

Suggestions for Letter from Chair

Overall Goals

- Provide recommendation to Dean (and above)
- Tell a story that supports the recommendation (for tenure, MSU is deciding on lifetime job security; why is such an investment warranted?)

Do

- Provide a balanced perspective on performance and potential
- Highlight relevant positive material from external letters where appropriate
- Explain anything questionable/complicated, including concerns raised in external letters

Don't

- List material from Form D or CV
- Draft a sales pitch for a desired outcome

General Outline

Recommendation

- To reappoint/promote/tenure or not
- Outcome of vote

Background

- Brief history (PhD year and institution, postdoctoral work if done, semester joining MSU and in what capacity)
- Set context: Departmental norms/expectations/priorities (for career stage, touch on teaching load, grant activity, service)
- Expectations for discipline (indicate that department expectations are in line with them)

Research and Scholarship

- Area of work and its general importance/impact (calibrate as appropriate with analytics – H-index, citation counts, etc.)
- Progress in setting up lab/research program (for reappointment and tenure)
- Funding (successes, attempts if no successes yet)
- Publication-related performance
- National/international reputation (for promotion to associate and full, at least)
 - o Awards
 - o Visibility (invitations to speak, write chapters, etc.)

Teaching and Mentoring

- Types of courses taught in general (undergrad, grad, large lecture, small discussion, lab, etc.)
- Quality of teaching
- Undergraduates, graduate students, postdocs mentored outside of classroom (on research, internships, career development)
- Junior faculty mentoring (for promotion to full)

Service

- Within discipline
- At MSU
- In community
- Government

- Highlight leadership (for promotion to full)

Summary

- Highlight key points in a few sentences (did all external referees make the same recommendation?)
- Reiterate your recommendation