1. **SAMPLE LETTER TO EXTERNAL LETTER WRITERS FOR PROMOTION TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

<<Date>>

«MrMrs» «FirstName» «LastName»

«Title»

«Address»

«University»

«City», «State»

«PostalCode»

«Country»

Dear Professor «LastName»,

We write to ask for your advice as we consider Assistant Professor [NAME] for promotion to associate professor in the Department of [DEPARTMENT NAME] at Harvard University. Please note that, at Harvard’s Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), associate professorships are untenured. We would greatly appreciate your assessment of Professor [NAME]’s scholarly contributions and promise and a specific recommendation as to whether or not Professor [NAME] should be promoted. If you have personal or professional connections with Professor [NAME], please note these in your response.

At the FAS, the standard for promotion to associate professor is “sufficient promise and achievement to qualify for tenure at a major institution within three to five years.” To aid your evaluation, we have enclosed a copy of Professor [NAME]’s *curriculum vitae*, research statement, teaching/advising statement, statement on overlap and joint authorship in publications, and a selection of Professor [NAME]’s work. We would also appreciate hearing your views on Professor [NAME]’s eventual prospects for achieving tenure at Harvard and any measures that Professor [NAME] could take to increase [his/her/their] impact in the [FIELD] in particular and in [AREA] more broadly.

We also seek a frank comparative evaluation of Professor [NAME]’s scholarly record relative to that of Professor [NAME]’s cohort in the field of [FIELD]. We would be grateful if you would identify the leading scholars at a comparable career stage and indicate where Professor [NAME] stands relative to them.

[INSERT AS NEEDED: “With regard to the timing of this promotion review, please note that, with the significant disruptions to professional life resulting from the COVID-19 crisis, the FAS instituted in 2020 and 2021 policies giving tenure-track faculty the option of appointment extensions and a term of teaching relief. In keeping with these policies, Professor (NAME) was given a (CHOOSE ONE: two-year/one-year/six-month) appointment extension (INSERT AS NEEDED: and a term of teaching relief).

Evaluators should assess Professor [NAME]’s aggregated scholarship, teaching and advising, and service without any penalty for having received an appointment extension [INSERT AS NEEDED: and teaching relief], due to the pandemic. As Professor [NAME] was given a [CHOOSE ONE: two-year/one-year/six-month] extension and thus came up for associate promotion in the [CHOOSE ONE: sixth/fifth/fourth and a half] (rather than the ordinary fourth) year after their initial appointment date, their body of work should be evaluated according to a standard of someone who has had four years to work towards associate promotion. All the work that Professor [NAME] has done since the start of their appointment is evaluated as if they have done so on a clock unaffected by the pandemic. [INSERT AS NEEDED: Similarly, regarding teaching relief, Professor (NAME) should have their scholarship, teaching and advising, and service evaluated as if they had taught the course for which they received relief.] COVID-related clock extensions [INSERT AS NEEDED: and teaching relief] should not be counted against candidates in any way.”]

We will make every effort possible to keep your response confidential. We will make it available only to the senior members of the Department of [DEPARTMENT NAME] and others directly involved in the formal review process.

Please let us know by email ([EMAIL ADDRESS]) whether you plan to write a letter. If you are willing to write a letter, it would be most helpful to receive it by [DATE].

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Chair, Department of [DEPARTMENT NAME]