

CONFIDENTIAL LETTER PROCEDURE for Tenure and Promotion Actions

Confidential letters by external referees are expected of faculty applying for promotion to the rank of professor and of those applying for tenure in the units where the criteria require evidence of recognition outside the immediate academic community (i.e., LAS, EDU, TCB, and PHM). In the other units (i.e., CPS, LIB), letters are highly recommended.

- a) **Procedure:** The Personnel and Budget Committee will generate, in consultation with the applicant, a sufficient list of names to generate three to six letters, recognizing the possibility that not all referees will agree to submit a letter by the deadline. The applicant will select an appropriate sampling of his or her professional effort and will supply sufficient copies for distribution to these external referees, in addition to those required for the Personnel Action Form. The list and materials will be given to the Dean, in the semester prior to the review, who will solicit the letters, indicating to the referees the nature of the action. The evaluations will be sent directly to the Dean and will be considered to be the confidential property of the evaluating committees. Confidential letters will be shown only to members of the three personnel committees. After the Board of Trustees has considered the action, said letters will be destroyed.
- b) **Guidelines:** Applicants should appreciate that the value of the letters from external referees varies considerably. Letters from senior academicians of undisputed distinction are most valuable. Thus, when committee members see a laudatory letter from a full or distinguished professor, a chairperson of a department, a dean, an editor of a leading journal, a judge or convener of a major art show or an equivalent distinguished professional, they are likely to conclude that the recommender has sufficient experience and peer-recognized judgment to offer an opinion based on nationally—or internationally—recognized standards. A letter based on friendship or interest in the outcome is likely, without evidence to the contrary, to be considered less valuable. The letter must address the issues that concern the committee, essentially the scholarly, artistic or professional reputation of the candidate (as is appropriate based on the statutory regulations and the rank sought) in his or her field.
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TIMELINE

- On or before May 30: Chairperson will provide Dean with list of potential referees.
- The Dean will contact the referees to inquire if they are willing/able to provide a letter, if so the Dean will send the material to the referee. If there are fewer than three referees available, the dean will notify the Candidate that he or she will need to supply more names in consultation with the P&B.
- The confidential letters must be received by the Dean's office BEFORE the candidate's PAF is reviewed by the first committee.