Cover Letter Writing 101:

MOST IMPORTANT TIP #1: Don’t rehash your resume.

         Cover letters need to enhance and support the resume, not repeat what is already on it.

         Your job is to find different ways to reinforce the critical message.

         **The cover letter is your chance to highlight what isn’t in your resume!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!** (e.g., particular characteristics, skills, examples)

MOST IMPORTANT TIP #2: Match your skills and qualifications with prospective employer needs (aka use the job description & qualifications as your guide to write the cover letter). Once you determine what the employer’s critical needs are, show employers what they want to see – aka highlight what you have done that fits their needs.

         As you understand their needs, draw the connection between those needs and your skills as a means to meet them

         Tie together what the company is doing and what their needs might be

         To come full circle, explain how you fit into their strategy and can close potential gaps in meeting their objectives

Cover Letter Tips:

         Write with passion and enthusiasm! You need to spark the employer’s interest with the cover letter. Make them want to meet you.

         Tailor each cover letter to meet the needs of the employer – what you have to offer them

         Make sure there are no grammar or spelling errors

         Give specific examples of how you meet their qualifications. For example, I have discussed how I co-led a research project  to demonstrate leadership, ability to carry out research projects. Refer to my cover letters for other examples.

         Avoid negative and controversial subject matters (like why you want to leave your current job).

         Make your cover letter well organized

         Write with the specific reader in mind

         MUST ANSWER:

o   What is the company looking for?

o   What do they need?

o   What qualifications do I have that are valuable to the potential employer?

o   What specific contributions have I made in the past that will excite this employer?

o   Why do I want to work for the company?

o   What separates me from the rest of the field?

o   Am I a team player?

Cover Letter Organization Recommendations:

Paragraph 1: power introduction

         Attention grabber. Generating interest and stating why you want to work for this employer

         What can you do for employer?

Paragraph 2, 3, 4 (if needed): Promote your value

         Your skills, abilities, qualifications and credentials that would meet readers needs and job requirements

         Mention specific accomplishments, achievements, education experience, etc. that support above (not essential)

Paragraph 5: Close and show appreciation