Sample Letter to External Evaluator with Modifications due to COVID, Assistant to Associate Professor

[date]

Dear [evaluator’s name],

We are considering [faculty member’s name] for possible promotion to the rank of Associate Professor on indefinite tenure in the [department name]. Letters of evaluation from at least five scholars or professional specialists outside the university are required for each nominee. Therefore, it would be most helpful to have your independent evaluation of:

* the candidate’s current research activities and the significance of these accomplishments to date; please consider the totality of the contribution to the field with attention to all forms of scholarly production, if relevant;
* the candidate’s promise of becoming a leading scholar;
* if you are able to do so and believe it would provide a fuller sense of the candidate’s contributions, please comment on the candidate’s diversity, equity, and inclusion activities;
* the candidate’s teaching and service contributions, if you feel you can provide such an evaluation;
* factors you think may be of importance to us in evaluating the candidate’s capabilities, accomplishments, and potential reputation.

COVID-19 continues to create challenges for our campus and our community. The University of Illinois is deeply committed to the welfare and well-being of our faculty members and acknowledges the differential and negative impacts COVID-19 has had on career development. Thus, in your evaluation we ask that you assess the candidate’s activities and accomplishments within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, our institution permits one or more extensions (i.e., tenure clock “rollbacks”) during the pre-tenure probationary period. Our policy states that the criteria for promotion and tenure at Illinois are the same for all faculty regardless of length of service during the probationary period.

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 that might be consulted about the candidate’s accomplishments.

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.

Upon accepting this request to review [Faculty member’s name] dossier, you will be able to access their curriculum vita, research statement, and samples of their work [add to the list all attachments for review, as needed] via the online system.

Finally, because your evaluation will provide essential input in our review and because the entire review process is a lengthy one, I would appreciate receiving your comments at your earliest convenience and by [date]. If you will be unable to complete your evaluation by this date, please let me know immediately. Please submit your evaluation through the Interfolio [online] system link you received with this request letter.

Thank you for your contribution to this important process.

Sincerely,

[department head name]

Enclosures