Tenure Review template letter – June 19, 2023

Letter to Referees Requesting Written Assessment

I am writing to request your written assessment of the scholarly and professional accomplishments of Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is being considered for tenure at the University of Toronto. Your assessment will form part of the dossier upon which a decision will be made to grant or deny them tenure. The identities of referees are held in strict confidence.

The Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments at the University of Toronto asks referees to comment solely on the achievements of Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ against the criteria as set out in the Policy. A copy of the Policy is enclosed. I draw your attention, in particular, to the criteria in section 13:

“Clear promise of future intellectual and professional development must be affirmed for tenure to be awarded. Demonstrated excellence in one of research (including equivalent creative or professional work) and teaching, and clearly established competence in the other, form the second essential requirement for a positive judgment by the Tenure Committee....

1. “Achievement in research or creative professional work is evidenced primarily, but not exclusively, by published work in the candidate's discipline; in this context, published work may include books, monographs, articles and reviews and, where appropriate, significant works of art or scholarly research expressed in media other than print. It may also be evidenced by various other types of creative or professional work, including community service, where such work is comparable in level and intellectual calibre with scholarly production and relates directly to the candidate's academic discipline. Research also encompasses unpublished writings and work in progress. Scholarly achievement may be demonstrated by consideration of theses or other material prepared or written under the candidate's direct supervision. In some exceptional cases, weight should be given to "unwritten scholarship" of the type displayed in public lectures, formal colloquia and informal academic discussions with colleagues.”

[…]

1. “An assessment of promise of future intellectual and professional development will inevitably be based on the vitality and progress the candidate has demonstrated as a teacher and scholar during his or her probationary years at this University. A positive judgment on this criterion means that the members of the tenure committee are reasonably convinced that, following the granting of tenure and the long-term commitment that it implies, the candidate will continue to make a valuable contribution to his or her discipline.”

The University of Toronto asks you not for a recommendation for or against tenure, but rather for your judgment as to whether Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s scholarly and professional work demonstrates the achievement of excellence in research (including equivalent creative or professional work); or if not, whether or not it clearly establishes competence. In addition, please comment explicitly on whether you feel the candidate demonstrates future promise as outlined above. Specific appraisal of significant items, in addition to a judgment of the quality of the body of work in relation to the discipline’s norms, would greatly assist the committee. Normally external referees are not expected to comment upon teaching effectiveness.

I enclose a copy of Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s curriculum vitae, and copies of the relevant work to assist you in your assessment. Should you require additional information I would be happy to supply it.

Thank you for undertaking this important duty for our discipline and for the University of Toronto. I would appreciate receiving your assessment within \_\_\_\_ weeks.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chair

Encl.

Note to Chairs:

1. You must enclose the section III of the Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments, “Criteria for Granting Tenured Appointments.”
2. You must ensure that the referee has available to them copies of all scholarly and professional work submitted by the candidate for external appraisal. Your letter should either include copies or acknowledge that you have ascertained that the referee already has access to this material.