8. Templates for Solicitation Letters for Reviewers

8.1 For promotion or appointment as associate professor or full professor, whether or not involving the grant of tenure. (If the reviewer is a collaborator, please use the collaborator letter template instead.)

Dear [reviewer's title name]:

I am requesting your assistance on behalf of the [Department/School] in a frank evaluation of the scholarship [or artistic work] of [candidate name], who is being considered for [appointment/promotion] to the rank of [ ] professor [with/without tenure] [**Or** he/she/they already holds tenure.]. I have enclosed a curriculum vitae, personal statement, and sample of publications [or other scholarly or creative product].

Would you please let me know as soon as possible if you will be able to provide a review by [date] at [contact information]? (If you would like copies of [her/his/their] additional publications beyond the sample we have enclosed, please let me know.)

We are seeking your assessment as to whether [candidate name]'s scholarship [or artistic work] has demonstrated excellence and creativity, made important and original contributions, had an impact on the field, shows a clear arc of intellectual and creative development, and is widely perceived as outstanding. Every promotion [and grant of tenure] is expected to meet the national and international standards of the leading institutions as well as improve the overall stature of the [department/school]. [For those engaged in digital scholarship, if appropriate: Please include an analysis of the intellectual and creative contributions of [his/her/their] digital scholarship in particular. Has it had a significant impact on the field? Please give concrete examples of such impact.]

Please understand that we seek your evaluation at an early stage in our process and that we have not yet made a decision. We seek your frank and candid assessment. We are requesting an analytical evaluation, rather than general praise or advocacy. We very much appreciate the time and effort involved in providing a review. [**If appropriate:** In evaluating [candidate name]'s productivity, please take into account that [his/her/their] tenure clock was extended by [number] years, but research productivity was not expected to increase commensurately.] [**If appropriate:** In recognition of your effort, we would like to acknowledge your assistance with an honorarium of $____.] If you are able to provide a letter of evaluation, please include a short biographical sketch about yourself, and describe any professional and personal relations you have had with the candidate.

We also request that you identify the leading departments of [candidate name]'s field, and give us your candid judgment on whether [candidate name]'s scholarly [or artistic] work would meet the standards for promotion [and tenure] in those schools (assuming an opening existed and that teaching and service was acceptable). Our reviewers would find your answer especially valuable if the candidate is compared to some individuals at a comparable career stage.

Your letter will be treated as a confidential document to the full extent allowed by law. [**If applicable:** It will not be read by any member of our faculty who is [a collaborating author][a co-investigator] with the candidate.] It will be studied closely by tenured faculty in

the department and university promotion committees and officials, and it is intended to be read by no one else.

Thank you for considering this request and for your efforts to help the university make an informed decision in this important matter.

8.2 For promotion or appointment as a Clinical Scholar at the associate or full professor level.

Dear [reviewer's title and name]:

I am requesting your assistance on behalf of the [Department/School] of [ ] in a frank evaluation of the work of [candidate's name], who is being considered for [appointment/promotion] to the rank of [ ] with the designation of Clinical Scholar. If you are able to provide a letter of evaluation, please include a short biographical sketch about yourself, and describe any professional and personal relations you have had with the candidate.

The Clinical Scholar designation, which is not a tenure-track or tenured position, is a high honor awarded by the President of the University. The designation requires a review process as rigorous as the process used for tenure decisions, though with different criteria which are indicated by the questions we ask below.

Please let me know as soon as possible whether or not you are able to assist us by reviewing the enclosed materials and submitting a letter of evaluation by [date] at [contact information]. [***If appropriate:*** In recognition of your effort, we would like to acknowledge your assistance with an honorarium of $____.]]

I have enclosed a curriculum vitae, personal statement, our definition of "Clinical Scholar," and a sample of publications. We are requesting an analytical evaluation, rather than general praise or advocacy.

Please also know that we seek your evaluation at an early stage in our process and that we have not yet made a decision. We seek your frank and candid assessment of whether [candidate's name] is recognized at the national or international level for leadership in important translational or clinical research?

Examples of the information we seek, as appropriate to this case:, Has [he/she/they] provided substantial intellectual input and leadership to large collaborative research efforts or clinical trials? Has the candidate been a member of NIH study sections or advisory boards?) Are [candidate's name]'s scholarly peer-reviewed publications of appropriate quality and quantity for the proposed rank, and have they had an impact on the field? Has [candidate's name]'s clinical or translational research or have his/her/their] clinical trials been recognized by significant funding support from appropriate sources over a period of years (e.g., pilot studies or large multicenter studies funded through peer-reviewed federal or non-federal sources)? Has [his/her/their] research funded by contract with companies resulted in significant publications in peer-reviewed journals? Has [candidate's name] demonstrated leadership at the national or international level in improvement of clinical care (e.g., has [he/she/they] established residencies or fellowships for advanced practice, or has [he/she/they] been a member of consensus panels, task forces, or the U.S. Public Health

Service to establish and publish guidelines for patient care management, diagnostic criteria for new diseases, standards for clinical testing, etc.?

[***If the reviewer is a collaborator, the following item should be added:***
As you have collaborated with [candidate's name], please help us to understand [his/her/their] particular contribution(s) to the collaborative work.]

Based on your knowledge of [candidate's name]'s work and accomplishments, can you give examples of institutions (you may include your own) where [he/she/they] would be judged to have met the criteria for the award of the most similar type of appointment or promotion? What aspect of [candidate's name]'s work leads you to this conclusion?

Your letter will be treated as a confidential document to the full extent allowed by law. It will be studied closely by school and University promotion committees and officials, and it is intended to be read by no one else. Please help us reach an informed decision about whether USC should offer [candidate's name] this [appointment/promotion].

Revised 2022

8.3 For use when the reviewer is a collaborator.

Dear [reviewer's title and name]:

I am requesting your assistance on behalf of the [Department/School] in a frank evaluation of the work of [candidate's name], who is being considered for [appointment/promotion] to the rank of [ ] [with/without tenure]. Please let me know as soon as possible by e-mail whether you are able to assist us by reviewing the enclosed materials and submitting a letter of evaluation by [ ]. [***if appropriate:*** Because we appreciate the effort such an evaluation takes, we will acknowledge your assistance with an honorarium of $____.]

I have enclosed a curriculum vitae and personal statement. I am soliciting your input particularly because you are a collaborator with [candidate's name], and USC's promotion and appointment committees would like to understand [candidate's name]'s contributions to your joint work. Please describe the circumstances in which you know the candidate and came to work together, as well as any other professional or personal relationships you have had.

Please help us to understand [candidate's name]'s contributions to collaborative work, in particular what contributions can be attributed to the candidate, and what leadership did the candidate provide to the work? Also, if any future collaborations are planned, please inform us of what those projects will be and how [he/she/they] will contribute to them.

Finally, at times outside evaluators have direct knowledge about other aspects of a candidate's academic role—including teaching, professional service, public service. If you have this direct knowledge, please add your evaluations of [candidate's name]'s accomplishments in these areas.

We value your frank and detailed judgments highly. We are requesting an analytical evaluation, rather than general praise or advocacy. Please understand that we seek your evaluation at an early stage in our process, and that we have not yet formed a judgment.

Your letter will be treated as a confidential document to the full extent allowed by law. It will be studied closely by school and USC promotion committees and officials, and it is intended to be read by no one else. We are grateful for your effort to help us reach an informed decision about whether USC should [offer [candidate's name] a lifetime appointment] [offer [candidate's name] this appointment] [grant [candidate's name] this promotion].

Revised 2022