Sample Letter to Collaborator Evaluator

[promotion from assistant to associate OR promotion from associate to full]

[date]

Dear [evaluator’s name],

We are considering [faculty member’s name] for possible promotion to the rank of [Associate Professor with indefinite tenure OR Full Professor] in the [department name]. When a substantial proportion of a candidate’s research involves collaborative efforts and the candidate is not the leader of the research (e.g., the PI or first, last, or corresponding author on publications), it can be challenging to understand their distinctive contribution to the research. Thus, as part of the promotion process, we request a letter from someone in the group or team who can speak to the faculty’s contribution. **As [the team leader] of some of the research on which [faculty member’s name] has worked, we are hoping you can provide insight into their distinctive contribution.**

Faculty can make a distinctive contribution in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to: (1) research conception (e.g., ideas behind the research, formulation of major questions, hypotheses, theories); (2) methodology (e.g., development of design or process); (3) execution through experimentation, design, computation, or analysis (e.g., programming, software or instrument development, archival work, data collection); (4) writing and generating drafts (e.g., writing the initial draft or substantially contributing to later drafts); (5) project coordination (e.g., management of research activities leading to grant or publication). **We would be grateful if you would discuss the distinctive contribution of the candidate along any or several of these dimensions, as well as others you see as relevant.**

Although we are not asking you to evaluate [faculty member’s name] research program, 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 in the case that you would like information on the broader context of their work.

The policy of the University of Illinois is to hold in confidence the letters commenting on the candidate’s contribution to collaborative research, regardless of whether they are from faculty at the University of Illinois or another institution. Only the committees and administrative officers directly responsible for the decision of concern 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.

Given that your evaluation will provide essential input for our review and the entire review process is a lengthy one, we would appreciate receiving your comments at your earliest convenience and no later than [date]. If you will be unable to complete your letter 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]