that I had researched Dow. I know that they do more than chemical synthesis and research, and I want her to understand that their dedication to outreach is one of the reasons why I respect their company and wish to work for them.

**Conclusion**
I hope that this memo has given you a clear understanding of my choices for my job application packet.

Attachment
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References

2016-2017 Campus Internship - Research and Development (BS/MS)-1605959


DOW Chemical Company. Fact Sheet: Northeast Technology Center. *Fact Sheet: Northeast Technology Center.*