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Centennial Student Union 173
(507) 389-6076

How to wrtie a Nomination or Reference Letter

Most of us, even as early as in our high school years, will have to have a nomination letter or a letter of reference written on our behalf. These types of letters can be for a job, scholarship or for acceptance to a respective college. No matter how positive the experience may be with the writer of your choice, a great reference doesn't always make a great nomination/reference letter.

Step by Step Tips

Salutation
Include a personal greeting to the person you are writing. If you are unsure of the person's name, ask the person you are recommending or call the office that the letter is being sent to. It should be a last resort to use the general, "To Whom It May Concern".

Paragraph 1
The first paragraph of the recommendation letter explains your connection to the person you are recommending, including how you know them, and why you are qualified to write a recommendation letter. Your qualifications can be just as important as theirs.

Paragraph 2
The second paragraph of the recommendation letter contains specific information on the person you are writing about, including why they are qualified. Choose a few points and give specific examples that reinforce these points and return to those throughout the letter. Using specific examples is a must. This will allow the candidate to stand out from others.

Paragraph 3
When writing a letter referring a candidate for a particular job opening, the recommendation letter will include information on how the person's skills match the position they are applying for. Ask for a copy of the job posting and a copy of the person's resume so you can target your recommendation letter accordingly.

Summary
This section of the recommendation letter contains a brief summary again of why you are recommending the person. State that you "highly recommend" the person or you "recommend without reservation" or something similar.

Conclusion
The concluding paragraph of the recommendation letter contains an offer to provide more information. Include a phone number within the paragraph, include the phone number and email address in the return address section of your letter, or in your signature.

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