

SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER

<date>

<name>

<title>

<department>

<institution>

<street>

<city, state, zip>

Dear Professor <Name>:

We are currently considering <candidate> for promotion to <action>. Faculty at the University of Michigan are promoted on the basis of research, scholarly, and creative contributions; teaching ability; and service. Recognition of the quality of their work by their peers is a significant factor in the review process. We value your candid assessment of <candidate's> research accomplishments and future promise, including both positive points and areas needing improvement. Your scholarly and professional judgments will play an important part in our evaluation of <candidate> for promotion.

REMINDER

(When applicable, please add the following: <candidate> has received an extension of <his/her> tenure clock by virtue of university policy. This policy states that the criteria for promotion and tenure are no different than the criteria for faculty who do not have an extension to the tenure clock. We therefore request that this extension not be a factor in your letter of evaluation.)

Based on the enclosed materials and any other knowledge you have of <his/her> work or professional accomplishments, we would like your candid evaluation of <candidate's> written and scholarly contributions in relation to others of comparable experience in <his/her> field. In particular, we would appreciate your comments on the following issues:

1. **How do you know <candidate>? (in what capacity and for how long?)**
2. What are your impressions about the quality, quantity, focus and scholarly impact of the writings?
3. Which, if any, of the publications do you consider to be outstanding?
4. How would you estimate <candidate's> standing in relation to others in <his/her> peer group who are working in the same field?
5. How would you evaluate <candidate's> service contributions to the discipline; that is <his/her> work on professional committees, as a reviewer of proposals or papers, as an editor, or similar activities?
6. Might <his/her> work meet the requirements for someone being considered for promotion at your institution?

[The following paragraph (word-for-word) should be included in ALL letters soliciting an evaluation of the candidate.]

Questions sometimes arise about the confidentiality of external review letters, and we do want to advise you that your letter will be reviewed by senior faculty at the University of Michigan. We do not, as a general practice, provide candidates with access to their promotion files without a specific written request. In that event, we would protect your confidentiality by intermingling and reordering the paragraphs from the entire set of external letters after first removing all names, institutional affiliations and other identifying information from them. Legal considerations have diminished our ability to assure even this degree of confidentiality in the event of an investigation of alleged discrimination by a federal or state agency or a lawsuit by an unsuccessful candidate. Under such circumstances, a candidate is likely to be able to obtain access to his/her own promotion files, as well as the files of other candidates, successful or unsuccessful. We can assure you that we will not release your letter unless required to do so by law or court order.

We request that you return your review to us by <date>. We would also appreciate it if you would provide us with a short biosketch, including a brief description of your areas of expertise and current research interests.

We realize that your schedule is full and that this may be a time-consuming task; however, we will be most grateful for your assistance. **We have selected you because of your expertise in this area. Should you fail to respond, this will be so noted in the promotion record. If you need further information,** please contact <contact name> at <phone/fax>.

REMINDER

Sincerely,

<Name>

<Title>

Enclosures