

Tip Sheet: Drafting Dean's Nomination Letters for External Awards

The Dean appreciates the time and effort invested by individuals drafting nomination letters for external awards on his behalf. While individual award or prize competitions require unique approaches, this document provides a list of considerations when preparing a letter for the Dean's signature. The tips below are not intended to be prescriptive, but to provide a guide to those preparing letters:

- Read the award/prize criteria to ensure you understand how the award will be adjudicated.
- A successful letter should include a personal greeting to the person or committee you are writing to. Letters should never be addressed on a first name basis, regardless of familiarity.
- Identify a theme for the letter.
- Use specific details—numbers, facts, examples, anecdotes.
- Paragraphs should remain clear and concise.
- Remember that the adjudication committee may be reading many letters, so it is important to engage the reader with relevant information and key details in a concise manner.
- In general, avoid the use of excessive adjectives and sentences that say the same thing twice.
- The Faculty has many outstanding faculty members. Try to avoid using the word “best” or “top”, or unsubstantiated superlatives.
- Avoid replicating the curriculum vitae (CV) in text form.
- The body of the letter may be arranged into sections or parts:
 - **Section/Part One:** The first section of the letter includes the name of the award and nominee, and explains the Dean's connection to the person being recommended, including how they are known and why the Dean is qualified to write a recommendation letter.
 - **Section/Part Two:** The second section of the recommendation letter contains information outlining why the person you are writing about is special and unique, including a detailed description of their qualifications for the award or prize. Without citing the nominee's CV, carefully select relevant pieces and frame them as contributions, benefits and impacts, giving specific examples reinforcing these points and then return to those throughout the letter. Be sure to illustrate why this nominee stands out. *Note: When drafting a nomination letter on behalf of the Dean for an award competition that requires several nomination/referee letters, try to minimize repetition between the letters.*
 - **Section/Paragraph Three:** The third section should address the specific skills and experience that the nominee possesses relating directly to the award criteria. Where possible, tie it into the mission of the organization awarding the prize.
 - **Section/Paragraph Four:** The fourth section contains a brief summary review of why the Dean is recommending the person and the conclusion of the letter. It is important to be consistent with the points that were addressed in the previous

sections and not to introduce any new information. The person reading the letter should have no doubt in their mind as to the nominee's experience and qualifications. The concluding paragraph(s) of the letter should contain a statement declaring the Dean's confidence in the candidate and an offer to provide more information about the nominee at the request of the adjudication committee.

- Style:
 - For style concerns, refer to The Canadian Style manual, which includes punctuation, grammar, abbreviations, and letter-writing guidelines.
 - Use full name of UBC (ie. The University of British Columbia, instead of "UBC" or "the university") when first referencing it in a letter.
 - Avoid using UBC or the Faculty's specific ranking numbers. Alternatively, use: "The University of British Columbia is one of the leading research universities in Canada, and is among the top universities worldwide."
 - Commonly used opening statements:
 - "It is with great pleasure that I write this letter to nominate Dr. Z for the Award Society's Lifetime Achievement Award."
 - "I am pleased to support the nomination of Dr. Z for the Award Society's Lifetime Achievement Award."
 - Commonly used closing statements:
 - "Dr. Z's commitment to his field is profound and his leadership has had a lasting impact on the community he serves and globally. Thank you for considering his nomination."
 - "I would like to thank the adjudication committee for their consideration of Dr. Z."
- Formatting the letter:
 - The Dean's Signature block should appear in this format:
Gavin C. E. Stuart, MD, FRCSC, FCAHS
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
Vice Provost Health, UBC
 - Font: Calibri, size 11.5
 - Sign-off text: "Yours sincerely,"