



## JOB SEARCH TRICKS

Matthew Klein, PA-C, Former AASPA Student Director

*Originally published in the July/August 2015 Sutureline, Volume 34, No. 3*

Many PA programs are a short 2 years in duration. And how that time flies. The hours spent in the library seem to drag on endlessly but before you know it you're on clinical rotations and soon thereafter, you are looking for a job. The thought of working is exciting and intimidating all at once. I am one of the many fortunate people in my class to have a job lined up once I graduate. I learned a couple of tricks during the job search and application process that I would like to pass along.

Start assembling your CV from day one of PA school. Many entering the PA profession do it as a second career so their CV is well-developed, but more can always be added. Regardless of what medical setting you are working in, be it an academic center or a rural clinic, your employer will want an employee that can add value to his or her practice. It's great that you'll be a top-notch PA who is ready to treat all the patients that come your way, but that should not be all you are. Use your talents, previous experience, and have a plan of what you will be able to contribute to a given practice, outside of being a practitioner. Tell them about your plan in your cover letter and be ready to talk about it at your interview.

You will likely send out dozens of cover letters and CVs during the application process. It is time consuming, annoying, and necessary. Unfortunately each cover letter needs to be catered directly to the specific employer and position. It's important to be fastidious about this and make sure there are no misspelled words or grammar issues. Sending a letter for a primary care position shouldn't have the address heading for the University Surgery Department instead.

When you get an interview make sure you do your homework. Prior to my interviews I was sent an itinerary of my day. I sat down the night before, researched and took notes on each person I was scheduled to meet. I also researched the people I thought I may encounter (e.g. the Chairman of the Department) and had something to talk about with each of them. In my experience people love to talk about themselves or their projects, so it's good to know about them so you can engage them.

I then thought about questions they may ask me and I wrote out my response in bullet format. I found that in these interview nebulous questions like, what would your superpower be, were not asked. It was more like a first date and you are trying to get to know the person. So I prepared for this by writing my answers to questions like why did you choose to become a PA? And why do you like this medical specialty?

A couple last pieces of advice: make sure your phone is off, don't chew gum during the interview, and remember that you are interviewing the entire time you are there so don't get too relaxed. Good luck and try not to be nervous!