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 the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Harvard University. Please note that, at the FAS, associate professorships are untenured. We would greatly appreciate your candid assessment of Professor [NAME]’s 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.” 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.

As part of your assessment, please situate Professor [NAME] in the field of [FIELD], relative to other scholars in the field who are currently at a comparable career stage. In particular, who do you see as the leading scholars in Professor [NAME]’s cohort, and where does Professor [NAME] stand among them in terms of scholarly impact and promise, and why? [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE, IF THE CANDIDATE IS INTERDISCIPLINARY: “We also recognize that Professor [NAME]’s work is interdisciplinary; if you wish, you may primarily comment on those aspects of their work most relevant to your expertise.”]

External evaluators often find it difficult to comment on the teaching, advising, mentoring, or service/citizenship of a colleague at another school. If this is the case regarding Professor [NAME], please feel free to not comment on these matters. The FAS is able to assess Professor [NAME]’s performance in these areas internally.

To aid your evaluation, we have enclosed a copy of Professor [NAME]’s *curriculum vitae*, research statement, teaching/advising/mentoring statement, service/citizenship statement, statement on overlap and joint authorship in publications, and a selection of Professor [NAME]’s work.

[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, 2021, and 2022 policies giving tenure-track faculty the option of appointment extensions and a term of teaching relief. In keeping with these policies, the FAS gave Professor (NAME) a (INSERT NUMBER OF YEARS OR, IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, NUMBER OF MONTHS) appointment extension (INSERT AS NEEDED: and a term of teaching relief). (INSERT AS NEEDED: In addition, the FAS gave Professor [NAME] a one-year appointment extension in keeping with its parental leave policies.)

Evaluators should assess Professor [NAME]’s aggregated scholarship, teaching, advising, mentoring, and service/citizenship without any penalty for having received (CHOOSE ONE: an appointment extension/appointment extensions) (INSERT AS NEEDED: and teaching relief). As Professor [NAME] was given a (INSERT NUMBER OF YEARS]-year [OR, IF LESS THAN ONE YEAR, NUMBER OF MONTHS]-month extension and thus came up for associate promotion in the (INSERT NUMBER OF YEARS, E.G., “seventh,” “sixth,” etc.) (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 of 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: and parental leave). (INSERT AS NEEDED: Similarly, regarding teaching relief, Professor (NAME) should have their scholarship, teaching, advising, mentoring, and service/citizenship evaluated as if they had taught the course for which they received relief.) COVID-related (INSERT AS NEEDED: and parental leave) 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]