SAMPLE SOLICITATION LETTER

<date>

<name>
<title>
<department>
<institution>
<street>
<city, state, zip>

Dear Professor <Name>:

We are currently considering <candidate> for promotion to <action>. Faculty at the University of Michigan are promoted on the basis of research, scholarly, and creative contributions; teaching ability; and service. Recognition of the quality of their work by their peers is a significant factor in the review process. We value your candid assessment of <candidate’s> research accomplishments and future promise, including both positive points and areas needing improvement. Your scholarly and professional judgments will play an important part in our evaluation of <candidate> for promotion.

When applicable, please keep in mind that at the University of Michigan the criteria for promotion to tenure are the same regardless of the length of a candidate’s service as assistant professor. [ADD THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE IF THE SCHOOL/COLLEGE ONLY ALLOWS ONE ATTEMPT AT TENURE: “Also note that, except in rare circumstances, a review for tenure in [Unit] can only occur once; deferral to a later date is not normally a possibility.”] We ask that you be attentive to our policies in your evaluation of <candidate>.

Based on the enclosed materials and any other knowledge you have of <his/her> work or professional accomplishments, we would like your candid evaluation of <candidate’s> written and scholarly contributions in relation to others of comparable experience in <his/her> field.

Dr. <candidate> is engaged in research that is interdisciplinary in nature. [He/she holds a joint appointment in the departments of <discipline> and <discipline>.] We invite your consideration of the interdisciplinary nature of <candidate’s> work in your review of his/her scholarly contributions.

We would appreciate your comments on the following issues:

1. How do you know <candidate>? (in what capacity and for how long?)
2. What are your impressions about the quality, quantity, focus and scholarly impact of the writings?
3. Which, if any, of the publications do you consider to be outstanding?
4. How would you estimate <candidate’s> standing in relation to others in <his/her> peer group who are working in the same field?

5. How would you evaluate <candidate’s> service contributions to the discipline; that is <his/her> work on professional committees, as a reviewer of proposals or papers, as an editor, or similar activities?

6. Might <his/her> work meet the requirements for someone being considered for promotion at your institution?

[The following paragraph (word-for-word) should be included in ALL letters soliciting an evaluation of the candidate.]

Questions sometimes arise about the confidentiality of external review letters, and we do want to advise you that your letter will be reviewed by senior faculty at the University of Michigan. Because the University is a public institution, legal considerations limit our ability to assure confidentiality but it is our practice not to release external review letters unless required to do so by law.

We request that you return your review to us by <date>. We would also appreciate it if you would provide us with a short biosketch, including a brief description of your areas of expertise and current research interests.

We realize that your schedule is full and that this may be a time-consuming task; however, we will be most grateful for your assistance. We have selected you because of your expertise in this area. Should you fail to respond, this will be so noted in the promotion record. If you need further information, please contact <contact name> at <phone/fax>.

Sincerely,

<Name>
<Title>

Enclosures