Dear Professor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I write to request your participation in the personnel review process by the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ program/department at the University of Massachusetts Boston to evaluate the scholarly work of (Title, e.g., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Librarian) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who is being considered for (tenure and) promotion to (level). I have attached a copy of Professor X’s CV.

The Department of XXX offers BA, MA, and PhD degrees [or the XXX unit in Healey Library provides the following functions: XYZ]. UMass Boston is classified as a Doctoral University with Higher Research Activity (R2), is federally designated as an AANAPISI campus, and is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Community Engaged University. The university serves 17,000 students from 149 countries. About 60% of students speak a language other than English at home and more than 60% of our students report that they are first-generation college students. UMass Boston is committed to being a leading anti-racist and health-promoting public research university.

Professor X’s research primarily concerns problems of XXX, the phenomenon of YYY, and implications for ZZZ. [or Librarian X’s specialization is XXX, contributing to YYY.]

Letters of reference from external reviewers are a crucial component of the personnel review process. For an appointment to XXX, [use one of the following quotes from the Red Book, and for Librarians provide appropriate language from article 20 in FSU Agreement]

For an appointment as an associate professor, a candidate must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in their field; and must show promise of continuing professional development and achievement.

For an appointment as a full professor, a candidate must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in their field; and must show significant potential for continuing professional achievement.

In accordance with Massachusetts’ Fair Information Practices Act, letters of reference in a candidate’s file are available to the candidate unless they sign a statement waiving their right to see them. [If the candidate has signed waiver…] Professor X has waived the right and therefore your letter will be treated as confidential. At UMass Boston, candidates are provided a table of contents of their dossier which includes the source of each item. Thus, Professor X will know that you have provided a letter of reference because your name will appear in the table of contents, however Professor X will not know the source of any comments cited in the different review recommendations. Any quotes used from your letter will be de-identified, e.g., “External reviewer B wrote…”

If you are willing to serve as a referee, your letter will be needed by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. As you make a decision, please consult the attached information about conflicts of interest. If you have a disqualifying conflict of interest, you may not serve as a referee. If you have a conflict of interest that is not disqualifying, please declare the nature of the conflict of interest when you reply to me. We ask that you also disclose the conflict in the reference letter.

If you can assist in the review, I would appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience. For your consideration of my request to provide a letter of reference for Professor X, I have provided their CV.

EITHER:

When I receive your positive reply, I will provide Professor X’s personal statement and a selection of their publications and other products. With your positive reply, I will need to receive from you a copy of your CV.

OR:

I have provided Professor X’s personal statement and a selection of their publications and other products. (provide link, a zip file, or some other mechanism)

If you are able to write a letter, in addition to disclosing any conflict of interest in your letter and your relationship to Professor X, please comment on at least the following areas related to Professor X’s scholarship. Guiding questions are suggested. (these are for faculty, librarians have different criteria)

*Quality of scholarship*: Are they dealing with important questions? Is their work theoretically sound and methodologically rigorous? To what extent is their work community engaged, and how so?

*Contributions of scholarship*: What are the scholarly and intellectual traditions in which Professor X’s work is properly located, and which of their specific scholarly contributions are most impactful? What are Professor X’s contributions to community and societal issues at the local, national, and global level (as relevant)?

*Impact of scholarship*: Considering the entirety of Professor X’s publications, what is their overall impact on the field, on the community, and on society? What is the significance of their work and the importance of the implications that derive from their body of research and creative activity?

*Standing in the field*: What is your assessment of Professor X’s recognition among scholars or professionals in his field, and among civic and community leaders and partners, as applicable?

*Trajectory, potential, and promise*: What are your perspectives on the overall arc of Professor X’s scholarship? What is their potential for continuing professional development and achievement? Does their research have the potential to lead to meaningful applications or new directions? Does their scholarship show promise of continued scholarly development?

As you are writing your letter, please take into consideration the following context. Beginning in Spring 2020, as elsewhere, faculty and librarians across UMass Boston experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, as a result of the crisis, all courses at the university were moved to remote instruction, research facilities including labs and the library were closed, and travel was suspended, limiting opportunities for field work, archival research, and professional visibility. In addition, many conferences were canceled after presentations had already been accepted to be presented. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on campus, many worked from home while simultaneously providing childcare or care for other family members due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schools. The university remained primarily remote through the end of Summer 2021 and returns to on-campus operation beginning in Fall 2021. Due to the disruptions to academic productivity as a result of the pandemic, all pre-tenure candidates were granted the option of a one-year tenure delay as a matter of right. UMass Boston’s policy is that the criteria for tenure and promotions are the same for all faculty regardless of the length of their service in their current rank. We ask that you use this standard in your evaluation and that you bear in mind the disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic in your review. Candidates have also been asked to explicitly address pandemic-related disruptions in their personal statements.

I realize that there are many demands on your time and I offer my sincere thanks for your willingness to consider this request.

Sincerely,