

SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER FOR OUTSIDE REFEREES (research professor) *(This letter may be tailored to the circumstances of the individual departments and college/schools. Referees, however, must be informed that we cannot ensure the confidentiality of outside letters of reference under Texas law.)*

Dear :

The Department of _____ is considering Shannon Smith for advancement in rank to the position of Research Associate Professor. At The University of Texas at Austin, Research Associate Professor is a non-tenure track faculty title used for appointment of individuals whose principal contributions are to the research program, with the additional expectation that they will also participate in academic activities in appropriate ways. We would appreciate your candid assessment of Professor Smith's research and scholarly contributions to assist our decision-making process. Although research faculty may teach in addition to conducting research, evaluation of this and other aspects of academic service is carried out separately, and we are asking you only for information about his scholarly distinction and professional standing. A copy of the candidate's curriculum vitae is enclosed.

Under separate cover, we are sending you a package of Professor Smith's recent publications. We would like your assessment of these works and your answers to these specific questions:

1. Do you know Professor Smith, and if so, for how long and under what circumstances?
2. How would you assess the contribution to your discipline made by Professor Smith? Which publications would you judge to be the most significant, and why?
3. How would you assess Professor Smith's development as researcher/scholar compared with others in your field who are at a similar state of development.

We would be grateful for any additional comments you might have.

Under the laws of the State of Texas, Professor Smith has the right to request to see any materials in his personnel file, including your letter. Members of our faculty and internal review committees who see your letter as part of the promotion process will hold the comments you make in confidence, however.

For your comments to receive full consideration, we will need to have a letter from you no later than September 1, 2006. A facsimile by that date is acceptable if followed by an original letter with your signature within a few days. Please enclose a copy of a short version of your curriculum vitae or résumé (preferably no longer than one page) or the URL for your Web site where we may obtain this information. If you have questions, please call me at the number given on the letterhead.

We thank you for your time and assistance with this important matter. As faculty members, we realize that the amount of time required to do a thoughtful review is considerable.

Very truly yours,

Bailiang Hsu
Professor and Chair

Enclosure