

[Date]

Professor Jane Smith
XYZ University
Street Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Professor Smith:

Professor John Doe is being considered for promotion to Distinguished Professor of xxx at Texas A&M University. As part of our procedure for promotion, we seek candid outside evaluations by established leaders in the candidate's area of scholarship. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to write a letter of evaluation for his dossier. We have enclosed a copy of Dr. Doe's curriculum vita.

The Distinguished Professor rank at Texas A&M University is reserved for those who have made extraordinary contributions. At present only 54 faculty among the university's 2,900 faculty have been recognized with this distinction. To be eligible, the candidate must meet the following **three critical criteria**:

1. Be considered **Pre-eminent** in his or her own field (specifically, we believe that, at a minimum, this is indicated when the candidate is among the top 5% of active researchers in his or her area of research or scholarship on an international basis).
2. Have made at least one **Seminal Contribution** (i.e. the work caused a *substantial* intellectual leap forward in the discipline rather than an incremental extension of existing knowledge).
3. Have had a **Major Impact** (i.e. his/her work is central in any narrative of the field, and he/she is widely recognized to have redirected scholarship in the field).

In your letter, please specifically address whether, in your opinion, the candidate meets these three critical criteria. In so doing, we would appreciate your defining the nature and size of the "field" in which the candidate works.

Because our review panel is comprised of distinguished faculty from across the University community, many of the individuals on the review panel will not be familiar with the candidate's field, so it would be helpful if your comments could be couched in non-technical terms as much as possible. We appreciate your willingness to undertake this evaluation for us, and look forward to receiving your reply by _____.

Your letter will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by Texas law. However, under Texas law, the person made the subject of your letter may obtain a copy of the document upon request.

Sincerely,

[Name of Sender]