FCSM GUIDELINES for
EXTERNAL EVALUATION LETTERS for PROMOTION to PROFESSOR

The FCSM PTRM Committee guidelines for letters of evaluation from external reviewers for candidates for promotion to Professor will follow the guidelines established by the Provost and approved by the University Senate. The external evaluation will address the candidate’s scholarship as it relates to the candidate’s promotion to Professor. The letters will remain confidential and will not be made available to the faculty member. These letters will not be included in the faculty evaluation portfolio, but will be forwarded under separate cover to each subsequent level of review.

IDENTIFYING EXTERNAL EVALUATORS
Evaluators will be independent and impartial, can not be members of the Towson University faculty, and should not be current or former advisors or mentors to the Candidate or otherwise have (or have had) a personal or significant professional relationship with the Candidate. Evaluators must be established scholars or practitioners with demonstrated expertise in the area of the Candidate’s specialization, and preferably be from or have experience at peer-type institutions.

SELECTION OF EVALUATORS
The Candidate will recommend 5 evaluators who meet the criteria described above to the department chair. The Candidate may also provide names of potential evaluators that they do not want to be used for their evaluation. The department chair will recommend 5 additional evaluators. The Dean will contact the potential evaluators to identify 3 who agree to provide evaluations (see Query letter below). The Dean will request evaluation letters using the letter template below.

SUBJECT MATTER OF EXTERNAL REVIEW
External evaluators are not to evaluate the candidate’s teaching, advising or service to the University. The external evaluation will address the Candidate’s scholarly work as it relates to the Candidate’s promotion. The Candidate shall provide a PDF file (or similar) of the following material to the Dean to be forwarded to the external evaluators electronically:

- Candidate’s Curriculum Vitae,
- Candidate’s supporting statement focusing on the area of scholarship and reflecting on accomplishments during the evaluation period,
- A maximum of three publications or other scholarly products, either as readable files or internet links thereto. The external evaluators will be able to request additional items on the candidate’s curriculum vitae by contacting the Department Chairperson.
Timeline:

First Monday in April
Candidates for promotion to Professor will submit a list of five potential external reviewers to the Chair of their department.

Third Monday in May
Chair will identify five additional external evaluators and forward the list of 10 (including the five named by the Candidate) to the Dean’s office. Query Letter to potential external evaluators will be sent from the Dean’s office to identify three external evaluators.

First Monday in July
Three external reviewers will be confirmed and sent supporting documentation to complete their evaluation.

Third Friday in September
Letters will be forwarded under separate cover to the Candidate’s Department PTRM Committee for departmental review.

Sample Query Email Letter to External Evaluators

Dear ____________:

Professor XX, currently an Associate Professor in the Department of XX, Towson University, is a candidate for promotion to the rank of Professor. The Promotion Committee is presently assembling a file which must contain letters of reference from recognized scholars in the candidate’s field who are in a position to evaluate the quality and the significance of her/his scholarly work. We would like to ask you to review Professor XX’s scholarly work, and we hope that you will agree to undertake this task.

If you are willing to act as a referee, we will provide you with electronic copies of Professor X’s CV, a maximum of three recent publications and/or other scholarly work, the candidate’s narrative statement, and a letter giving some basic guidelines for referees’ assessments. Should you desire to see more than three recent publications, we would be happy to provide more.

To ensure the timely progress of Professor X’s file to upper-level committees, we would need your assessment by DATE. Please let us know whether you are willing to provide an evaluation of Professor X’s work. Thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,

FCSM Dean
Sample Email Letter to External Evaluators

Dear ________________.

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an external evaluator of the scholarly work of Professor XXX, who is being considered for promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. I am attaching a CV, the Candidate’s statement, and three publications or examples of the candidate’s scholarly work to assist with your review. Pursuant to the University’s promotion policy, your review will remain confidential and will not be made available to the Candidate.

Towson University (TU), Maryland’s comprehensive Metropolitan University, offers a broad range of undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, arts and applied professional fields that are nationally recognized for quality and value. TU emphasizes excellence in teaching, scholarship and community engagement. The TU vision is to be a regionally ranked Research-Intensive University, with a student population of 25,000 by the year 2016 (the current enrollment is almost 22,000).

The Fisher College of Science and Mathematics (FCSM) provides rigorous and high quality undergraduate and graduate programs in a variety of scientific, computing and mathematics fields. Faculty members engage students through interactive teaching, advising, basic and applied research, and collaborative activities. The FCSM vision is to be recognized as one of the best learning environments in Maryland for preparing students in the natural, physical and computing sciences and mathematics. FCSM faculty members are teacher-scholars who commit themselves to a high level of interaction with their students. FCSM faculty must teach 9-12 contact hours each semester, so evaluators should keep this in mind when reviewing the Candidate’s record.

Promotion to Professor recognizes a sustained commitment to excellence or distinction in teaching, scholarship, and service. Candidates must demonstrate a sustained program of recognized scholarship. We emphasize that while different disciplines will necessarily have different levels of grant success and publication, the key element is a sustained commitment to peer-reviewed scholarly productivity.

Please provide an objective assessment of the Candidate’s accomplishments as a scholar and your opinion on whether the Candidate has demonstrated the degree of accomplishment required for promotion to Professor at TU. In making your evaluation of the candidate’s work, please address the following:

[End of Document]
1. What, if any, has been your professional and/or personal relationship with the Candidate?
2. What is the significance of the issues addressed by the Candidate’s work?
3. What is your assessment of the originality and the quality of the work?
4. Is the methodology used appropriate to the issues addressed and consistent with best practices in the field?
5. Does the work produce useful lines of future inquiry for the Candidate and/or for others in the field?
6. Has the Candidate’s work appeared in journals or been published by presses that are appropriate to the field and that are indicators of high quality?
7. Does the body of the Candidate’s work reviewed indicate continuing development as a scholar?

In addition to responding to these specific inquiries, please feel free to comment on other aspects of the Candidate’s scholarly work.

Due to the calendar for promotion decisions, please complete your review of the material and submit your evaluation by September XX (3rd Friday). Please address all correspondence to me at the address below, marked “Confidential.”

Thank you for your assistance in this important matter. It is essential to sustaining the academic quality of TU that we obtain outside evaluations to assist us in judging the professional scholarship of our faculty. We realize how time-consuming this task is, and we are truly grateful.

Sincerely,

FCSM Dean