Pathways to Los Rios

A resource for applicants providing insight into the Los Rios Community College District recruitment process, from completing the application to post-interview for Faculty & Administrative Positions
...About Our District

- A community college district governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees
- 2,400 square mile service area including Sacramento and El Dorado counties and parts of Yolo, Placer and Solano counties
- Enrolls nearly 90,000 students
- Employs over 3,500 regular employees
Vision, Values

Vision Statement
We, the Los Rios community colleges, provide outstanding programs and services so that all students meet and exceed their personal, educational, career and social goals. We meet the social and economic needs of the community.

Values
We value: students, community, academic excellence, diversity, relationships, and participatory governance. The District’s values provide the guidance and inspiration for implementing and maintaining programs to promote student success.
Our Colleges

- American River College
- Cosumnes River College
- Folsom Lake College
- Sacramento City College
Since 1993, Los Rios Community College District has trained employees in the Interest Based Approach (IBA) to problem-solving. The underlying premise of IBA is that relationships are often as or more important than the issues we may encounter within those relationships. Constant attention to effective communication that places a focus on the interests (values) of those with whom we are in relation is the key element of IBA.
Completing the Application

- Applications are available online at www.losrios.edu
- Use short, concise, to-the-point sentences
- Emphasize experiences that best reflect the job duties
- Begin sentences with action verbs when appropriate
- Neatness matters
- It is important to complete each section of the online application – do not leave blank and write “see resume”
- Minimum qualifications are included on each job announcement – all applicants must meet those minimum qualifications
Let’s Start with the Application....

- Why is the application so important?

This is your chance to show you are qualified for the position, and your shot to get an interview!
Our Top Application Tips

- Read the instructions carefully. Employers notice when you do not follow instructions, and this can reflect on your abilities.
- Do not lie. You can risk your opportunity to ever work with that employer, at the minimum.
- Read the duties of the position carefully, and communicate your skills that lend to this position.
- Check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Compose your answers first in a word processing program so that you can take advantage of the spelling and grammar correction functions. Ask someone else to read your application. We can almost guarantee they will spot things you haven’t.
Our Top Application Tips - continued

• Answer every question on the job application form. If no answer is needed, write “N/A”. Again, it shows you have taken your time, read every question and checked the application form. We often see applications with important information missing that was needed to screen for minimum qualifications.

• A word on references – employers are preferred, but you can also use teachers, coaches, counselors, or people you have done volunteer work with (no relatives, please). And always get permission from your reference first.
Our Top Application Tips: Answering the Equal Opportunity Question...

- One of the questions you are required to answer with Los Rios CCD is:

  - “As an equal opportunity employer with a diverse staff and student population, the Los Rios Community College District is committed to creating an inclusive and effective teaching and working environment for all. What contributions are you most proud of that exemplify your awareness and sensitivity towards promoting an inclusionary environment? What have you learned working with diverse populations?”

- This is an important value to our district, and careful consideration should be given to this question. The next slide includes sample responses to this question which are reflective of our culture.
“I have a long work history of demonstrating how I have promoted a positive inclusionary environment, including my current position as a director at a non-profit children’s health services agency. The attributes that I have demonstrated towards being sensitive and promoting an inclusionary environment in the agency I work for is reflected in the success of the agency having a positive work environment for all that work there, and in meeting the needs of an un-served and under-served population that the agency serve. I have learned working with a diverse population that it is important personally and professionally to be sensitive, aware, and to promote diversity. My commitment in promoting diversity is essential in my understanding of others along with how I effectively communicate with others and how I effectively deal with others.”
“I have worked with diverse populations both as a Manager for a fast food restaurant and as an Administrative Assistant for a college that prides itself on having a diverse population of students. An example of promoting an inclusionary environment would be building a staff at the fast food restaurant that worked hard to understand each other as well as the customers, and open the lines of communication and cooperation among a diverse population. I also have a bachelors degree in Sociology, which has helped me to learn that there are many backgrounds and experiences that contribute to the personalities and perspectives of people. By being open to these unique perspectives I have learned to communicate better with a variety of people."
“Coming from an immigrant family I have learned to be tolerant of others and respect the view of all people regardless of race, gender, disability, etc. I have learned that working with a group of diverse individuals is very helpful for the group and the individual. People with different backgrounds bring different ideas that can be very beneficial to the company where they are employed. You also learn new things everyday from different people, which is one of the many reasons why I like to work in a diverse environment.”
Completing the Application

- Include a letter of interest (or cover letter) – use this letter as an instrument to introduce yourself to the screening / interview committee
- Unofficial copies of transcripts are required of all faculty applicants – graduate advising documents and grade reports will not be accepted in lieu of transcripts
- Some positions may have supplemental questions in addition to the application – applications received without responses to those questions will be considered incomplete
- Reference checks will be made on all finalists – be certain to include references on your application
Our Top Application Tips...One More Word

Explaining Separations - Negative phrases like “I quit,” “I was fired,” and “I was terminated” can be regarded as red flags. You always want to be truthful, but positive – and avoid saying anything negative about a past employer. Below are some more positive ways to explain separations:

- Job ended
- Career advancement
- Return to school
- Relocated to an area with greater economic potential
- Career change
- Will discuss in interview
- Involuntary separation
- Downsized
- Seasonal/temporary employment
- Company closed
- Left for advancement potential
While You’re Waiting

- After a position closes, Human Resources screens all applications for:
  - Minimum Qualifications: Ensures all applicants meet the minimum qualifications listed on the job announcement
  - Convictions (P-881 form): Submitted information relative to an applicant’s conviction is reviewed to determine the applicant’s eligibility to continue (felonies and sex / drug offenses are problematic)
- Applicants not meeting minimum qualifications and/or applicants unable to continue because of convictions are notified immediately via email (make sure to keep your email information current on your application).
Important Tip

Be honest on your application. Offers of employment are withdrawn every year because of an applicant’s dishonesty.
College appoints interview committee members

Interview committee develops screening criteria that generally includes:
- Recency of training/experience
- Relevant coursework
- Teaching experience
- Experience with diverse communities
- Professional recognition/continued professional growth
- Community involvement
- Subject matter expertise

Committee members independently screen and rank each application

Committee members tabulate results and the top candidates are invited for an interview
So . . . You Got An Interview!

- Do you have all relevant information
  - Date
  - Time
  - Location
  - Directions
  - Contact name/number
  - Time to review interview questions
  - Oral presentation topic and duration
  - What, if any, technology will be available
  - Writing sample duration
  - Campus tour availability
Do Your Homework...

- What do you know about the district
- What do you know about the college
- What do you know about the students
- What do you know about the community
Homework: The District

- www.losrios.edu
- District’s vision/mission/values
- Programs of study
- Course catalogs
- Class schedules
- Annual Report
Homework: The College

- www.losrios.edu
- College’s vision/mission/values
- Programs of study
- Course catalog
- Class schedule
- Student service programs – LRC, DSPS, EOPS, MESA
- Local high schools
- Visit the campus
Homework: The Students

- www.losrios.edu
- Student demographics
- Educational goals
- Student organizations
- Student newspaper
Interview Process

- **Question Review**: Candidates will generally be given a designated time to review the interview questions
- **Oral Interview**: A panel interview in which the same standardized questions are asked of each candidate
- **Oral Presentation**: Part of the oral interview in which each candidate presents a topic to the interview committee – generally 10-15 minutes
- **Writing Sample**: A timed, written response to a standard topic provided to all candidates
- **College Tour**: An escorted tour of the college campus (may occur)
Interview panels are often composed of a large group of people asking the same standardized questions of each candidate. While possibly appearing impersonal, this practice is designed to assure equal treatment of each interviewee.
Interview Questions

The four basic questions every candidate should be prepared for:

- **Opening**: Tell us about yourself. What makes you uniquely qualified for this position? What are your qualifications for this position?
- **Presentation**: Topic will be provided in advance.
- **Diversity**: What experiences have you had with working in an ethnically diverse environment?
- **Closing**: Is there anything else about yourself you would like to share with the committee?
Oral interview questions tend to fall into four broad categories:

- **Educational and Career Background:** Determining how the candidate’s background is consistent with the job description. Looking to fulfill specific curriculum and collegial needs.
- **Discipline Specific/Educational Philosophy:** Ascertaining the candidate’s discipline knowledge and addressing broader philosophical education issues.
- **Teaching/Classroom Issues:** Evaluating the candidate’s communication/teaching skills and effectiveness with managing the classroom and difficult situations/students.
- **Diversity:** Determining the candidate’s ability to work productively with a diverse faculty, staff and student population.
Interview Tips

- Allow plenty of time to arrive at the interview
- Make notes during question review and use them during your interview
- Greet the committee members as they are introduced
- Organize your thoughts before answering a question – be specific and don’t ramble
- Ask for clarification of a question you don’t understand
- Use good body language and maintain eye contact
- Presume the committee members know nothing about you
A demonstration of the candidate’s professional skills – teaching, counseling, presenting, etc.

Provides interview committee with insight on pedagogy, communication skills, and probably future performance

Topic provided in advance

Usually 10-15 minutes long

Ask what type of equipment will be available – chalkboard, overhead, projector, etc.)

Present to the intended audience

Don’t feel obligated to cover the entire topic in the time allowed

Face and engage your audience, make eye contract, present your best teaching skills
Oral Presentation

Tip

If using technology, always be prepared with a back-up plan should the technology fail.
Writing Sample

- A demonstration of the candidate’s writing skills
- Topic is not provided in advance
- Computer made available
- Usually 20-30 minutes long
- Organize your thoughts and write clearly
- Present a logical order to your composition
- Don’t make it overly long
- Use spell check and proofread
Practice writing by picking a topic from the newspaper. Time yourself and draft an outline, type your response and proofread.
Closing The Interview

- The last opportunity to make a good impression
- Provide the interview committee with a glimpse of your personality
End the interview with a statement about your interest in the position and your commitment to making a positive contribution to the department and institution.
Committee members independently and confidentially rank candidates in order of preference before any discussion.

The committee chair and equity representative score the rankings to determine the composite top three to five candidates.

Strengths and weaknesses of each finalist are discussed with the appropriate administrator and forwarded to the College President.

Second interviews with the College President, Vice President and/or Area Dean are arranged.

References are checked.

College President determines successful candidate.
Adjunct Faculty Positions

- Submit a completed application packet for each discipline you are qualified to teach
- As positions become available, Area Dean/faculty representative will review pool of applications on file
- Interviews are scheduled by the individual department, so it is important to keep your contact information up to date
- Your application will remain active in the pool unless you decide to withdraw – you will be reminded annually to update the information on your application to keep you current and competitive
**Needing More Experience?**

- **Faculty Diversity Internship Program**
  - Designed for individuals who are interested in community college teaching, who have completed or are close to completing their Master’s degree, and who have no teaching experience.
  - Participants attend six training sessions at CSUS during the fall semester and work with an LRCCD instructor during the spring semester.
  - Applications generally due mid-September.
  - Learn more at [www.losrios.edu](http://www.losrios.edu) (click on Job Openings and go to “Other Resources”)
Needing More Experience?

- **CSUS Continuing Education – Community College Faculty Preparation Certificate Program**
  - Provides coursework and classroom experience to prepare current and future community college instructors
Thank you!