

Carnegie Mellon University

Mellon College of Science Interoffice Correspondence

To: Members of the MCS Faculty Preparing Promotion/Reappointment Cases
From: Curtis A. Meyer, Associate Dean for Faculty and Graduate Affairs
Date: March 13, 2013
Subject: Requesting Student Letters

The following information is compiled from older memos regarding the subject of requesting student letters for promotion/reappointment cases in the Mellon College of Science.

From an April 2002 Memo on “Student Letter Requests”:

It appears that undergraduate and graduate students writing letters of recommendation for faculty promotion cases are sometimes misled by the statement of confidentiality and are not always aware that a large fraction of a department read the letters. Please include the following wording when requesting letters from students for reappointment or promotion cases.

Your comments on this case will become an important part of the written documentation that is reviewed by members of the department and by the college and university promotion-committees for their recommendations. No one other than the participants in the promotion process will have access to your comments.

Procedures for selecting Students:

Student letters are an important part of the reappointment and promotion process. Both the candidate and the department select students from whom letters will be requested. Who selected which letter writer should be clearly indicated in the case preparation.

In the case of the department, the students should be randomly chosen from all students receiving a passing grade in recent courses taught by the candidate.

In making student selections, the department recognizes that the definition of a “passing grade” may depend on the level of the course, the program of which the course is a part, and other factors.