Tips to writing a cover letter

- A cover letter is usually read before the resume. It’s a first impression. Should not duplicate the resume.
- It typically has the following format:
  - Heading: your address, employers address, date, salutation
  - First paragraph; introduction, what are you applying for and where you learned about the position
  - Second paragraph: what you bring to the position, highlights from resume. Show excitement!
  - Third paragraph: outline next steps and contact information
  - Closing paragraph: be polite. Say thank you!
  - Enc: resume. This is the abbreviation for enclosure, written two spaces below signature to indicate that you are enclosing other documents.
- Do not use a general letter nor try to put it together at the last minute. Tailor your cover letter to the job you are applying for and show what you know about the company. Employers appreciate, and pick up on, genuine interest.
- Address it to the hiring authority. It may take some extra time to find out who that is but it shows you have done your research.
- Maintain a balance between showing your personality, relating your accomplishments to the needs of the company and references to the enclosed resume.
- Use your space wisely. Avoid clichés and meaningless or wordy expressions. Stay away from passive words. Did we already suggest to show excitement about the position? Keep it to one page.
- Review, review and have others review it and give feedback. If your peers are not impressed after reading it consider how employers, who read dozens per job posting, will feel about it.
- Resources:
  - [http://www.career.vt.edu/jobsearchguide/coverlettersamples.html](http://www.career.vt.edu/jobsearchguide/coverlettersamples.html)
  - [http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverformat.htm](http://jobsearch.about.com/od/coverlettersamples/a/coverformat.htm)
  - [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/698/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/698/01/)