Sample Letter to External Evaluator for Named Professorship/Chair

[Date]

Dear [Evaluator’s Name]:

We are considering candidates for a named faculty appointment as the [name of chair or professorship], and Professor [name of candidate] has been suggested as a possible candidate. Such appointments recognize faculty for excellence in scholarship, teaching, intellectual leadership, and service to their research community and the university. The holders of professorships and chairs in our department are all nationally and internationally recognized scholars in their fields.

Assessments from leaders in a candidate’s area of expertise are an important part of the evaluative process for these named faculty appointments and we would be very grateful if you would provide us with your analysis of the significance of Professor [name]’s work within the canon and [their] suitability for such an appointment. I appreciate the time and effort that you will spend in preparing this assessment, and I want to thank you in advance for your candid evaluation of Dr. XX’s expertise.

Please provide us with your analysis of the significance of Professor XX’s work, and describe the basis for your knowledge of the candidate and [his/her] work.

Specific points of interest are:

1. [Their] past and current research activities and the significance of these accomplishments;
2. The extent to which [they] has attained national and/or international stature in their field;
3. [Their] standing in relation to specific individuals at a similar career stage who you consider to be leaders in [their] field;
4. [Their] reputation in and contributions to teaching and public service; and
5. Other factors that you believe to be of importance to us in making our decision.

In all items, comments that are specific will be most helpful. The provost of our campus requests that you provide, in addition to your own comments about this case, the names of two or three other authorities who might be consulted about it.

To assist you in making your assessment of the professional contributions and future promise of Dr. XX, I am enclosing [their] [list materials included, such as CV, research/publications, etc.].

Because your assessment will provide essential input at an early stage of our review, we would very much appreciate receiving your written comments at your earliest convenience, and at least by [date - four weeks is standard]. If you will be unable to complete your evaluation by this date, please let me know immediately.

The policy of the University of Illinois is to hold in confidence all letters of evaluation from persons outside the institution. Only the committees and administrative officers directly responsible for the decision of concern here will have access to your letter. It will not be provided to the person on whom you comment unless we are required specifically and legally to do so.

Once again, I thank you in advance for your help and contribution in this important process.

Sincerely,

[Department Head Name]

Enclosures