AALL PLACEMENT COMMITTEE
SUGGESTIONS FOR APPLICANTS INTERVIEWING AT ANNUAL MEETING

Resumes and Application Letters: Appearance

☐ Use standard paper colors and textures. Strange colors or background images may be eye-catching, but may produce negative reactions as well. No one wants to be known as “the balloon paper applicant.”

☐ Restrain use of bold, italics, underlining, and multiple fonts. Too much visual clutter detracts from the content.

☐ If you MUST fax or email to meet the deadline, follow up immediately with a paper copy. Fax copies are hard to read; email attachments may be hard to open successfully.

☐ Remember that the employer may be looking at many applications: use a reasonably-sized font; make sure there is enough contrast between paper color and type; and tighten up descriptions so there is plenty of white space.

☐ Proofread, proofread, proofread! Eliminate all spelling and grammatical errors.

Resumes and Application Letters: Content

☐ Leave the exaggeration to your stories about the fish that got away. Remember that employers will be talking with your references and asking about the job experience you list.

☐ Be sure to read the job description and reflect it in your application. Nothing gets an application rejected faster than a cover letter that evinces interest in the associate director position when the job opening is for a cataloger.

☐ Modify your cover letter for every job. One size NEVER fits all even when the positions have the same job title.

☐ Be enthusiastic. “Ho hum” application letters evoke “ho hum” responses by the employer.

☐ Make your resume concise and exclude extraneous information. Over-long resumes hide the most important information among insignificant details.

☐ Choose references who can discuss your qualifications for the job. Your college coach may have thought you were a great tennis player but not have much knowledge about your reference skills.
Always ask your references for permission to list them in your resume. When you contact them, check their current address and telephone number, tell them about the position for which you are applying, and remind them of particular projects you handled that would be pertinent for that position.

**Placement Office:**

- Be discrete about comments you make in public. If you make sarcastic remarks about the interviewer to your friend, that person standing nearby may be the interviewer's friend or colleague.

- Accept the proposition that applications are confidential. Placement Office volunteers will not disclose how many or who your competitors might be.

- Do not “camp out” in the Placement Office. Daily quick visits to check the bulletin boards for new postings are encouraged, but be aware that you may create a negative impression on interviewers if they constantly see you lingering in the Placement Office.

**Job Interviews:**

- Be positive, but leave the gushing to newly discovered oil wells. Reality usually has some less desirable aspects as well and being honest about the latter makes your enthusiasm more believable.

- Wear proper interview attire. While the annual meeting is a relaxed environment, you should still dress for job interviews as you normally would.

- Be prompt for interviews. You have limited time to talk about your qualifications and explore the job's possibilities, so you will not want to miss a minute of your interview.

- Know the requirements of the job and be prepared to present specifics about how your qualifications satisfy them.

- Be prepared to articulate why you want a particular job.

- Have a mental or physical list of questions you want answered. You may be the applicant, but the interview is also your opportunity to find out about the job and the hiring institution.

- Answer the question asked. Employers generally ask the same questions of all applicants and then compare answers. Politicians may get away with the ploy of taking ANY question and replying with the information they want to present, whether pertinent or not, but you are not likely to fare as well.
Focus on, and adhere to, that fine line between sounding too humble and too boastful.

Be honest. You may get exactly what you say you want.

Generally:

- Only apply for jobs in which you are truly interested. Interviewing is hard work, so save your energy for those positions you would seriously consider if offered.

- Ask colleagues or mentors to review your resume and provide feedback, and offer a copy of your resume to each person you list as a professional reference. They may appreciate the opportunity to review your resume, and they may have helpful comments for improving it.

- Ask your coworkers and those you want as references for sample interview questions. If you have a chance to “practice” interviewing, take it. Even if the real questions are different from the practice ones, you will gain valuable experience.

- Prepare for the annual meeting in advance. Bring extra copies of your resume with you. Do not wait until the last minute to speak with your professional references or others whom you will ask for assistance. They may be traveling or difficult to contact immediately before or during the annual meeting.