How to Approach the Research Plan in a Job Application
(for Research-Intensive Universities)

Academic Job Search Series
July 27, 2016

Colleen McLinn, CU-CIRTL Program Director
Christine Holmes, Director of Postdoctoral Studies

Faculty Panelists:
Daniel Lichter, Professor and Director of Institute for the Social Sciences
Marvin Pritts, Professor of Horticulture, School of Integrative Plant Science
Outline

- Carnegie Classifications
- Panelist Introductions
- General overview
  - What is the purpose of a research statement?
  - What do committees look for in a statement?
  - Getting started
  - Best practices for a compelling statement

Open Questions and Answers
The Carnegie Classification of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education - Basic Classification

- Doctoral Universities (335)
- Master’s Colleges and Universities (742)
- Baccalaureate Colleges (583)
- Associate’s Colleges (1521)
- Special Focus Four-Year (1005)
- Special Focus Two-Year (479)
- Tribal Colleges (35)

(number of institutions in each category)

http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu
## Cornell University

**Ithaca, New York**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>4-year or above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Population</td>
<td>21,679</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Doctoral Universities: Highest Research Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Instructional Program:</td>
<td>Balanced arts &amp; sciences/professions, high graduate coexistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Instructional Program:</td>
<td>Research Doctoral: Comprehensive programs, with medical/veterinary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment Profile:</td>
<td>Majority undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Profile:</td>
<td>Four-year, full-time. more selective, lower transfer-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size and Setting:</td>
<td>Four-year, large. highly residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To find similar institutions, check the dimensions of interest and click the Find Similar button.

[http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu)
Within the Doctoral Universities

- **R1:** Highest Research Activity (115)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Columbia University in the City of New York</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>Ithaca, New York</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUNY Graduate School and University Center</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York University</td>
<td>New York, New York</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stony Brook University</td>
<td>Stony Brook, New York</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNY at Albany</td>
<td>Albany, New York</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td>Syracuse, New York</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University at Buffalo</td>
<td>Buffalo, New York</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rochester</td>
<td>Rochester, New York</td>
<td>Private not-for-profit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **R2:** Higher Research Activity (107)
- **R3:** Moderate Research Activity (113)
Designing Your Research Statement Around Undergraduate Research (Four-Year Colleges)

August 3, 2016 - 12:00-1:30 pm
102 Mann Library
Jeffrey Werner, Associate Professor of Chemistry, SUNY Cortland

www.gradschool.cornell.edu/academic-series
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- General overview
  - What is the purpose of a research statement?
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Open Questions and Answers
The following slides are adapted from:

Jim Pawelczyk, Penn State - “Crafting the Research Statement” (2008 talk)
www.lifescitrc.org/resource.cfm?submissionID=4017
What do committees look for?

• Your future direction
• Potential for funding
• Summary of accomplishments
• Your fit with the unit
• The resources you will need to be successful in your new job
• That you think and communicate like a professional researcher

“The strongest research statements present a readable, compelling, and realistic research agenda that fits well with the needs, facilities, and goals of the department. Research statements can be weakened by overly ambitious proposals, by lack of clear direction, by lack of big-picture focus, or if inadequate attention is given to the needs and facilities of the department or position.”

Peter Fiske, in “The Truth about Teaching and Research Statements” (1997)

Credit: Jim Pawelczyk, Penn State
Crafting a *useful* statement - Thoughts on content

- **Background & Relevance**
  
  Give a context for your research interests
  
  Why does it matter?

- **Current & Planned Research**
  
  Communicate a sense that your research will follow logically from what you have done and that it will be different, important, and innovative

Credit: Jim Pawelczyk, Penn State
Crafting a *useful* statement -- Make your content compelling

- What excites you about your research? Sound fresh
- Where appropriate, acknowledge the work of others
  
  Discuss, negotiate, and coordinate future research themes and strategies with your mentor(s)
- Use language that shows you’ve begun to think of yourself as an independent researcher; knowledgeable about key issues in your area/field
  
  Your 3- to 5-year plan should be credible and specific (rather than detailed)
- Identify funding organizations likely to support your research plans in a way that communicates your understanding of grant writing
  
  Briefly outline your proposal; one with broad enough goals that you can submit elsewhere if necessary

Credit: Jim Pawelczyk, Penn State
Crafting a *beautiful* statement - style and formatting

- Write as clearly and concisely as you can
- Use headings (and subheadings), bullets, and white space for best effect
- Electronic submission: check PDF formatting, be sure hard copies are appropriate for scanning
- Aim for 2-3 pages in length; avoid page-long paragraphs
- Get feedback from senior colleagues
- Proofread!! Read your statement aloud ... you’ll be surprised how many more improvements you’ll find!

Credit: Jim Pawelczyk, Penn State