Resume & Cover Letter Guide



Tusculum College

Office of Career Services

File Date 3/1/18

**Resumes & Cover Letters** **– are marketing tools used to tell your professional story.** *They communicate how an applicant’s skills, abilities and interests match a specific employer’s job requirements for a specific position. Employers are not seeking “the perfect candidate”, but rather a candidate who is a good “fit” for a specific job. Resumes are very individualized to person and type of job. Resume writing is a formal unique style of writing not used elsewhere. There are many different opinions about how to write a resume. Listed below are some general resume guidelines.*

***Research and extensive editing*** are necessary to write an effective resume and cover letter. It can easily take four hours to write an effective resume and cover letter.

***Research the job and company.***

Review:

* Job description for specific position
* Job description for same position at other companies
* Company culture, mission, and press releases found on company website
* Informational interviews with an acquaintance, who is working in the same position at another company, if possible

***Edit resume repeatedly*** for typos, spelling, grammar, brevity, and consistency in format. When you think the resume is ready to send, ask three more persons to proof your resume. Fresh eyes will often catch a mistake.

***Be concise,*** you have approximately 6 to 15 seconds to gain the attention of the employer. Focus on strengths. Use bullets on resumes (dashes, if an e-resume), to highlight achievements in quantifiable terms.

***Be honest and genuine.*** Never lie or misrepresent abilities on a resume or cover letter.

***Tell one story about your work.***  Include only relevant work experiences that highlight how your abilities/interests match the employer’s needs outlined in the job description.

***Critically important information should be listed in the top one third of resume page.***  Usually this is the contact information, objective or professional summary, education, and some of the relevant work experience. If the reader is not interested in the top third of the first page of a resume, it is usually discarded.

***Resume length*** should be appropriate for work experience. One page resumes are usually appropriate for traditional college students, who may not have much work experience. Non-traditional students, who have accrued many years of work experience, require a longer resume. ***Limit work experience to the last 10 to 15 years, in most cases.***

***Resume paper*** should be used to apply for jobs by USPS mail. Offer paper copies of resume to each interviewer, when interviewing. Take paper copies of resumes to interviews, even if you initially applied online. Resume paper should display a watermark when held up to a light. Only use conservative colors, white, ivory, or very pale gray, with no flecks or design. Use the same resume paper for references.

***Chronological or functional*** resumes may be used. Most employers prefer chronological resumes, especially for the traditional college graduate. Functional resumes may be used to highlight key functions used in multiple jobs over many years.

***Font and style*** of resume should be formal, consistent and easy to read. Ink color should be only black for the formal resume style. Recommended fonts are (Times New Roman, Arial, or Georgia) in a 10pt. to 12pt. size. Avoid casual fonts like Comic Sans. Headings in ALL CAPS look larger without using more space. Consistently using different styles (\*bullets, italics, bolding, ALL CAPS) with similar items guides the reader to skim the resume more efficiently. Use only one font, but vary style of key matching items in resume.

***Bullets*** allow the reader skim duties, skills and achievements completed in each position. Be very concise. Be consistent in formatting, using periods at the end of each statement or omitting periods from the end of each statement. ***Start each statement with an action verb in the appropriate verb tense.***

***Action verbs*** are used to initiate statements; omit personal pronouns. Eliminate any words that are not absolutely needed.

***Include relevant keywords*** from job description to meet online resume screening software requirements in resumes and cover letters. Spell out acronyms, degrees, and titles to increase keyword hits and ranking for interview selection. Be relevant; only applicable keywords improve your odds. (Headers and resume templates sometimes hide keywords from a software screening.)

***Contact information*** should be listed in an efficient format at the top of each page of resume. Contact information should include full name, address (city and state), phone number, professional email, and Linkedin URL if appropriate. (Email should be ***yourfullname@something.com*.** Email should not be work or school email. Email should be professional, not cute like *sexysuzy@something.com* or *profisher@something.com*) Contact information format should be used at the top of the reference page to match resume.

***References*** should be listed on a separate sheet from resume. Only submit references when requested. List three to five references on one sheet. For each reference include name, job title, name of employer, phone number, and email (physical address optional). Ask references for permission to list them as a reference. Email each reference a copy of your resume and cover letter, when you schedule an interview. Keep references posted on your job search. Professional references should be familiar with your work habits and performance, such as, former employers, faculty, co-workers, or supervisors for community service projects, not family members.

***Avoid visual clutter and photos.*** (Some employers like photos; others discard resumes, which have photos.) Employers typically view applicant’s social media postings online. Posting a professional photo on Linkedin is recommended. Applicants should list personal Linkedin URL in the contact information of resume, if profile is complete.

***Avoid passive or negative*** statements or tone. Avoid obscure terminology and slang. Avoid using abbreviations, unless obvious (Two letter state abbreviation, such as, TN; and GPA 3.5/4.0 are acceptable abbreviations.) Spell out numbers under 10, per APA writing style (other than GPA).

***Avoid listing unnecessary personal information***. For example, do not include health status, marital status, number and ages of children, age, weight, height, and military status, unless required for the specific job.

***Resume templates*** may be used to organize information. However, when applying online, resumes should be typed into a blank Word document, unless the application instructions direct otherwise. College Central Network (CCN) provides a resume builder with a free template, action word lists, and sample resumes at **www.collegecentral.com/tusculum.**

***Read and follow directions*** exactly as listed in the job description.

***Resume Construction*** should follow a traditional format and order. Only the most relevant information should be included. Sometimes good information is omitted to include information that is more important.

CONTACT INFORMATION – List name in 18 pt. font size at top of page. Then, list phone number, email, city, and state. (List Linkedin URL, if appropriate.)

OBJECTIVE – An objective statement clearly states which job the applicant desires in one short sentence. Most employers want to see an objective statement for a specific job.

EDUCATION – List all schools in reverse chronological order, listing most recent school experience first. List the name of school, location (city and state), degree, major(s) area(s) of study, expected date of completion, GPA (if 3.0/4.0 or higher), and possibly relevant coursework, if space allows.

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS – List knowledge of foreign languages, computer operating systems and languages, other special certifications related to the position.

EXPERIENCE - List all work experience in reverse chronological order with most recent work first. List all full-time, part-time, and internship positions (paid and unpaid).

* For each position, include name of company, city, state, dates of employment, and job title.
* Start each bullet with an action verb. Do not use “responsible for” or “duties include”
* List key skills and highlight accomplishments in measurable, quantifiable terms. Do not simply list all regular work duties.
* Use keywords to improve software screenings

COMMUNITY SERVICE – List relevant volunteer work, highlighting transferable skills in the same format as other work experience, if space permits.

HONORS & ACTIVITIES – This section may be used to highlight awards, collegiate athletics, and professional association involvement. Include officer positions to demonstrate leadership skills.

OTHER POSSIBLE CATEGORIES: Professional Summary, Professional Affiliations, Research, Publications, Conference Presentations, Leadership Experience, Class Projects, and Relevant Coursework

***WRITING COVER LETTERS***

***Cover letters*** explain how an applicant’s skills and interests match the needs of the employer, as outlined in the job description. Explain gaps in employment or a change of career, as needed. Cover letters should be three or four paragraphs of complete sentences, unlike the resume. Check cover letter carefully for typos and misspelled words. ***Be concise***. Do not to address the cover letter “To Whom It May Concern.” Research to find the name of the hiring manager.

***The introductory paragraph*** should clearly state which position you seek. Explain how you learned about the position, through a job advertisement or referral. If referred, list the name of the person who referred you.

***The middle paragraph*** should state why your skills and interests are a good “fit” for the employer’s needs, based on the advertised job description. Explain why you are interested in the company and the position.

***The closing paragraph*** should be short. Ask for an interview and include your contact information (professional email and phone number). Close the letter with “Sincerely”, “Best Regards”, or another formal business style. ***Do not forget to sign your cover letter!***

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| ACTION VERBS | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| ACTION VERBS Continued | | | | | | | | |
| Mediated  Mentored  Merged  Monitored  Motivated  Negotiated  Networked  Observed  Obtained  Operated  Ordered  Organized  Outlined  Overhauled  Oversaw  Participated  Performed  Persuaded  Pioneered  Placed  Planned  Portrayed  Posted  Prepared  Presented  Prevented  Prioritized  Processed  Produced  Programmed  Projected  Promoted  Proofread  Proposed  Prosecuted  Provided  Publicized  Published  Purchased  Pursued | |  | Qualified  Questioned  Ranked  Reached  Received  Recognized  Recommended  Reconciled  Reconstructed  Recorded  Recruited  Reduced  Referred  Registered  Related  Reported  Represented  Researched  Reserved  Resolved  Responded  Retrieved  Reviewed  Revised  Rewarded  Scheduled  Screened  Searched  Selected  Served  Shadowed  Shaped  Sold  Solicited  Solved  Sorted  Specified  Spoke  Stocked  Strengthened | |  | | Suggested  Supervised  Supplied  Supported  Surpassed  Surveyed  Synthesized  Tailored  Taught  Terminated  Tested  Testified  Tracked  Trained  Transferred  Transformed  Translated  Tutored  Upgraded  Used  Utilized  Validated  Verified  Volunteered  Warned  Welcomed  Witnessed  Won  Worked  Wrote | |
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Joe Pioneer Smith (Sample Template) (Left Justified)

(123) 456-7890 / Firstname.Lastname@mailservice.com / City, ST

**OBJECTIVE**: To obtain employment as XYZ job title at XYZ company

**EDUCATION** (List education section near top of resume for recent graduates or those changing careers)

**Tusculum College**, Greeneville, TN, Month 20XX (Be consistent in placement and format of dates)

*Bachelor of Arts (or other degree) in Business Administration (or other Major), Minor in English (or other Minor), GPA X.X/4.0 (if 3.0 or higher)*

**Related Coursework**: (Important for accounting, computer science, and some other majors that teach languages and other specific skills, only list most important.)

**PROFESSIONAL SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS** (If applicable)

*(List technical skills, languages, computer software systems/languages, check the job description for required and preferred skills. List all that match your abilities.)*

Examples: C#, Java Script, C++, Spanish, Finra/Securities License - Series 6, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Office Applications, Grant Writing & Research, Typing Speed 80 WPM, Social Media Marketing, First Aid/CPR certification, and others. (List skills in bulleted form, unless space is limited)

**EXPERIENCE**

**Most Recent Employer**, City, ST, Month 20XX – Month 20XX (may list dates at right margin, align)

*Job Title*

* Begin each bulleted statement with an action verb (align all bullets, periods optional, be consistent)
* List skills and key responsibilities
* List accomplishments in quantifiable terms, whenever possible

**Previous Employer**, City, ST, Month 20XX – Month 20XX

*Job Title*

* Begin each bulleted statement with an action verb (periods optional, be consistent)
* List skills and key responsibilities
* List accomplishments in quantifiable terms, whenever possible

**Internship Employer**, City, ST, Month 20XX – Month 20XX

*Internship Title*

* Begin each bulleted statement with an action verb (periods optional, be consistent)
* List skills and key responsibilities
* List accomplishments in quantifiable terms, whenever possible

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**Name of Organization**, City, ST, Month 20XX – Month 20XX

Volunteer

* List only skills and information transferable to the position targeted in this resume.

**HONORS & ACTIVITIES**

**Name of Organization**, City, ST, Month 20XX – Month 20XX

*Volunteer*

* List skills, which are transferable to position targeted in this resume
* List leadership positions in clubs
* List athletic participation and awards
* List academic honors (awards, scholarships, dean’s list, etc.…)

Joe Pioneer Smith (Sample Template) Centered

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**‍**SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE (THREE PAGES)

**Jane P. Medical**

60 Shiloh Road, Greeneville, TN 37743 | 123-456-7890 | janepmedical@yahoo.com

**OBJECTIVE**

*To obtain admission to the Quillen College of Medicine at East Tennessee State University for the term starting fall of 2015*

**EDUCATION**

**TUSCULUM COLLEGE**, Greeneville, TN August 2011 – May 2015

*Bachelor of Arts in Biology; Chemistry and Psychology Minor*

GPA: 3.76

MCAT: 28 Verbal: 10 Physical Science: 7 Biological Science: 11

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**THE COUNTRY CLUB**, Morristown, TN May 2013 – August 2013

*Assistant Tennis Director*

* Coached tennis lessons to various age groups
* Managed opening and closing of facilities and provided light housekeeping and landscaping

**GORDON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION**, Calhoun, GA May 2012 – August 2012

*Secretary*

* Assisted the Director of Gordon County Parks and Recreation
* Directed phone calls and walk-ins to the correct location
* Managed opening and closing of facilities

**JOB SHADOWING EXPERIENCE**

**ADAIRSVILLE FAMILY MEDICINE – Byron Littlefield, D.O.**, Adairsville, GA August 2014

*Student* *Observer* - *27 hours*

* Shadowed Dr. Littlefield in his family medicine practice
* Participated in patient consults

**NORTHWEST GEORGIA MEDICAL GROUP – Scott LePor, D.O.**, Calhoun, GA July 2014

*Student* *Observer* *- 20 hours*

* Observed doctor/patient consults in family medicine office

**GORDON HOSPITAL – Brent Box, M.D.**, Calhoun, GA December 2013

*Student* *Observer* *- 40 hours*

* Witnessed several outpatient surgeries
* Joined doctor in patient check-ups in the Progressive Care Unit

**TAKOMA MEDICAL ASSOCIATES – Daniel Lewis, M.D.**, Greeneville, TN May 2013 – June 2013

*Student Observer - 40 hours*

* Assisted Dr. Lewis with patient consults in his family medicine office

**HONORS & AWARDS**

**ITA SCHOLAR ATHLETE**, Intercollegiate Tennis Association July 2012 & July 2014

* Recognized any varsity letter winner with a grade point average of at least 3.50 that has been enrolled at present school for at least 2 semesters

**ITA ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM**, Intercollegiate Tennis Association July 2012 – July 2014

* Recognized any ITA program that had a cumulative team grade point average of 3.20 or above

**CHARLES OLIVER GRAY SCHOLARS LIST**, Tusculum College July 2012 – July 2014

* Awarded to students who had been named to the Dean's List for two or more consecutive semesters

**SAC COMMISSIONER’S HONOR ROLL**, South Atlantic Conference June 2012 – June 2014

* Recognized student-athletes who carried at least a 3.30 cumulative grade point average and completed at least one season in their designated sport

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**ATHLETIC DIRECTOR’S HONOR ROLL**, Tusculum College May 2012 – May 2014

Acknowledged student-athletes that accumulated a grade point average of 3.0 or higher

**DEAN’S LIST**, Tusculum College December 2011 – May 2014

Acknowledged full time students with a 3.50 grade point average or higher

**MOST VALUABLE PLAYER**, Tusculum College Women’s Tennis Team May 2014

Recognized team member that displayed exemplary teamwork, leadership, and match play ability

Voted on by fellow teammates

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

**PIONEER STUDENT ATHLETE ADVISORY COUNCIL** August 2012 - Present

*Tennis* *Representative*

Generated a student-athlete voice within Tusculum College

Solicited student-athlete responses to proposed NCAA Division II legislation

Organized community service efforts

**WOMEN’S TENNIS TEAM** August 2011 - Present

*Team* *Member*

*Captain* – August 2013 – Present

Participated on 2014 Conference Championship winning team

Displayed teamwork and organizational skills

Portrayed leadership and empathy for teammates

**ALPHA CHI NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY** October 2013 - Present

*Member*

*Secretary* – May 2014 – Present

Admitted to honor society when juniors or seniors are amongst the top 10 percent of their classes academically

Promoted academic excellence and character among college and university students

**PRESIDENT’S SOCIETY** May 2014 - Present

*Student* *Ambassador*

Coordinated activities with the President of Tusculum College, Dr. Nancy Moody

Furnished campus visits and tours

Provided availability once a week for on-call status in the Office of Admission

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT JUDICIAL BOARD** September 2014 - Present

*Associate* *Justice*

Performed as the student voice in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct in the Tusculum College handbook

Recommended appropriate consequences for those found responsible of violations of rules

**SCIENCE CLUB** September 2014 - Present

*Member*

Contributed to the reestablishment of the Science Club at Tusculum College

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

**SAFE HARBOR HOMES,** Greeneville, TN February 2014 – March 2014

*Student Volunteer*

Participated in class project for Biological Service Learning to design the Dating Violence Awareness Garden to heighten awareness of domestic violence at Tusculum College

**GREENE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**, Greeneville, TN February 2012 – December 2013

*Student Volunteer*

Provided basic housekeeping and exercised animals

**RURAL RESOURCES**, Greeneville, TN September 2014

*President’s Society Volunteer*

Provided basic landscaping services for the offices

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**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**, Greeneville, TN September 2014

*President’s Society Volunteer*

Painted a wheelchair ramp for community member at their home

**MAKE-A-WISH FOUNDATION**, Greeneville, TN August 2012 - Present

*Pioneer Student Athlete Advisory Council Volunteer*

Participated in various fundraisers to raise money for the foundation

**RELEVANT COURSEWORK**

BIOL-101 General Biology I 4.00

BIOL-102 General Biology II 4.00

BIOL-201 Genetics 4.00

BIOL-202 Microbiology 4.00

BIOL-205 Morphology/Taxonomy of Vascular Plants 4.00

BIOL-224 Mycology 4.00

BIOL-230 Medical Terminology 2.00

BIOL-302 Human Physiology 4.00

BIOL-303 Histology 4.00

BIOL-304 Human Anatomy 4.00

BIOL-315 Cellular and Molecular Biology 4.00

BIOL-354 Service Learning in Biological Sciences 4.00

CHEM-101 General Chemistry I 4.00

CHEM-102 General Chemistry II 4.00

CHEM-203 Organic Chemistry I 4.00

CHEM-204 Organic Chemistry II 4.00

CHEM-301 Biochemistry 4.00

MATH-140 Elementary Statistics 4.00

MATH-180 Pre-Calculus 4.00

PHYS-201 Physics I 4.00

PHYS-202 Physics II 4.00

PSYC-101 Essentials of Psychology 4.00

PSYC-200 Developmental Psychology 4.00

PSYC-220 Abnormal Psychology 4.00

PSYC-318 Behavioral Pharmacology 4.00

PSYC-345 Biological Foundations of Behavior 4.00

**REFERENCES**

**FaCulty**

*Associate Professor of Chemistry*

Tusculum College

60 Shiloh Road

P.O. Box 5082

Greeneville, TN 37743

423-636-7300 Ext. 5300

[cprofessor@tusculum.edu](mailto:nmoody@tusculum.edu)

**FACULTY**

*Associate Professor of Biology*

Tusculum College

60 Shiloh Road

P.O. Box 5082

Greeneville, TN 37743

423-636-7300 Ext. 5300

[bprofessor@tusculum.edu](mailto:dmcginn@tusculum.edu)

**COACH**

*Head Men’s and Women’s Tennis Coach*

Tusculum College

60 Shiloh Road

P.O. Box 5300

Greeneville, TN 37743

423-636-5300

[tcoach@tusculum.edu](mailto:tarnett@tusculum.edu) Page 3

*SAMPLE EXECUTIVE RESUME FOR 15 YEARS EXPERIENCE (TWO PAGES)*

**Joseph D. Executive**

60 Shiloh Road, P.O. Box 5082, Greeneville, TN 37743 · #123-456-7890 · joseph.executive@email.com

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**FACILITIES PROFESSIONAL**

Excited to support the infrastructure and assets of your organization

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**PROFESSIONAL PROFILE**

* Seasoned facilities professional, with experience working in industrial environments in both military and civilian settings.
* Exceptional project manager, who brings a collaborative approach to successful, value-added assignments.
* Driven achiever with extensive problem-solving experience, who provides measurable process cost savings, while enjoying a fast-paced environment with multiple priorities.
* Strong communicator, who can deliver effective presentations to management and floor associates, while maintaining strong business-to-business relationships.
* Effective leader, who demonstrates a leadership style that promotes mutual trust and professional example, while working with staff from diverse backgrounds.

**AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

Toyota manufacturing methods in processes Proficient in ISO quality system Implementation of robotics

New product change-over Complex material handling conveyors Cooling water maintenance

HVAC chillers Financial planning and budgeting Quality assurance

Electrical distribution to 600V Specification writing Project estimating

Auto-Cad® Manual blueprinting and drawing Customer support

RFI, RFP, and RFQ processes Chemical handling and disposal Solid waste management

Emergency power generation Testing of critical assets Tooling development

Fork lift repair MS Office Suite® MS Project®

Lotus Notes® Visual management Infrared PM Technologies

Crane, hoist and runway installation Product manipulators AGV’s

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Maintenance Supervisor,** Toro Company, Windom, MN, Jul 2012 - Nov 2013

* Managed and provided technical support for seven union millwrights for assembly operations.
* Prepared and managed all purchasing for the millwright department, and perishable tools for assembly lines.
* Successfully introduced 5S program to maintenance department and stores area.
* Provided sourcing, purchasing, and accounting for multiple accounts.
* Provided logistical support and project management for capital projects.

**Project Manager,** CB Roofing Construction, Lenoir City, TN 37771, May 2011 – June 2012

* Provided site surveys and prepared bids for upcoming commercial roofing projects.
* Managed labor and worked with property managers for successful project completion.
* Purchased commercial roofing, and presented value-added engineering to property owners and managers.

Page 1

**Facilities Manager,** Exedy America, Mascot, TN 37806, Sept 2009 – Feb 2011

* Installed underground press scrap removal conveyor during two-week facility shutdown.
* Resolved cooling water leaks and maintained exact coolant levels.
* Successfully restored cooling machinery to regular operation and favorable condition.

**Project Manager – Estimator,** Alliant Electric, Knoxville, TN, 37932, June 2007 – Aug 2009

* Estimated major electrical projects throughout the southeast United States.
* Provided support and project management for multiple projects.
* Engaged with local codes enforcement officials to resolve issues involving rights of way, build-outs of aged buildings, and other major issues.
* Managed purchasing and logistics to ensure project materials arrived at work sites at specific times.

**Facilities Manager,** DeRoyal Industries, Powell, TN, 37849, Apr 2003 – May 2007

* Acted as project manager for construction of new manufacturing facility in Santiago, Dominican Republic.
* Supplied support for multiple manufacturing facilities located in East Tennessee, Florida, and Central America.
* Upgraded existing facilities to current FDA Standards.
* Provided research, purchasing, and logistics for multiple plant capital improvements.
* Completed budgeting for multiple departments.

**Maintenance – Facilities Supervisor,** Sea Ray Boats, Inc., Vonore, TN 37885, Feb 1988 – Apr 2003

* Managed the construction of two pre-cast manufacturing buildings of 30,000 square feet and one metal manufacturing building of 15,000 square feet.
* Managed all facilities sourcing, purchasing and logistics for supplies and capital projects.
* Implemented computerized maintenance management software program.
* Personally introduced robotics to the boat manufacturing process, first in class.

**MILITARY EXPERIENCE**, 1974-1987

* Damage Controlman, First Class, E-6, *United States Coast Guard.*
* Held staff position at United States Coast Guard Ninth District, Cleveland, Ohio, Naval Engineering Branch.

**EDUCATION & TRAINING**

* Bachelor of Science in Management, Tusculum College, Greeneville, TN, graduated December 2015.
* United States Coast Guard Law Enforcement School, Yorktown, VA.
* United States Coast Guard Marine/Environmental Protection School, Yorktown, VA.
* Damage Control “A” School, Governor’s Island, NY.
* Damage Control “C” School, Governor’s Island, NY (Advanced Welding).
* Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Warfare School, Philadelphia, PA.
* United States Maritime Administration Fire Fighting School, Toledo, OH.