Dear Recommender:

As the pre-law advisors on campus, we would like to thank you for your work with the pre-law students, particularly your willingness to write letters of recommendation for them. Sometimes a strong letter of recommendation can be the deciding factor in a student’s law school admission.

Most law schools prefer that students use the LSAC Credential Assembly Service (CAS) for letters of recommendation. A recommender sends one letter to LSAC and LSAC sends copies of that letter to all schools to which the student is applying. A handful of schools still prefer that the letters of recommendation come to the school directly from the recommenders. That is increasingly rare, and it is the student’s responsibility to tell the recommender exactly where the letters should go and to provide proper envelopes and postage.

There seems to be some confusion regarding the proper timeline for law school recommendations. January 15th is likely to be the first official deadline a student will encounter. However, most law schools operate on a “rolling admissions” basis, whereby they start reviewing applications, and often extending offers of admission, as early as late October or early November. There is a real competitive edge to be gained with an early application; therefore, we urge our students to apply as early as possible in the process.

Please be frank with students about your own timeline for sending the recommendations. If a diligent student submits a law school application early – in November, for example – but a recommender does not send the requested recommendation in November, there are two possible scenarios. In one, the student’s file simply sits somewhere, waiting for the recommendation, costing the student any benefit she may have received from an early application. In the other scenario, the student’s application is reviewed anyway, and a decision is made without benefit of the recommendation. We had several students in this application cycle who received rejections from law schools before the second letters of recommendation even arrived at LSAC. In each situation the student had requested the letter 4-6 months in advance of the rejection.

Please also be candid with the student about the quality of your potential recommendation. If you do not feel able to provide a strong recommendation for a student, please let the
student know that and give the student the option of requesting recommendations elsewhere.

We have provided the student with two sets of guidelines, one for the student and one for the writer of the recommendation. We have instructed the students to give a copy of this letter and the guidelines to each person from whom they request letters of recommendation.

If there is anything we can do to make the recommendation process easier or more efficient, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

Pre-Law Advising Team
Office of College Advising
CAS 120