

# FACULTY WORKSHOP

# Letters of Recommendation

**GRADED**

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF SÃO PAULO

OFFICE OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

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# Our goals for this session...

1. Provide you with some pointers for how to write a “quick and dirty” letter of recommendation.
2. Write one letter!

# The 5-Part Recommendation

- Part 1: Introduction
- Parts 2, 3, & 4: Anecdotes
- Part 5: Conclusion



# Part 1: Introduction

- Who are you?
  - Name, title
  - courses you taught this student in
  - A little description of the course
  - how many years you have been teaching
  - Summary introduction sentence about student overall
- Copy-and-paste this section into every rec, changing just that final, student-specific summary statement!

# Introduction Example

I am honored to have been asked to write this letter of recommendation for Bill Belichick. I have been teaching for 25 years, including the past 10 at Graded, and I have been lucky to have served as Bill's Ethics teacher for the past two years. This is a course that requires deep reflection and critical thinking. From all that I have seen of Bill in my work with him in this context, I am confident that he is well-prepared for university.

## Parts 2, 3 & 4: Anecdotes

- What attributes do you want to highlight about this individual?
- What examples from your work with this student illustrate each attribute?
- Put this into 1, 2, or 3 parts/paragraphs.
- Minimize TELLING; maximize SHOWING. Share the stories of this student in your classroom.
- Add “best of career” context for any anecdote wherever possible.



# Anecdote Example

One of the most impressive attributes of Bill's performance in my class is his dedication. He seems always willing to whatever it takes to reach success and to improve as a student. For example, on his very first essay — an analysis of a self-selected text by Aristotle — he struggled with some of the concepts. However, how he responded to the situation revealed his commitment. He read through my comments, shared questions in class discussion, and then sought me out for individual conference, taking notes throughout. Then he asked to revise the essay, not for a grade but in order to make sure that he was able to reflect his understanding. Of course, I agreed. His second draft proved to be much better, and, frankly, it established the trend that his work has followed ever since. He has not needed to revise most of his work, as it tends to be submitted according to the highest standards and reflecting an incredible depth of thinking, not to mention careful and thoughtful proofreading. **As such, in my career, Bill is the most talented student I have had the good pleasure of teaching.**

## Part 5: Conclusion

- Summary of your thoughts about this individual as a student in your class context.
- What other commentary about this individual can you add with respect to a broader conception of this individual, including a sense of them outside of the class and perhaps anything about their character.
- Closing statement of endorsement.



# Conclusion Example

In conclusion, Bill is a talented ethicist and writer and even more capable student. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him over these past two years. That said, I would be remiss not also to mention that he is an influential member of our community. In addition to being a leader of our lacrosse team, he is also an all-around positive and friendly guy, involved in a number of clubs and activities. I am sure that he would leave a positive mark on any community lucky enough to have him. As such, Bill comes with my highest recommendation.

# “Quick and Dirty” Process

1. What 1-3 attributes of this student stand out to you?
2. What anecdotes can you recall that highlight these attributes?
3. Write them out!
4. Write your introduction.
5. Write your conclusion.
6. Edit the transitions.

**NOW YOU TRY!**