PHY1600S - Effective Communication for Physicists

Assignment 9 (***NB - due by 5 pm on Sunday the 25th of March 2011 NB***)
Since I will not have time to give this assignment the usual detailed care, you are
urged to consult with your Reading Partner and proof-read assiduously to ensure that
the documents that reach me meet the highest standards!

Apply for:

EITHER

a non-academic position - you can find some of these listed on the Jobs Postings notice
boards on the 3rd floor, or in a technical journal or newspaper, or on the many sites on the
Web. Also, check out government organizations, NRC, Environment Canada, etc.

OR

an academic position - look in the scientific journals (such as Physics in Canada, the CAUT
Bulletin, Physics Today, etc.), on the Web (e.g. http://www.cap.ca/ ,
http://www.academiccareers.com/Applicants.htm,
http://www.AcademicKeys.com/all/eflier_prefs.php)

Your assignment must include:
- an up-to-date **résumé** (for the non-academic position) OR a **curriculum vitae** (c.v.)
  for the academic position)
- a **covering letter** of application on headed paper (if you are a Physics student, use
  the departmental letter template linked from the course web site).
- a **copy of the job listing**

 Electronic submissions are best for me, but if that is difficult for you, put a hard copy
under my door **with your name on it, and let me know**. Links to accepted formats appear
on the course Web page.

NB. Please note the special deadline; even earlier submissions would be welcome!!

Professor Stephen Julian (Chair of the Department) and Mr. Tom Predovic (Senior Vice
President of Technology at *NexJ* Systems) have kindly agreed to lead a question and
answer session during our class on Tuesday 27th March. In addition, to provide examples
for discussion, we will conduct a few mock interviews, based on your applications.   If you
do **not** want to be in the pool of those who might be chosen to be publicly interviewed,
please so indicate on your assignment. Of course, I hope most of you will declare yourself
willing; participation in the interview (or not!) will have no effect on your pass/fail status in
the course *or* on your future employment!

Notes.
In general, I suggest that you prepare both a curriculum vitae (c.v.) and a résumé. (Links to
information and templates to both appear on the course web site). These are different
documents that are not interchangeable. Since the former is the longer, I suggest that you
prepare it first. The abstraction of material for the resume, tailored to specific job
applications, is then easy. Everyone should have both on file at all times.

A **curriculum vitae** (c.v.) is a formal listing of a person's academic record.   While some
variations in format are allowed, the c.v. should be treated as a formal document that
follows a standard form; it should be kept up-to-date, but is otherwise static.

A **résumé**, often used for non-academic positions, is less formal than a c.v., providing an opportunity to present your qualifications in the best possible light. A résumé is an abbreviated c.v. and should not exceed one – or, at the very most – two pages. Hiring officials won't read more! The résumé should be tailored to the particular job you are applying for, emphasizing things that are most relevant to the application. The résumé can take almost any format that places your strengths top and centre. For example, at this stage of your career, you might highlight your degrees and scholarships. Later in your career you would focus on your skills and experience, with academic details of lower priority, and scholarships dropped completely. Short, discursive paragraphs are often valuable in addressing your potential employer. Aesthetics are important.

For academic positions, particularly those that place prime importance on teaching, a request for a Teaching Dossier is becoming common. This document is separate from the c.v., focusing on teaching philosophy, competence, and experience. There is considerable variety of form. As usual, good aesthetics helps your application to stand out from the pile.

Probably the most important document is your **covering letter** of application, a formal letter, giving a brief description of the position you are seeking, with a couple of paragraphs that summarize your current position, achievements, suitability, and interest. Its purpose is to get the attention of the reader, and to orient him or her to the fuller description contained in your resumé or c.v. Make sure that you tailor this letter to the job you are applying for. Aesthetic appeal is vital.

All documents should be visually pleasing, with emphasis on your strong points. For hard copies, good quality, white (never coloured), spotless paper, with printing of laser printer quality or equivalent is advised. Print size, unless otherwise indicated, should not be less than 12 pt, except, perhaps, for appendices or footnotes. Photographs are optional.

Models or templates for all of these documents can be accessed from the course Web page, and more information is available on many other Web sites.

Miscellaneous Suggestions for Preparing the Documents
- Remember Set - Body – Closure. Spell check and proofread many times!
- Make your Reading Partner work!
- Use correct written English, no colloquialisms.
- Aesthetics are important – make the documents look good.
- Don't use abbreviations unless previously defined - e.g. OAC, Lab, PRO, etc.
- Be consistent in organization! E.g. Date, University, Position Held, Duties.
- Tailor the letter to the job; show that you have read the ad, checked out the organization that is hiring! Don't be shy!
- Don't draw attention to shortcomings! (e.g. AWARDS – None: EXPERIENCE - some)!
- In c.v. and resumés, tables and point form are good organizers of data.
- Always mention your TA experience in your c.v. or résumé, even if teaching is not a central part of the job you are applying for.   Note: 'Demonstrator' is ambiguous, and little used outside U of T - Use Teaching Assistant, with a sentence or two detailing the specific duties.
- References: Usually put names and coordinates, once permission has been granted; for this assignment the statement "References available on request" is sufficient.