

Dear **NAME**,

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an external reviewer for **TENURE CANDIDATE**'s application for tenure. This is a labor-intensive task, and your willingness to assist us in this review is deeply appreciated.

As each institution's process differs with respect to the tenure, this letter provides some insight into Skidmore's process. Skidmore College is a selective, private liberal arts institution where our faculty subscribe to the teacher-scholar model. On average, our faculty teach five courses or the equivalent each academic year. Tenure and promotion files are evaluated according to three areas: teaching, scholarship, and service. We are asking you to address the candidate's scholarship. It is helpful if you would contextualize your relationship to the candidate in your letter and briefly describe your expertise in the candidate's field.

The applicant's file is reviewed by the home department or program, and a recommendation regarding tenure is made to the College's Appointments and Tenure Committee (ATC). ATC is a multidisciplinary committee of seven faculty representing four college divisions (i.e., humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, arts and pre-professional programs). Your letter will be read by colleagues in the candidate's department or program, members of the ATC, the Associate Dean of the Faculty, and the Dean of the Faculty. The candidate will not have access to your letter unless the individual is denied tenure.

It is likely that members of the ATC are not familiar with the candidate's disciplinary conventions, and depend heavily on the external letters in helping them understand the value of the candidate's work in the discipline. Once the file, including letters, is reviewed, the ATC makes a recommendation to the President regarding promotion and tenure. The President then makes his or her recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

Letters that are most useful to the ATC do the following:

- Provide a perspective on publishing or exhibition conventions in the candidate's field; for example:
 - Co-authorship
 - Rate of publication or completion of works
- Speak to the quality of candidate's work; for example:
 - Rigorous and appropriate methodology
 - Conceptual sophistication
 - Aesthetic value
- Position the candidate's work in the broader disciplinary context, for example:
 - How does the work push the disciplinary discourse forward?
 - In what ways does it build on extant knowledge?
- Address the quality of the candidate's dissemination outlet, for example:
 - Journal rankings
 - Quality of book presses
 - Prestige of artistic venues

- Illuminate the nature of the scholarly or artistic process, for example:
 - What sort of intellectual, scholarly, or artistic effort was necessary to produce the work?
- Evaluate the candidate's promise in making meaningful contributions in the future

In sum, we hope to receive evaluative letters that help illuminate the strengths and/or weaknesses of the candidate's work in appropriate disciplinary contexts. These kinds of letters are valued and most welcome.

Again, we understand that reviewing a colleague's body of work takes time and considerable effort. Thank you for your assistance in this review.

In gratitude,

CHAIR/ PROGRAM DIRECTOR