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### Letter of Recommendation Guidelines

I receive many requests for recommendation letters, and I aspire to write the most effective letter possible on your behalf. To help me in this process I ask that you provide the following information with your request for a letter or letters (this information, broken down point by point, is more useful to me than a resume). If some of the bullet points below don't apply to you, skip them.

Please know that I cannot write an effective letter for you if our shared experience is mismatched to the opportunity to which you're applying. For instance, if our only connection is your work in one of my introductory courses, I cannot write an effective letter for graduate school (no matter how personally supportive I may be of your candidacy) – this because grad-school admission committees need to hear from faculty who've guided your advanced undergraduate work. Don't hesitate to contact me if you're unsure about any match or mismatch.

- **WHEN IS THIS LETTER DUE? WRITE THIS IN BOLD LETTERS AT THE TOP OF YOUR MEMO/NOTE TO ME.**
- remind me of when we first met – how long have we know one another?
- a list of the courses we took together: when you took each course and your grade for each
- your major and minor
- your overall CAP or GPA -- and your sense as to whether the CAP or GPA in your major is higher or lower than this overall GPA
- your GRE or LSAT scores: what they are, when you took the exam, and in what percentile your scores place you. If you don't know the percentile ranking, look it up on the web.
- any special activities or accomplishments (e.g. internships, community service, attendance at conferences, in- our out-of-class research projects or presentations, etc.) that are relevant to your application
- a draft of any required "statement of purpose" or writing sample that you're enclosing with your application (and tell me what question or prompt in the application your essay is specifically addressing). **Note: I cannot write a letter without this information**
- a paragraph or two that tells me what you believe the selection committee reviewing your application (and my letter) is looking for (e.g. what skills, talents, accomplishments, and/or personal goals seem to be most sought after and valued by the program or position to which you're applying?), and in what ways you believe you especially "match up" to these expectations. *This is no time for false modesty -- extol your virtues!*
- Keeping in mind your impressive strengths, what weaknesses or shortcomings remain for you, which you'll continue to work on as you enter into the program or job to which you're applying?
- Who else is writing letters for you? Given what you expect their contributions to be, what would you hope I'd emphasize or underscore in my letter?
- Anything else I need to know?

I need a minimum of two weeks lead time to complete my letter for you. I can make an exception in special circumstances, but these circumstances must be special, and even when they are I cannot promise that an exception will be forthcoming.

Thank you, and good luck!

Michael Maniates