SUNY Upstate Medical University
The Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF FACULTY AFFAIRS
& FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Guide for Writers of Letters of Support

This guide is provided as a resource to assist writers of letters of support for the Norton College of Medicine faculty promotion candidates.

Tips:
- Use letterhead, not email.

- Total page number should be consistent with context. Consider two pages for recommendation for a job or an award, one or two pages for promotion support or grant support.

- Save a copy for your files.

Template:
Dear (Name of Department Chair, Dean, or other letter requestor):

- First paragraph- briefly state who you are, how you know and for how long you've known the candidate. The opening indicates general warmth. What is this letter is about? "I am pleased to provide this letter of support for _____."

- Include a brief description of your own institution, position, role, and relationship with the candidate.

- If possible, use the specific criteria on which the individual candidate will be judged to organize the structure and content of the letter.

- Use bullets or numbers for each criterion to make it easier for the reader to review and correlate to the ranking or decision.

- Provide evidence for criteria.

- Highlight relevant CV and portfolio accomplishments. Do not re-list, but do provide personal (witnessed) anecdotes. Contextualize work in terms of scope, importance, and promise. Include details not obvious from CV/portfolio.

- Briefly remark about the person's character, & professionalism.

- Provide a brief (2-3 sentence) summary paragraph or statement. Summarize your recommendations. Use a key summary statement such as "I highly recommend Dr. _____ for this _____." "I give my highest recommendation."