

## TIPS ON WRITING SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS OF REFERENCE

- ✚ Ask the candidate for his/her CV so that you can familiarize yourself with his/her accomplishments
- ✚ Find out as much as possible about the scholarship's criteria so that you can cater your letter to suit the individual scholarship
- ✚ Do not employ a standard template that can be used for multiple candidates; rather, try to communicate in your letter what makes the candidate unique
- ✚ Make sure to include the name of the scholarship and specific reasons why you think the candidate is deserving
- ✚ Be clear about your relationship with the candidate and state exactly how long you have known him/her
- ✚ Be as specific as possible; for example, instead of saying that the student is a hard-worker, give concrete examples of instances where they worked above and beyond what was required
- ✚ Offer personal observations of the applicant, rather than a list of their accomplishments
- ✚ It is useful to include an anecdote or short story that demonstrates why you are recommending the applicant
- ✚ Remember to proofread your letter to ensure that your spelling, grammar and punctuation are impeccable
- ✚ Use clear, concise, and simple language throughout your letter and remember to sign and date it

- ✚ Find out how long the letter needs to be; if unknown, one typed single-spaced page is standard; remember, quality is favored over quantity
- ✚ In general, your letter could include a brief introduction and conclusion with about 2 body paragraphs, although this is not required – please see the examples below
- ✚ Make sure to type your letter on company letterhead
- ✚ If you have any questions about how to write a scholarship reference letter, please see Joshua Berman in The Learning Centre (B-205F)

## **SAMPLE # 1 (On company letterhead)**

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing on behalf of STUDENT in reference to the CMA scholarship. STUDENT came to see me at The Learning Centre in regards to a special English project that she needed extra help with and has been working with me on a weekly basis for the past six weeks. Although she is very strong in Mathematics, she identified an area in her English studies that she felt she could use improvement in and sought my assistance on her own behalf. I feel that this in and of itself speaks to her character because not only do many students not want to address their academic challenges, it is even rarer that they voluntarily take the initiative to develop and strengthen those areas on their own.

In the time that I've known STUDENT, I have always found her to be extremely pleasant to work with, attentive to detail, disciplined, and conscientious of following through with scheduled tasks. Every week that we meet, I assign additional work (on top of the academic course load she is already following and the extra-curricular activities that she's mentioned to me), which she always completes. Her ability to manage her time well, willingness to go the extra mile, and hard work to achieve the task she's set for herself are truly amazing. I believe that her desire to achieve her goals, willingness to work towards them, and self-discipline will make her an excellent CMA.

Moreover, I find STUDENT to be a bright, thoughtful, and attentive student. When we work together she is inquisitive, asking questions that show she is working through the information and processing it for herself. When I present her with difficult concepts, she is able to reason her way through them and come up with her own interpretations and explanations, which she is then able to apply to the materials we are working on. She is good at problem solving and applying a logical approach to the challenges set before her, skills that are certainly beneficial in her chosen professional field. It is without hesitation that I recommend STUDENT for the CMA scholarship as I believe that she has all the traits and skills required to succeed.

Should you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

INSERT: YOUR NAME, SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

## **SAMPLE # 2 (On company letterhead)**

April 23, 2009

Subject: Nomination of STUDENT for the Alan Liddiard Memorial Award

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with certainty and enthusiasm that I recommend STUDENT to be the recipient of this year's Alan Liddiard Memorial Award.

I have known STUDENT since she began volunteering at The Learning Centre in January 2008. During this time, she has proven herself to be a dedicated volunteer, a hard-working student and an all-round wonderful person who takes great pride in her school.

STUDENT first began studying at Vanier at the Language School. Recognizing the quality of education and sense of community Vanier has, she chose to pursue her DEC here as well. A student in the Health Science Program, she has excelled academically. STUDENT works diligently to get the absolute most out of her education. Her impressive grades are the result of high intelligence, determination and ambition. (Indeed, STUDENT has been accepted into the prestigious and difficult-to-get-into Double Degree Business Administration and Mathematics Co-operative Program offered jointly by University of Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier University.)

STUDENT, however, does not only come to Vanier for academic purposes; she is active in its vibrant community. She volunteered in The Learning Centre for two semesters as a TLC Assistant. Her tasks included working on and distributing publicity materials for the Centre, assisting in special events, and a myriad of clerical jobs. She quickly adapted to the work environment and was given a steadily increasing amount of responsibility, to which she responded with confidence and ability. STUDENT was very professional, reliable and consistent with her great work; a key player contributing to the overall functioning of our Centre. In addition to carrying out her responsibilities conscientiously, STUDENT always showed up with a smile on her face. Her interactions with both Learning Centre staff and students alike highlighted her friendly disposition.

The great care and interest she put into her work as a TLC Assistant can be seen as an extension of STUDENT feelings towards Vanier. This was most evident to me in the spring of 2008 when we offered our TLC Assistants tickets to attend the Oratorio Terezin. Most of our volunteers declined, explaining that they were too busy with end-of-term studying. STUDENT, however, was thrilled and thankful to have the chance to attend; her mother was visiting from China and she was extremely proud to take her to a grand production put on by her school.

At present, STUDENT is a member of the Vanier Key Society, to which she was admitted in A08. As part of the Key Society, she has continued to devote her time, effort and talents to the promotion of Vanier. STUDENT worked as a Vanier ambassador at Vanier's annual Open House, participated in an event welcoming Vanier's new international students and is currently involved in the Vanier Peace Garden Project, to be located by the Sports Complex. Being one of the four original student members of this project (it has since expanded) STUDENT has been active in the development of the Peace Garden since its inception. Working under the supervision of Student Services' Barb Armstrong, STUDENT has been committed to fundraising for the project, working on the "A Quarter A Day" fundraising cans as well as bake sales (one which has already passed and another to take place on May 6). Finally, STUDENT has been involved in designing the Garden, selecting plants for it, and working on a plan for it to be sustained after she and her Peace Garden team members have graduated.

Reflecting over STUDENT academic success and contributions to the Vanier community, I feel confident that she is most worthy of the Alan Liddiard Memorial Award. Please contact me should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

INSERT: YOUR NAME, SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

**SAMPLE # 3 (On company letterhead)**

April 28, 2009

B.A.S.F. Scholarships  
C.P. Graham, P.O. Box 25027  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3R 3L9

To whom it may concern,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend STUDENT for the Jackie Robinson Career Scholarship.

STUDENT is a third semester student from our Business Administration program who was selected to represent Vanier College in our Education for All study program in Malawi, Africa. This project is supported by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) of the Government of Canada.

In the summer 2009 in Malawi, STUDENT will focus on the need for universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa and will visit various primary and secondary schools and offer support in classroom settings. Moreover, STUDENT will learn about the strengths and challenges of the Malawian schooling system, as well as the specific importance of gender issues with respect to education. Upon her return, she will create awareness about the necessity for universal education as she shares her experience by giving presentations to students from various high schools and colleges. We invite you to follow the development of this project and STUDENT experience through her blog that you will find on our website: ([www.vaniercollege.gc.ca/international-education](http://www.vaniercollege.gc.ca/international-education)).

We think STUDENT is an important member of our team because her demeanour is professional and mature. We have witnessed how her devotion and dedication to her program have instilled in her an excellent and professional work ethic. STUDENT will be a key element to help us create awareness about the importance of Universal Primary Education.

Please contact us if you need further information.

Best regards,

INSERT: YOUR NAME, SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

### **SAMPLE # 4 (On company letterhead)**

December 12, 2006

I would like to highly recommend STUDENT to you for a Millennium Excellence Award.

STUDENT began voluntary humanitarian work in South America at sixteen years of age. Her most recent trip was to Costa Rica. Prior to leaving, she took it upon herself to purchase school supplies to bring with her and once there, organized a team to make gift bags for the children. She worked in disadvantaged communities and helped in the development of small villages. Volunteering with the team, she promoted the importance of education and languages, by visiting schools and orphanages and talking with the children about the relevance of these issues to their lives. She also promoted environmental causes by working with the Costa Rican people to help clean beaches and parks.

STUDENT has taken initiative, with one of her classmates, to start a shoebox campaign, at Vanier. The campaign's objective is to fill two-hundred boxes of goods to be distributed to the needy in the Montreal area. Her responsibilities include writing sponsorship letters to various companies and organizations in the Montreal and Laval regions; as well as producing promotional material to enlighten the Vanier community about this campaign. Moreover, STUDENT is a member of the Vanier Key Society, which consists of high achieving students with strong interpersonal skills, especially chosen, to represent Vanier College as ambassadors. Her responsibilities include volunteering at the Vanier Open House in which she confidently addressed inquiries regarding the college and led guided school tours for groups of potential recruits

STUDENT has been tutoring ESL in The Learning Centre's Peer Tutoring Program at Vanier College since 2005. This program allows her leadership abilities to shine, exemplifying her strong ability to motivate her students. She has made a strong and positive impression on me. For example, her student needed to improve his oral communication skills. This was extremely important to him because he was required to complete a stage within the English milieu. STUDENT gave generously of her time, meeting him twice per week for two hours at a time. She gave him excellent feedback, constantly correcting his pronunciation and making positive suggestions for improvement. Through STUDENT support, I saw this young man's self-esteem and self-confidence grow, as well as significantly improving the clarity of his speaking skills. Thus, being a highly effective role-model, her student looked to STUDENT for guidance and motivation for learning. As a result, he followed her lead and was successful in improving his English skills.

STUDENT has learned that being a leader is not just about one person being in charge but rather working together towards a common goal; not imposing ideas on others but listening to them and trying to make herself a better person. Her involvement in the Humanitarian trips, worthy campaigns and tutoring ESL clearly show her leadership ability and strong initiative. I highly recommend STUDENT to you. I am confident that she is an excellent candidate for a Millennium Excellence Award.

Sincerely,

INSERT: YOUR NAME, SIGNATURE AND CONTACT INFORMATION