

HOW TO PREPARE AND ASK FOR A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

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<https://bullpennblog.wordpress.com/>



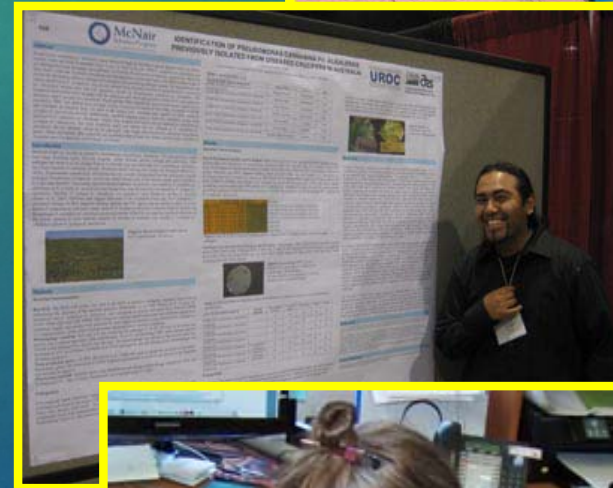
GREAT LETTERS REQUIRE THAT YOU:

- Get the position
 - Understand how you will be evaluated
 - Learn the skills
 - Do the work
 - Make sure you demonstrate skills
- Formally request the letters
 - Provide the information needed
 - Give suggestions



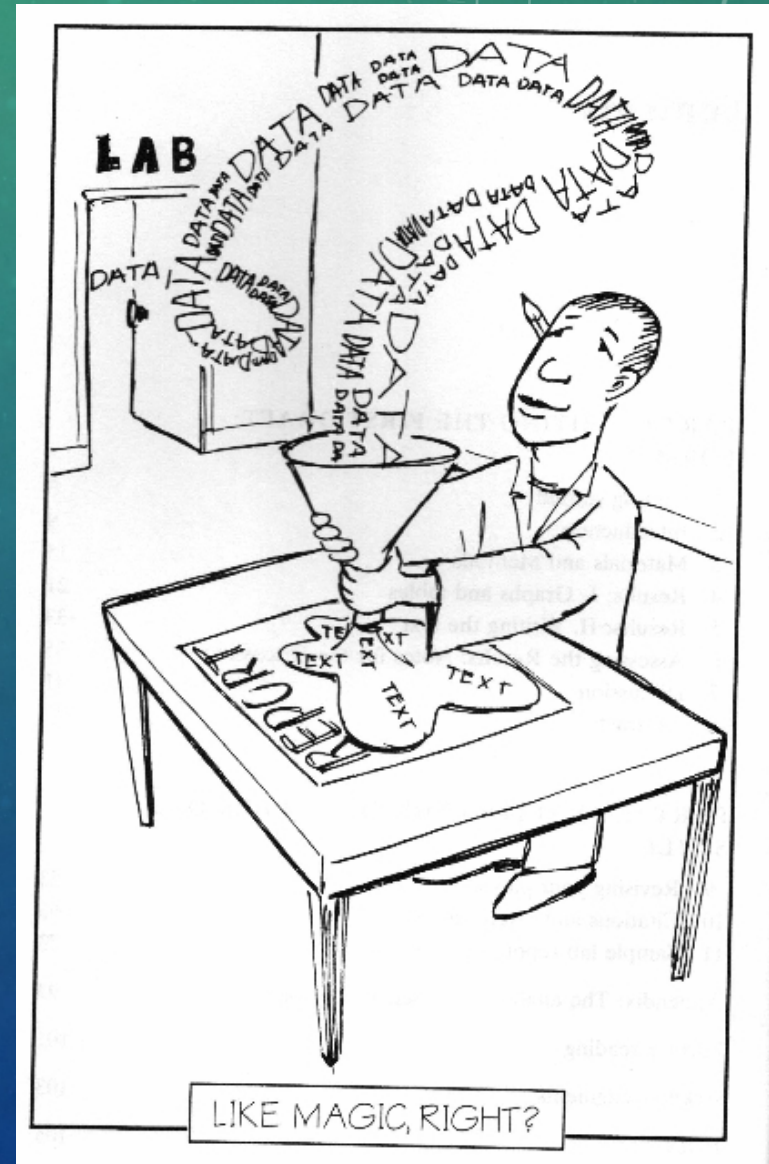
UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAINING HIERARCHY

- Laboratory safety
- Technical skills
- Documentation skills
- Experimentation skills
- Project management/planning
- Resource management
- Literature analysis
- Critical thinking
- Hypothesis testing and generation
- Presentation skills
- Professionalism



IF YOU HAVE DONE THE WORK: WRITE IT UP

- Writing is the most important part of the project.
- This is how we communicate what we have done.



<https://academichelp.net/academic-assignments/write-lab-report.html>

EVALUATION

1= highest effort demonstrated; 5=lowest effort demonstrated

Demonstrable characters	1	2	3	4	5
Analytical skills/ability					
Quantitative skills					
Oral/written abilities					
Creativity and originality					
Intellectual curiosity					
Maturity/reliability/dependability					
Motivation/drive/industriousness					
Initiative/resourcefulness					
Self-discipline/focus					
Ability to work independently					
Ability to work with others					
Academic performance					
Motivation for graduate study					
Ethical standards and integrity					
Willing to work hard to achieve					

For each topic with a three or higher list activities or training that will help improve your demonstrated performance in these areas.

PROCESS FOR A GOOD RECOMMENDATION

- Choose writers carefully
 - Different letter writers to speak to different strengths
- Cultivate relationships
- Ask whether they are willing and able to write you a strong letter of recommendation early and often
- Keep track of the good things your mentors say about you

FIRST REQUEST (FICTIONAL)

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From: Psu (Carolee Bull)
To: jjLoper@osu.edu
Cc:
Subject: Request for reference

Dear Dr. Loper,

Thank you for your support and mentoring over the past 30 years. I hope you agree I have put the training you provided to good use.

I will be applying for a few new positions in the coming weeks and I would like to know if you would be able to write strong letters of recommendations for these positions. I have listed the positions below and will send additional information if you agree.

Thank you in advance for your help with this. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information at this time.

Carolee

Due date: April 30, 2018
Organization: Louisiana State University
Send recommendation to: Mr. Warr dawarr@lsu
Job title: Department Head Plant Pathology
Job announcement: <http://www.lsu.edu/agriculture/plant/posting/3721>

Due date: June 1, 2018
Organization: University of Nebraska
Send recommendation to: Ms. Miller mcmiller@unl.edu
Job title: Department Head Plant Pathology
Job announcement: <https://employment.unl.edu/postings/57799>

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DETAILED SECOND REQUESTS

- Provide ample time
- Provide the details
 - Due dates
 - Where and how does the letter need to be sent and addressed
 - Guidelines for letter writers
 - Link to the announcement
 - Copy of your application
 - Will there be a recommendation form to fill out as well as a letter
- Ask them specifically to speak to certain strengths
 - Research, Academics, Communication, Teaching, Outreach, Project management, Teamwork

DETAILS FROM YOUR WORK WITH THE REFERENCE

Here are several areas you may want to mention regarding my ability to conduct research :

- My ability to work independently as demonstrated by my recent bean experiments. After the planning the experiment with your mentorship, I have planted, rated, and successfully isolated bacteria from the bean plants on my own.
- My ability to quickly learn new skills and procedures in the lab, which both you and your technician have remarked on. I was quickly able to run a successful PCR and gel without assistance. I was also able to master the procedure for bacterial isolation from plants and I have performed several isolations on my own since then.
- I was involved in several different projects in the lab due to my insatiable curiosity and my commitment to research. I was on the three separate lettuce isolation projects, the kale and chive isolations projects, and the *Pseudomonas cannabina* host range project. These projects peaked my curiosity, motivating me to answer the questions they posed.

DETAILS FROM YOUR CV SPECIFIC TO THE AWARD, PROGRAM, OR JOB

I have also created a list of highlights from my GRFP Personal Statement and CV:

- I am committed to receiving my Ph.D. degree as demonstrated by my past and present research and my academic excellence.
- Through my graduate research, I plan to identify genetic resistance to bacterial diseases in plants in order to develop healthier crops.
- I conducted research under the mentorship of Dr. Xxxxx Xxxxxxx at the University of Texas at Austin on variation in panicle architecture for the grass *Panicum halli*.
- I am a 2015 Goldwater Scholar Honorable Mention