



## Email Request for Student Support of a Teaching Award Nomination

- clearly state that you are asking for help from the student in order to put together a successful teaching award nomination
- provide the name of the nominee and explain why you are contacting the student (ie because they were a student in a particular class; because a classmate suggested you get in touch)
- if the student provided support for an earlier (unsuccessful) nomination, thank them for their effort and ask if they would be able to update their letter to include additional information
  - some award committees will not accept letters that were prepared for a prior nomination
- provide the complete and accurate name of the award as well as a link to additional information about the award
- briefly outline why you feel the nominee is a worthy candidate for the specific award
- express the value of awards recognizing excellent teaching beyond simply rewarding the recipient (ie establishing ours as a community that values excellent teaching!)
- focus on the role of excellent teaching in supporting students in achieving learning goals
- ask the student to send their nomination letter to you in order that you may review all the support letters and submit them in one package with your own statement
- thank the student for their commitment to supporting teaching excellence
- provide specific details about the expectations for support letters; a bulleted list is ideal
  - it's important that your support letter be in your own words
  - address your support letter to (*quote the award's nomination guidelines*)
  - your support letter should express (*use the award's criteria to tell the student what to target*)
  - you can visit the Centre for Teaching Excellence blog for tips on writing effective support letters: <http://cte-blog.uwaterloo.ca/?p=9>

### For your reference, here is the blog post on writing effective support letters

*What a boring place the world would be if all letters looked the same! Nonetheless, there are some features that make letters for major awards more persuasive...*

- *Start with how you know the nominee, since when, and in what context*
- *Give your own qualifications as a context for your comments*
- *Get to know the award for which the professor, instructor, or teaching assistant is being nominated — address whatever criteria you honestly can address*
- *Provide specifics: not just your favourite teacher ever, but the specific ways in which he/she (for example) helped you grasp a concept, choose a major, succeed in a career, teach others something, overcome test anxiety, become aware of your own skills, and so forth.*
- *Explain with examples how you are different for having had this teacher. What did you take away from the course BECAUSE of his or her teaching style and/or methods? This might involve concepts, but it might also involve values, approaches, or attitudes!*

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact the Teaching Portfolio:

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