For Promotion to Professor, Solicitation of External Reviews, Template – enclosures include CV; selected publications follow upon confirmation of reviewer participation. Do not use this template for cases of promotion to Associate Professor with tenure. A separate template is available for that purpose.

This template is a guide. You may customize it, but (1) you must cover the main points expressed in this template, (2) you may not deviate from the standards specified in the contract, and (3) you must include the section on confidentiality.

Prof. [name]

[Title]

[Department name]

[University]

[City, State, Zip] **Subject: Request for Service as an External Reviewer**

Dear Professor [name]:

I am writing on behalf of the Department of [name] in the [College/School] of [name] to ask whether you could assist us in the evaluation of [name of faculty candidate], who is being considered for promotion to the rank of professor. My colleagues and I recognize that this request adds to what is no doubt a considerable workload and appreciate your willingness to consider it.

In keeping with standard practice, the faculty and administrators involved in this promotion process will have read the file carefully and will be well acquainted with the substance of the work involved. Accordingly, we do not need to trouble you with a summary description of the work you are reviewing. Our primary interest is in your professional opinion of the value of her/his work and hence the task is primarily evaluative.

There is no minimum time period between the tenure review and promotion to Full professor. UMass guidelines state that if a case merits promotion, it should be brought forward without consideration of arbitrary timelines.

Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty across the University experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, as a result of the health crisis, all faculty moved their courses online, research facilities including labs and libraries were closed and all student evaluation of teaching was suspended. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on-campus, many faculty were working out of their homes while simultaneously providing childcare due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schooling. Research disruptions, significant shifts in teaching modalities, limited childcare, and remote work persisted through the 2020-2021 academic year. We ask that you take this unprecedented event into consideration when evaluating work performed during this period.

Candidates for promotion have the options of waiving or retaining the right of access to external review letters. In this case, Professor [last name] [has or has not] waived [his/her] access to all external review letters. However, under our contract with the faculty union, we must identify all reviewers. Therefore,

while internal faculty and administrative evaluators of the file will have access to your letter, it will otherwise remain confidential (to the extent allowed by law). The candidate will know that you have provided an evaluation [but will not have / and will have] access to your letter.

The standards and criteria for promotion of tenure-system faculty at the University of Massachusetts Amherst are described in our Academic Personnel Policy (Trustee Document T76-081, also known as the "Red Book"). The following are relevant excerpts from that policy:

- **Section 4.1.** High professional standards must be the basis for all personnel decisions. Personnel recommendations and decisions shall be made only after a review of all of the qualifications and all the contributions of the individual in the areas of teaching; of research; creative or professional activity; and of service. All three areas must be considered, but the relative weight to be given to each may be determined in the light of the duties of the faculty member.
- **Section 4.6.** Recommendations for promotion shall be based on qualifications and contributions in the areas of teaching; of research, creative, or professional activity; and of service; and on the following considerations:

  c) For promotion to Professor, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus among scholars or professionals in his or her field; and must show significant promise of continuing professional achievement.

At UMass Amherst, we take an expansive view of the accomplishments that would qualify an individual for elevation to this rank. Candidates for promotion to professor are required to demonstrate "a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals" and "significant potential for continuing professional achievement" (Redbook). They are evaluated in all three areas of research/creative activity, teaching, and service. All three areas must be considered, but the relative weight to be given to each may be determined in the light of the duties of the faculty member. As one example, consider the case of a faculty member who has maintained a modest level of activity in research/creative activity but has excelled in teaching or service. This individual may be making significant contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning in the discipline or obtaining significant external funding to support teaching or diversity initiatives, or creating and launching new degree programs, or exercising major leadership at the department, school/college, or campus level in an administrative, MSP, or Senate role. In assessing these contributions, we apply the same criteria as we do with faculty whose research records are the primary justification for promotion: it must be of a quality and extent "sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals", and it must be sustained over a long period sufficient to demonstrate "significant potential for continuing professional achievement".

If you accept this invitation, we will appreciate receiving your candid evaluation of this candidate's contributions to the profession. Within the limits of the criteria and standards described above, we would like to receive your assessment of the originality and impact of the candidate's work. Has it contributed to new lines of research or deepened our understanding of existing debates? Has the candidate demonstrated a meaningful and independent scholarly program? Is the candidate recognized as an intellectual leader on par with, if not exceeding, the influence and noteworthy accomplishments of peers who are at the same stage of professional development? For candidates in the creative, visual, and performing arts, has she/he had an impact within the field, reflecting recognition and respect among other professionals (and, where applicable, scholars) nationally or beyond?

We expect faculty at the rank of Professor to have achieved a very high level of visibility and professional accomplishment as leading thinkers in their field, outstanding teachers, and active

participants in their profession. While we recognize that scholarly work builds over the life of a career, we are particularly interested in your assessment of the candidate's contributions since promotion to the rank of associate professor with tenure. We expect that full Professors will continue to perform at a high level for many years to come.

Our institution values service to the profession and to the campus, as well as high quality teaching. If you are familiar with Professor [last name's] record in either domain, we would be grateful for your evaluation in these domains. In all of these respects – research, teaching and service – it would be helpful for us to understand the basis for your conclusions; what do you see in the work or record that leads you to the assessment you have provided?

For the benefit of UMass reviewers who are outside your discipline, we are required to solicit from every external reviewer their curriculum vitae, which will help identify the work for which you are known and hence the starting point of your evaluation. We also ask that you complete the attached disclosure form indicating the extent of your relationship with Professor [last name], if any. We would appreciate knowing whether you have collaborated with or had previous professional or personal interactions with the candidate. Should you believe that there is any room for misunderstanding or a potential conflict of interest in reviewing this case, please feel free to call me before you proceed.

I have attached a copy of Professor [last name]'s CV for your information. If you are able to accept this invitation, we will send you additional materials. As our evaluations proceed along an established time line, we would be most appreciative if you would, first, let me know by email [department chair's email] if you can accept this assignment within the next week and, second, provide your letter and CV by [four weeks after the date of the request]. I will forward the additional materials to you as soon as I receive your email confirmation.

Again, I respect the fact that this request imposes on your time. It is an essential part of the review process, as you know of course, and we do depend on our colleagues to help us make wise decisions.

Sincerely,

[Name of Department Chair]

[Title]