**Letters of Recommendation**

A letter of recommendation is a detailed discussion of the personal qualities, accomplishments and experiences that make you unique and perfect for the graduate or professional program to which you have applied. A well written letter of recommendation provides an admissions committee with information that may not be found elsewhere in your application. This can make up for the weaknesses that may be found in your test scores, personal statement/admissions essay, resume, etc. Nearly every graduate/professional program requires the submission of letters of recommendation. Please see below for the recommended process for requesting letters of recommendation.

**Who to ask:**

Consider asking faculty members, school administrators, classroom teachers, and employers. The persons you ask to write your letters should:

1. Know you well and long enough to write with authority
2. Know your work
3. Describe your work positively
4. Have a high opinion of you
5. Know that you are applying to the Professional Level/Student Teaching Cohort
6. Know your educational and career goals
7. Be able to favorably compare you with your peers
8. Be able to write a good letter

Keep in mind that no one person will be able to satisfy all of the criteria listed above. You should seek out recommenders that can comment on different skills you possess (i.e. a coach may be able to write about your perseverance, teamwork or leadership skills, while a professor may write about your academic achievement).

**Approaching your letter writers:**

When approaching potential recommenders, ask if they know you well enough to write a meaningful letter. Pay attention to their demeanor – if you sense reluctance, thank them and ask someone else. **Please be aware that no one is required to write a letter of recommendation and may decline this request for a variety of reasons**. Keep in mind, this declination can be avoided by providing your requested recommender with all necessary information, giving them sufficient time to write and submit a letter, meeting with them in person, and asking individuals who know you well.

**Necessary Information:**

Provide a folder with the following neatly organized within:

1. Your Resume
2. Professional Goals Statement
3. Supplemental Student Information Form (pink sheet)
4. Recommendation Request Form (blue sheet)
5. If you are asking for paper letters, include a stamped, addressed envelope for where the reference is to be mailed.

**NOTE: Four to six week notices are recommended as the minimum amount of time to provide letter writers. Be sure to schedule an appointment to provide your letter writers with the necessary information.**

**Confidentiality:**

 The recommendation forms supplied by graduate or professional programs require you to decide whether to waive or retain your rights to see recommendation. As you decide whether to retain your rights, remember that confidential letters tend to carry more weight with admission/hiring committees. In addition, many faculty will not write a recommendation letter unless it is confidential. Other faculty may provide you with a copy of each letter, even if it is confidential. Let your recommender know if you choose to keep the recommendation confidential or not.

**Deadline Approaches:**

As the application deadline approaches, to avoid nagging your recommender, contact your College of Education advisor to inquire whether your materials were received. If they have not been received then check in with your recommenders to ensure the letters are sent on time. Letters of recommendation due by February 1, 2017.

**Questions:**

Contact Karla Rockhold, College of Education Advisor, at 541-737-4661 or karla.rockhold@oregonstate.edu