Getting Strong Letters of Recommendation

Consider these helpful tips to assist you in asking for letters of recommendation.

Keep In Mind

- It is a good idea to ask a variety of people (ex. boss, volunteer coordinator, teacher, counselor, coach, club sponsor). Ask each person to highlight different attributes. Consider having recommenders that can:
  - ∗reflect on you intellectual growth
  - ∗be able to tell a good story about you
  - ∗describe who you are outside the classroom
  - ∗provide specific attributes about you
  - ∗assess your academic and personal achievements and potential
  - ∗Know you well enough to evaluate your relevant qualifications

- Plan to submit your application before the actual deadline. Giving yourself an early deadline allows you to prepare all of the required documents with ample time and helps minimize last- minute stress. Use the model below to prepare your deadline:

  _____ VS _____ Your deadline should be at least 2 weeks prior.
  (actual deadline) (your deadline)

- It is important that you make your request for a letter of recommendation early. Preferably, ask your recommender 1 month in advance but with at least a minimum of 2 full weeks to prepare your letter. List YOUR deadline (the date you prepared above) as the date needed on your request form. Once again, this will allow you to submit your documents ahead of time.

- Giving your recommenders a bit of guidance on what they should express about you on the letter will only make their job easier. Fill out the student self-assessment and tailor the answers about yourself a little different for each recommender. This will allow each recommender to target different qualities about you and avoid repeating the same areas. It will be helpful for your recommender to read any scholarship or admissions essays you have, if you are comfortable with that.

Tips

- Provide your recommender with an organized folder that includes:
  - ∗Your request form and self-assessment
  - ∗A list of all the scholarships/colleges that need recommendations
  - ∗Any required forms for those applications
  - ∗Resume, transcripts, personal statement (as applicable)

- Double check the letter of recommendation guidelines for each application.

- Send a “Thank You” note to your recommender.

Good luck!

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