Template for Letter Soliciting Outside Review of a Tenure Candidate

(Date)

(Address)

Dear __________:

Professor _______ of our faculty is currently being considered for promotion to Associate Professor, with tenure. As part of the review process, we solicit the opinions of recognized scholars outside Vanderbilt regarding the research accomplishments and scholarly potential of candidates for tenure. Thank you for your willingness to help us with this important task.

Our standards for tenure are summarized in the Faculty Manual of Vanderbilt University: “For the award of tenure, Vanderbilt requires (1) excellence in research, scholarship, or creative expression in one’s discipline; (2) a high level of effectiveness in teaching; and (3) satisfactory performance in the area of service.”

We would be grateful for your comments on the quality, quantity, and impact of Professor _______’s scholarship. It would be particularly helpful to us if you could address the following specific concerns in the course of your discussion:

1. Please describe your relationship to Professor ________. Do you know Professor ______ well? In what context?
2. Which of Professor _______’s works have you read?
3. How has Professor _______’s work contributed to the advancement of the field?
4. To what extent does Professor _______’s scholarship show signs of independence from graduate school mentors?
5. How would you rank Professor _______ in relation to other scholars in the field at a similar career stage?
6. How do you rate Professor _______’s promise for future scholarship?
7. Considering only the scholarship dimension of the tenure decision, does Professor _______ satisfy the scholarship standard for tenure typically applied at leading research universities?
8. Considering only the scholarship dimension of the tenure decision, would Professor _______ qualify for tenure at your university?

To assist you in this evaluation, I have enclosed Professor _______’s personal statement, CV, and principal scholarship products.

Under current policies and practices at Vanderbilt University, peer evaluations are (within limitations imposed by law) regarded as confidential. They are for limited use within the University. However, various government agencies may have a legal right to such evaluations,
and it is possible that in the future federal or state law may afford the person being evaluated access to the evaluations.

As usual, this review is subject to University schedules. Accordingly, we would be grateful if you would be able to provide your evaluation by _______________. With your review, please enclose a copy of your curriculum vitae. Please send your letter and CV to me at the address below.

We understand that serving as a referee is time consuming, and we are grateful to you for your generosity in helping us with this important matter.

Sincerely,

Chair of Department
(Complete Mailing Address)