Speaker 1:

I think for me it's the whole mindset. I need to be confident, not desperate, be confident about my experience and background. I think I've lost that in the years. And so I feel like I got that during today's workshop.

Christina:

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezzell:

And I'm Sun Ezzell. And you're listening to the Magic Mountie podcast.

Christina:

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun Ezzell:

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 4:

And I know I want to achieve my goals, and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Julie Laverty:

She is a Sociology major and she's transferred to Cal Poly Pomona. Psychology major, English major.

Sun Ezzell:

From transforming part time into full time.

Speaker 6:

I really like the time that we spend in Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

Christina:

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 7:

Think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina:

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

Sun Ezzell:

And I'm soon Sun Ezzell, learning assistance faculty and professional learning academy coordinator.

Christina:

And this is the Magic Mountie podcast.

Sun Ezzell:

Welcome to the second episode in our mini series on Getting a Full Time Job at a Community College hosted by Julie Laverty, Professor of Communication. This workshop series demystifies the hiring process from the paper screening to the interview to the teaching demo. In today's episode, we'll hear from Derek Dokter, Professor of Business Management, who attended last year's workshop, What to Expect When You're Applying as an Adjunct and returned to this year's workshop as a new full time tenure track faculty member to share his journey from adjunct to full time. Join us as Derek shares do's and don'ts of applying for a full time faculty position, including how he gave his cover letter and resume a complete makeover and got 17 interviews, five final interviews and multiple job offers before he landed his full-time position right here at Mt. SAC.

Derek Dokter:

It's such an honor to be here and even be a part of the workshop. I just never thought I'd be here. But I think the reason, the most reason why I wanted to come back and that I'm passionate about coming back is that I just would like to make a difference on one person's life. And so Julie had asked me if I would like to come back. So I came to the workshop and I just wanted to let the adjuncts know that I'm an advocate for them personally because I was sitting in their shoes thinking to myself, "I'll never be able to get a full-time job or I don't know when I'll be able to get a full-time job."

Derek Dokter:

And sometimes it gets to be kind of discouraging or disheartening that you see someone else to get a full-time job, and you're like, "I know I could do it. Why am I not getting anywhere?" The workshop really had a profound impact on me and it made the difference where I could actually have interviews. And so if that had that much impact, I want to be able to just give that back to someone else. Like I said, just one person or several people, whatever that takes. But to really make a difference for an adjunct to say, "You know what? I have hope. I am encouraged and I can persevere because someone else did it and now I can do it."

Julie Laverty:

So I'd like to introduce the now full-time professor who was in your position last year this month, Derek Dokter.

Derek Dokter:

All right. Good morning everybody. It's great to see your faces out there look excited, and if you're not excited, hopefully you'll be excited by the end of this workshop. I was here just like all of you last year, and if I can be up here standing up here, you can do it too, right? I want to be able to encourage you be able to do that.

Derek Dokter:

Before I start, I just want to kind of share a little bit about how I'm an advocate for adjuncts. I was an adjunct for many years as well and I was teaching at six community colleges at one time for the last, I'd say, two and a half years. So I was teaching between six and eight. One semester I even taught 10 classes. So it's like a lot of work, a lot going on to be able to make ends meet. But I know all of you are struggling to do it, but you need to know that you can still get to be a full-time teacher through this workshop today, and I'm just so excited about this workshop.

Derek Dokter:

So I just put some statistics not to discourage you, but to encourage you that there's a lot of adjuncts out there. It says here from the Coalition of Academic Workforce, 75% of the school makeup is adjuncts, right? So when you go and you apply for these jobs, you need to understand that there's a lot of people applying for them. But don't get discouraged by that because you could be that one person, right, or the two person or three person. You can do it.

Derek Dokter:

The other thing is is the average is six years to obtain full-time position. I heard some of you said you had been an adjunct for 19 years, whatever. Once again, this is just an average and this is just one person's average that they come up with. I was working at Citrus College. One person told me, "Hey, average is 10 years." I was working at Chaffey College. Someone told me it's 12 years, right? I was working at Cerritos College and they're telling me it's nine years. So no one has an answer. Don't look for a specific cookie cutter advice. That's where I was going to the next point here.

Derek Dokter:

When I was thinking about being full time, I was thinking, "Okay, what is the top 10 steps to be able to get a full-time job?" So I was trying to figure out what are they. And I'd go and talk to different people. Make sure if you talk to anyone, it's a full-time person that's been tenured, right? So they can give you some advice. But there is no cookie cutter answer. There's strategies to be able to meet those, the requirements or qualifications. And Julie is just been so wonderful to help people. She has a passion to do that to teach you the right strategies to succeed. And with these strategies you will be able to meet the end goal. I guarantee it. So here we go.

Derek Dokter:

The first thing is I want to just share some mistakes that I personally made before I came to this workshop so that you can avoid these mistakes, right? And these are some things that I did. So I'm going to look foolish here for a second. And you're like, "Hey, that's..." You can make fun of me so that you could feel better about yourself, right? That's what I really want you to do.

Derek Dokter:

So this first one, it says before is putting the exact position title. So before here when I was going to do a resume, I thought, "You know what, to save myself time," this is what I was thinking to be efficient, "I'll just make a general statement in my resume so that I can push it off to all these different schools." So I put a higher education teacher and student school advocacy, right? Because I'm thinking I want to be a higher ed teacher, community college, and I'm here to represent students. So I'm tying that in. No, no, no. What you need to do, this is something that's really important, is that you need to be very specific. And that's what they taught me in this class, right? So I would put profile full-time assistant professor in business.

Derek Dokter:

Now you need to make sure that when you're looking at the exact position title that you're really looking at it. Because when I was applying for jobs, there's an associate professor, there's an assistant professor, there's a business management professor, there's a management professor. So you need to look at, operations professor, what are you specifically applying for and specifically put that in your resume. Very, very important. They need to know that you are there applying all your effort to that specific school.

Derek Dokter:

Next one, the length. I made a huge error on that, right? I mean it's not huge in the fact that it's a lot of information. It's just that when someone looks at it, he sees a hundred applicants, they don't have time to look at 10 pages on a resume, right? But before this workshop, I had an eight page resume. I mean, the word tally was like 300 words about what I did at Chaffey College. When I came to this workshop last year, I found that you need to be very concise about how you write your resume.

Derek Dokter:

One thing that's really important is when you're going through the application, some of the jobs applications say, "I'm looking for a person that teaches business management, these certain management classes." And so you want to put the classes that they're wanting you to teach. You want to sift through all the classes you've ever taught and put those at the very top because that's what they're looking for at that specific school. And they want to know, can you teach those classes? And you can, but you want to put those at the very top, right? So I tell people that's really important. So that's the length.

Derek Dokter:

Another mistake I made is when you're looking at the qualifications. Before I would put the degree I have and why I felt that I was a great candidate to get that degree. Okay, that's good. But in this class and when you go to apply for a job, they just want to see that you have a master's degree or that you have a bachelor's degree or that they have an associate. They don't need to see all that other stuff. So it needs to be really clear and concise. And if you want to put a couple of other things with it, you can. Put your GPA, if you got a scholarship. I think those are important, but I would just get right to them. I would put full scholarship. I don't need to talk about all why I got a scholarship. They just need to see you got a scholarship period.

Derek Dokter:

And before the qualifications was where I came from. So I came from 10 years of experience in the professional world before coming back into education. And so you need to understand your industry. And the professional world when I was working in supply chain, they wanted to know every detail you did at your last job and explain it and give an example on your resume. But in education, they don't want that. They want to see that, Hey, you did this past job and maybe this little clip about what you did. That was it. So that saved me a lot there too.

Derek Dokter:

And I'm not saying that this is the perfect way. I just want to let you guys know that this has just worked for me and I'm just one person. I'm just trying to give you some hints of what it took for me to get some job interviews and get a full-time job. I just want to kind of give you that background. So I just wanted to show you the difference, okay, of industries. I tell people know their actual industry that you're applying for and what they're expecting of you. That's really important.

Derek Dokter:

Now this is important. It's not really a mistake, but it's something that I thought is really great improvement. Okay, an improvement. It's called the wow factor. I kind of just made that up. And before, I would just list some things about why I was a great leader. So I go on tour vans with my students in my classroom. I do speaking. I have professionals come into my class and speak. I thought those were great. I'll just list them. Well, that really has no meaning, right? It's a kind of a generic. So what Julie taught me last year in my class is that I put industry community associations that I'm a part of and why that is important to the job I'm applying for. So you're tying it in. Well, because I'm connected to the community so that I can help students get a job in the community or maybe get a scholarship in the community or meet a mentor in the community. Now, those were some mistakes that I made on my resume.

Derek Dokter:

Now let's go to the cover letter. Okay. Now the cover letter. I'm going to be real honest with you, before I came to this class last year, I was not... I'm not the best writer. Okay. It takes me a long time to learn to write better and stuff like that. Don't feel bad. I actually was a college graduate of a community college. The reason I share this story is, is that I can relate to a lot of the students here. Since I was the first generation to go to college and I'd take these English classes and I wasn't the best at it, I had to go to tutoring, the success center. Well, Think of that as kind of your own thing now because you're like, "Well, I'm a professional." I get that.

Derek Dokter:

They talked about another set of eyes looking at it. Maybe if you want to, as an adjunct, go to the writing center and say, "Hey, you know what? I'm applying for this job. Can someone just take a look at this?" That's no problem. We're all learning to grow and develop. So that's a really important thing. Or grab a mentor or have someone help you write.

Derek Dokter:

So the reason I'm talking about the cover letter, it was the most challenging for me, right? So when I thought about doing a cover letter, I was just going to write a letter to someone, to the school. Well that really isn't what you're doing. So it says here position. I would just used to just put the position there think that they would know. So what they taught me here last year, which was a total thing, it looks totally different, is that I put the job posting on here, I put right below it. The school that I'm applying for that I thought it was interesting how the HR guy said some people have cover letters from Cal Poly and all these ones because they just use the same generic one. You don't want to do that. You want to be specific. And then I would put to the selection of the committee at Grossmont College it says, "I am in request of your consideration of a full-time management marketing international instructor." So in the very first sentence, they know what I'm applying for, so they're not researching it. All right.

Derek Dokter:

Next, this is a challenging one, is the terminology. So when you're up looking at the application, there's all these words. Some of them you might know. Some of them you might think you know. Maybe it says SLO, student learning outcomes, maybe it has curriculum design, whatever, right? And so before, I was telling the person that I wanted, the school, let's say Mt. SAC, I was telling them why I believe that I'm the best candidate, but I wasn't really going over the specifics of the terminology.

Derek Dokter:

So I would say something general, like it says I have been a key partner in higher education courses and initiatives. Challenge doesn't sway me. What is that all about? That's kind of like some generic marketing scheme there. No, that's not going to work. This specific job they were asking for how many years. So I made it real easy. Over the last four years. Boom. That meets that qualification. Good to go. Next, and ask specifically about what classes to teach. It says, "I have been teaching courses that qualify me to meet the duties and responsibilities of the job title." So I'm telling them that, Hey, I can meet these job duties." And then this is the best part. It says, "in accordance to the assigned course outline of record." That was actually in the application. So they know, oh, this person read it thoroughly. They are using our words and they're connecting them to what they can do. And that's so key. I missed that whole thing before I came to this class. So that's really, really important to make sure that you use their words specifically within the cover letter.

Derek Dokter:

Now you say, "Well, I don't have time for that." As Julie said, you do have time for that. You have to make the time to do it. It's challenging, and by no stretch, it took me a long time to figure it out. Right. So I'm just trying to let you know that you can do it. Okay.

Derek Dokter:

The next one is research. Now before coming to this workshop, I heard just research the college and put it in your cover letter. Okay. How? What do you want me to do? So before, I would say, "I would welcome the opportunity to discuss and greater depth of my personal value, commitment, and most importantly, how I can contribute to your needs." What needs? Right? What needs? So it's just another general. You do not want to do general. The specific, as I said, "In closing, I wholeheartedly share the Riverside City's College mission statement," and then I quoted it. So what is that telling them? That's telling them you know what the mission statement is and you're aligning yourself with their mission statement.

Derek Dokter:

Make sure that whatever their mission, vision or core values, you really believe in, not just you just want a full time job, that you really believe in them and that you can put them in your cover letter to actually show how you believe in them and how you really are a part of their college. That's so key, right? So making sure that you use... I would research all those things. So if I say it again, I'd say I researched the mission statement, the vision statement, the core values. Sometimes they have institutional learning objectives, any of those things. Just look it up and you can check it out how you make it.

Derek Dokter:

And then cover letter. So before, I was just writing a letter generically. And it's supposed to tell the story of who you are and why you are the best candidate. Before, I would just kind of do a general, like I was telling you and then I would put, "Respectfully, Derek Dokter." Think about this. When you think about a cover letter, a letter that you write to someone, how many of us sign our letters that we sign to someone? All of us, right? Great. Well guess what I was doing? I was just sending off these cover letters without a signature. So it's a really important concept to sign your every cover letter.

Derek Dokter:

Now, what I learned through all of this is, I didn't know, but you can do an electronic signature. It takes 10 minutes and then you can do it every time and it's way easier than actually signing it, scanning it, copying it, putting it in your application. You have so many way of making error to do that. I would just do it like this. And it's funny is that after the fact of last year, several people told me that, "You know what really made a difference is that you actually signed the cover letter." Because a lot of people turn their cover letters in, they don't even sign it. So it's not personalized. So you really need to make sure that you do that. So having that story that you're talking about.

Derek Dokter:

Just a little personal reflection. The only reason I'm telling you this is because I just want you to be encouraged. That's my bottom line is I want you to be encouraged. So before I came here, like I said, last semester I was applying for jobs, not getting any interviews. So I want you to remember to be persistent. Spring of last year I taught seven or eight classes. I can't remember exactly. And what I would do is I was working full time and I'm like, I'm doing like a lot of hours. I get it. And then I applied for 32 positions in one semester. Now you're thinking, well that's a lot. Yeah, it is a lot because applications to be very thorough takes a lot of hours, but it's worth it. And to do the cover letter and go to the success center or have a mentor look at it that really believes in you, that should help you make a difference, like "I can do it. They believe in me."

Derek Dokter:

So I just want to let you know that this class really helped me out. I went to other classes and this was the best class by far. Not because I got a job at Mt. SAC, but it was the best one. I got 17 interviews and then five additional final interviews. I got other people that offered me jobs full time and I got to pick and I picked Mt. SAC. I love Mt. SAC. But I'm just telling you that this, not to be showy, I'm humbling myself, but just that I want you to come here and learn and take these notes so you can do it. It just gives me credibility to tell you that you can do it.

Derek Dokter:

And then I thought this was good. It says, "Strength and growth come only through actual continuous effort and struggle." And it is. It's a struggle, right? I was up until two o'clock, three o'clock in the morning applying for jobs. And it's a real struggle. But I want you to know that you can do it.

Derek Dokter:

So the last thing I want to talk about is the motivation for the right reasons. Before, you'll just apply for a lot of jobs. I have a couple of adjunct friends of mine. They just apply for all kinds of jobs. And so I asked them, "So why are you applying for that job?" "I want a full-time job." "Okay, but why?" "I just want a full-time job." Okay. You need to understand that when you apply for a full-time job, because they are very few, that you need to make sure that you, when you go for the job interview, if you get a job interview, which if you get a job interview, you need to be very thankful. That's a great sign that you're doing well. So be encouraged.

Derek Dokter:

But you're interviewing them as much as they're interviewing you. So you need to figure out in your mind, do I want to be at this school for the next 20 years? Do I want to be a part of this community? Do I want to make a difference on the students that are going into this community? Do I want to be that person going in and represent that? If you're applying for a job, let's say in Alaska and you never want to be there, you shouldn't be wasting your time. Save that time for the school that you really want to work for. Right? Save the time. Be efficient.

Derek Dokter:

So I talk about, last thing is be genuine. I have found that people go in... I remember when I first started, I'd go into these interviews and I would say what I thought they wanted me to say. They can see through that. They do this enough. So you need to be genuine in how you respond. What I do is I used to do, and this is kind of funny because I would stand in front of the mirror and you look like a fool, but that's okay. And then I would practice. And if that didn't do it, I practice it in front of my parents. Or then I practice in front of my wife or I practice in front of people. This is why I get the rhythm of it. And not just that. I've created a little cards of how to answer and respond. I wouldn't just go in there. You need to be strategic of how you answer because you might have one way to answer here and a different way to answer here, but you need to be genuine.

Derek Dokter:

And people told me, "Hey, when you interviewed at..." let's say Palomar or whatever, they said, "Hey, I could tell you are really authentic and that made the difference instead of just throwing out anything." So I want you to be encouraged to do it for the right reasons and be genuine.

Derek Dokter:

And so the last thing it says, "Never give up on yourself." I don't want any of you to give up. I'm honored to be here, but if you need any help with this, I know Julie's always available, but I'm at ddokter. I am definitely not a doctor, right? So I can't prescribe any medicine to you or anything like that. That's just my last name. And then there's my direct extension is 6390. I'm in the business management department. Like I said, by anything, I'm not perfect or have all the answers, but I would love to help you because I want you to get a full-time shop too. So thanks again for letting me be here today.

Julie Laverty:

Thank you.

Derek Dokter:

Thank you so much.

Christina:

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