

Sample Supervisor Letter of Support B:
Associate to Senior Associate

Note: This is a sample letter of support from the supervisor of someone seeking promotion from Associate to Senior Associate. Every AP's role and career trajectory are unique, and letters must be tailored to their circumstances. As such, the sample letter that follows shows the level of detail and kind of examples that are useful as a candidate's application is evaluated. Letters of support are optional but are strongly recommended as part of the overall promotion nomination package.

[Date]

Dear Committee:

Please accept this letter of support for [Name], who is applying for promotion from the Associate level to Senior Associate level Academic Professional within the University Library. As Head of [Unit] at the University Library, [Name] is under my direct supervision, and I feel that she is very worthy of this promotion. As you all likely know, I recently nominated [Name] for the "Outstanding Academic Professional" award within the University Library, which she was awarded. As I worked to pull together the recommended nomination for the campus CAPE award (which though submitted, it turns out she was ineligible for at this time) I reached out to several professional colleagues who had worked with [Name] over the past several years to help promote her worthiness for the campus award. I hope that you do not mind if I draw from some of those letters of recommendation here, as well as offer my own support. I will attempt to present my support for [Name]'s application to address the four AP Promotional Criteria set forth, but will also address her research efforts.

Overall Experience: [Name] came to the University of Illinois in 2013 with over ten year's of professional preservation experience at other institutions. She joined our staff in a newly crafted professional position, that of [Position title]. Since her arrival here, she has taken what was a list of responsibilities largely cobbled together between myself and a graduate assistant and built a true program in collections care for our library. She has brought valuable experience and clear vision to her areas of oversight. As [Position title], [Name] is responsible for leading programs, day-to-day operations, and support staff to ensure the Library's massive book, journal, newspaper, and other paper-based collections are in the best physical condition possible for University researchers, instructors, students, and the community at large. Her responsibilities also include managing preventative maintenance operations, such as environmental monitoring to ensure our libraries are providing the best possible environment for our collections; integrated pest management, to ensure unwanted insects cannot harm our library materials, and stack maintenance such as creating boxes and performing book repairs. [Name] also provides leadership in improving communication and workflow within [Unit], which has

strengthened the Library's overall emergency preparedness, ability to conduct large-scale moves of special collections materials, and the quality of our internal and public outreach and exhibits. She has a strong service orientation and works directly with the both University community and the public to help repair and preserve damaged paper-based materials, including family heirlooms and other irreplaceable books, papers, and photographs that have been passed down and treasured by generations.

On a more global scale, [Name] has become a national voice for cultural heritage disaster response through her efforts in Puerto Rico after 2017's devastating Hurricane Maria. She spearheaded an effort to establish the University Library as a "sister library" to the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez (UPRM). [Name] personally traveled to the island through personal funds and grants secured by UPRM to provide workshops on disaster recovery and planning. Originally slated for a single session, [Name] ultimately delivered several workshops and trained about 300 people who came from virtually every cultural institution in Puerto Rico to learn how to restore and preserve their collections. [Library Administrator] at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez Campus writes of [Name], "Words cannot express [Name]'s care for the recovery of Puerto Rico. For us, at the UPRM library, she has been the key element to make sure things were happening. Periodically, and generously, she shared information, offered her expert advice, and came to the aid of others - no questions asked! Always giving the extra mile."

Institutional Leadership: [Name]'s expert knowledge of print materials preservation is matched only by her friendly and reassuring demeanor. Whether it is a patron cradling a damaged book critical to their research, or a staff member at a local public library inquiring about a mold infestation, [Name] is ready to assist all who contact the Library's [Unit]. She is also an outstanding team member who will roll up her sleeves whenever her Library colleagues need a hand, too. No request is too trivial or too daunting; she has helped with everything from repairing book bindings, to safely relocating books during a flood, to moving millions of fragile and endangered historic advertising clippings from the basement of the University Press Building. [Name] is invariably the first to offer help, with a smile and a cheerful greeting. As a recent example of [Name]'s work ethic and demeanor, the Library recently acquired a very large (6 pallets' worth of boxes, stacked five high) from a recently deceased faculty member, who had abandoned his house, full of research and personal belongings, for several decades. When the property was auctioned off, the Library was contacted about the books and papers held within the dilapidated house. [Name] was the Library's main point person for organizing and performing a condition review on the materials removed from the house, which were literally crawling with vermin and covered in mold. While most people would have grumbled at the gargantuan and repellent task, [Name] took it in stride, organizing a sensible approach to our review methods, ensuring that the materials were safely quarantined away from other library collections, and making what, by all rights, should have been drudgery into an organized and almost fun (almost!) project.

[Name] also plays an important role in mentoring library students on preservation management in an academic library setting, as well as public service ethics. She is extraordinarily dedicated to ensuring that any student that works for her gets the best and broadest pre-professional experience possible. [GA student], [Name]'s current graduate assistant in collections care and a graduate student at the School of Information says, "[Name] has been my mentor in collections care for the last year. During my time working with her, I have found her wealth of knowledge on a variety of topics very impressive. She

approaches questions head-on and with careful consideration, and believe me, I have had plenty of questions for her. [Name] has fueled my interest in preservation services and has helped me develop what I once thought of as a fascination into the foundation of my career. Without [Name]'s determination and endless cheerfulness, my time at the University of Illinois would not be so full of unique and happy memories. Thanks to [Name] I have confidence transitioning from graduate assistant to preservation professional.”

Professional Service: [Name] is very involved in the American Library Association (ALA). She has served as chair of the ALA's Preservation Week Committee for several terms, and is now co-chair of the Preservation & Reformatting Section's (PARS) Program Planning and Publications Committee. In both of these committees, she has worked tirelessly to share her enthusiasm for cultural preservation with others in the library and public spheres. She has furthermore provided several national presentations and webinars on the subject of diversity in cultural heritage preservation, as well as on her hurricane recovery efforts in Puerto Rico. On a national scale, it is her work in Puerto Rico that really stands out, and her impact there has been invaluable in providing professional guidance and assistance to a disaster-ravaged community that has been largely neglected by the continental US. [Library Administrator] at the Library of Congress, states of [Name], “At the recent ALA PADG program I was asked to update on Puerto Rico and I did that with [Name], well actually I introduced her and then she captivated that group with her thoughtful presentation and her “call to arms”. I was so very proud of her and told her so. I did little to start her on her path, she is a rising star, indeed she is already a star.”

[Name] continues to collaborate with the American Institute for Conservation's (AIC) National Heritage Responders and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to engage cultural heritage professionals in education and ongoing disaster recovery at several Puerto Rican institutions. [Director] of the National Heritage Responders program of the AIC writes “Shortly after the hurricanes hit Puerto Rico, [Name] contacted my office at the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation to see how she might help support response and recovery efforts. Our team of National Heritage Responders was still several weeks away from being able to send in volunteers. Our primary need at that point was an understanding of the landscape of cultural institutions in Puerto Rico so we could ascertain who might need assistance. [Name] immediately jumped in and contributed to a spreadsheet of institutions with her deep knowledge of Puerto Rico's cultural heritage. The information from that spreadsheet went on to inform the official response from FEMA and likewise shaped the deployments of teams of National Heritage Responders in November 2017 and January 2018.”

Locally, she has served on several committees, including the Library Exhibits Committee, which she chaired, as well as a search committee within the Krannert Art Museum. She has also served on the CARLI Preservation Committee where she was chair as well.

Research: [Name] has worked closely with Library faculty on research about increasing cultural and racial diversity within the field of cultural heritage preservation, and has a co-authored article nearing publication on the subject. [Name] has also submitted a federal grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts to propose increasing preservation and conservation training opportunities for underserved populations.

Professional Knowledge: If you haven't gathered it already, [Name] really knows her stuff. She is a national leader in disaster planning and recovery, and exceedingly knowledgeable in all areas of her position, showing an ability to look critically at workflows and constantly evaluate them for possible improvements. While she came to Illinois with a great deal of experience, she did need to learn about how to work with our commercial bindery (which she is now very adept at and serves as the main point of contact with that vendor). What's really impressive is that [Name] always wants to learn more or learn how she can do better at what she is already doing – a desire which will only continue to benefit the Library and our preservation program for years to come.

Please do seriously consider [Name]'s application for this promotional opportunity. I hope that you will agree with me that she is indeed worthy of promotion at this time.

Sincerely,

[Supervisor]
Professor and Head, [Unit]