Template for Letter Soliciting Outside Review of a Promotion Candidate

(Date)

(Address)

Dear ___________:

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

Our standards for promotion to Professor are summarized in the Faculty Manual of Vanderbilt University: “Vanderbilt expects the level and quality of achievement in (1) research, scholarship, or creative expression; (2) teaching; and (3) service to be equivalent to that required of Professors in leading departments and schools of other major research universities. The candidate must have attained national or international recognition among leading scholars in his or her discipline for sustained and excellent research, must have taught the courses requested by the department or school at a consistently high level of effectiveness, and must have demonstrated a well-developed and recognized record of service both to the University and his or her discipline.”

We would be grateful for your comments on the quality, quantity, and impact of Professor _______'s scholarly research. 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 Dr. ________. Do you know Dr. ________ well? In what context?
2. Which of Dr. ________’s works have you read?
3. How has Dr. ________’s work contributed to the advancement of the field?
4. How would you rank Dr. ________ in relation to other scholars in the field at a similar career stage?
5. How would you rate Dr. ________’s promise for future scholarship?
6. Considering only the research dimension of the promotion decision, does Dr. ________ satisfy the research standard for promotion to Professor typically applied at leading research universities?

To assist you in this evaluation, I have enclosed Dr. ________’s personal statement, curriculum vitae, and principal research papers.

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)