

## What I need to write you a good letter of recommendation.

(I am assuming most letters are for post baccalaureate programs; if it is for a scholarship or honorary membership, such as *Who's Who*, some of these might not apply):

- 1) Address and person to whom the letter is going. (I really hate doing generic "to whom it concerns"....that is a red flag to some that the reference isn't that strong/favorable, they want to see that the reference really does know you. Now I don't want to get crazy ..... so if you are applying to 20 different schools or such, then we may need to shift, but if it is for a few targeted positions I would recommend having one base letter but changing the opening to make it more personable.
- 2) Statement of the position/vocation you are seeking.....and a sentence or two about why you want it and/or why this PARTICULAR vocation (teacher, accountant, doctor, lawyer, etc.) is such a good fit for you \*
- 3) Resume – including: most up-to-date GPA, major(s)/minor(s), awards [recognitions, scholarships, honor societies], scholarly work [papers, presentations], leadership & engagement in clubs/organizations, and service/volunteerism.
- 4) **A - Grad School:** Brief statement (couple of lines at most) about WHY you are applying to each particular school. So, for example, if you are asking for five letters, how can I make it sound like your “school A” is a priority school for you? (Ex: “\_\_\_\_\_ shared with me that he/she is particularly draw to your program because of its flexible course schedule, internship placement, community focus, urban setting”, etc.) **B – Scholarship/Honorary:** (couple of lines at most) about WHY you are qualified for this particular award based on criteria--- include some adjectives about yourself that you have heard others use to describe your gifts/leadership abilities---consider the Gallup Strength Finders materials as an example.
- 5) Brief statement (couple of lines) about what you learned about leadership through Honors and how you have used it.....the more specific the better\* Another way to consider this: Where in Honors (that I have witnessed) has your leadership/service made an impact?
- 6) If you are in the Honors core program and completed a Capstone Project: give me the title and a 2-3 line statement of your vision and the outcome of the project.
- 7) Any specific areas you want me to hit that your other references may not be able to address and/or that would reinforce what others say
- 8) Any forms that need to go with the letter.
  - a. **(NOTE: Be sure to "waive your right to see the letter", I will show it to you but you should not advertise this as it could taint their impressions that I would give a fair appraisal.)**

\* **Note:** I use these to personalize the letter.

It helps tremendously to have a two week turn-around. I ideally want to have time to send it to you so you can do an edit for SPELLING ☺ and information accuracy and then I sent it along. Also, copy Michelle on what you send.....just in case.....you know.....

Finally, should you use me as a reference, list the office phone (610-436-2996). For my "title" I am: ***Professor of Communication Studies*** and ***Director of the Honors College***

Best with all of this.....*Kevin W. Dean, PhD*