

SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER TO REFEREES

Associate/Full Professor Ranks on the “At CUMC” Title Track

[date]

[name]

[title]

[affiliation]

[address]

Dear Dr. [XXX]:

The [Department/School] of [department/school] at Columbia University is considering the [appointment/promotion] of Dr. [XXX] to the rank of [Associate/Full] Professor of [department] at Columbia University Medical Center (at CUMC). Dr. [XXX]’s principal contributions have been in [education and/or clinical care and/or investigation]. We would like to obtain your candid and confidential opinion concerning the advisability of recommending Dr. [XXX] to this appointment at this time.

The rank of [Associate/Full] Professor of [department/school] at CUMC is not a tenure-track position. Although most faculty will have a major academic focus, as described below, with accompanying evidence of competency in educational activity, there may be instances in which faculty make high quality, substantive contributions in more than one area of focus. Faculty may also have contributions that are less quantitatively or more narrowly concentrated in the other areas of focus. However, it is the sum total of major and minor achievements that determines a faculty members suitability for appointment or promotion in rank. Because faculty in the “At CUMC” track often make contributions in multiple academic areas of focus, your comments need only address the area(s) of focus of the candidate with which you are familiar.

Promotion to Associate Professor should be marked by a strong regional reputation and an emerging national reputation in the area of focus. Faculty at this level should be acknowledged by peers inside and outside of CUIMC as experts in their area of focus.

Promotion to Professor should be marked by national recognition of contributions within the area of focus. Faculty at this rank should be widely acknowledged by peers inside and outside of CUIMC as exceptional within their area of focus.

Within the “at CUMC” title, there are three areas of scholarly focus briefly defined below that faculty may choose as major or minor areas of academic focus:

Investigator Area of Focus

Evidence for concentration in the *Investigator area of focus* may be demonstrated by: quality and quantity of publications in peer-reviewed journals, authorship on multi-authored publications and/or documentation of a substantial contribution by the candidate to collaborative, multidisciplinary investigations and publications. The faculty member may be a principal investigator or a significant collaborator on funded research grants or contracts originating from federal, foundation or industry sources. Further evidence could be demonstrated by invited lectures that highlight recognition of investigation expertise or by service on editorial boards, expert panels, FDA panels, and data safety monitoring boards for multicenter studies.

Applied Health Care or Public Health Sciences Area of Focus

Evidence for concentration in the *Applied Healthcare or Public Health Sciences area of focus* can be demonstrated through recognition as an expert clinician or public health professional, honors and leadership in regional or national professional societies of the clinical or public health discipline; important contributions to institutional or national quality assurance programs; development of or leading the application of clinical or public health technology that changes practice or patient outcomes; membership on editorial boards of clinical or public health specialty journals; authorship of book chapters and case reports; participation in clinical or public health research as a site investigator for large multi-center trials or public health intervention programs within the discipline; or development of guidelines or patient care or public health protocols which are used locally, regionally or nationally.

Educational Leadership/ Scholarship Area of Focus

Evidence for concentration in the *Educational Leadership/Scholarship area of focus* may be demonstrated by a robust and varied portfolio of educational activities: development of educational materials, including new curricula offerings, educational programs, textbook chapters, syllabi, computer programs, videotapes or simulation technology that make a unique contribution to the quality and methods of education; regional or national recognition of educational expertise demonstrated by participation and/or leadership in educational societies, invited lectureships and publications related to education; exceptional and high-quality contributions to the teaching of students, postgraduate students or professionals.

All faculty members are expected to participate in some educational activities, that may include: lectures, seminars, conferences, small group tutorials, grand rounds, hospital and outpatient preceptorial teaching, research mentorship, career advisory mentorship, student advising, morning report, didactic presentations, and continuing professional education.

Dr. [XXX]'s curriculum vitae is enclosed for your examination. In order to maintain the schedule of the review, it would be helpful to have your comments by no later than [date]. I assure you that your reply will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and that it will be reviewed only by the faculty members and administrators involved in the review process. Your letter of evaluation can be sent to me at the following address:

We recognize that this request adds significantly to your busy schedule and very much appreciate your valued contribution to the process. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [phone number] or via e-mail at [e-mail address]. I look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely yours,

[name of department chair or search committee chair]
[title]
[department]
[school]

Enc.
Candidate's curriculum vitae
Teaching evaluations
Candidate's personal statement