Regardless if you plan to pursue a graduate or a professional program, letters of recommendation will play a significant role in your application packet to graduate and/or professional programs or, in some cases, for job, internship and assistantship interviews. Letters of recommendation are often reviewed by the graduate or professional program to which you are applying and are assessed for your fit with the graduate program to which you applied.

**Who you should ask to write letters?**
- 2-3 Science Professors (one being your PI)
- 1 Non-science Professor
- 1 character reference from a non-relative
- 1 from Pre-Med Committee (Lori Martensen and Dr. Biagi will be sufficient for this)

**Choosing Who to Ask**
When requesting letters of recommendation, ask yourself the following questions:
1) Does this person know me well enough to write about my potential for a career in my selected area of study?
2) Is this person likely to write a positive letter?
3) What do the schools you are interested in require?

**Academic References**
In a perfect world, all letters of recommendation would come from people who know you well and can speak to both your academic abilities and your personality. However, when you attend a school as large as OSU, you don’t always have the opportunity to get to know your professors well. Plan ahead and make an attempt to interact with faculty one-on-one or in small group settings by visiting during office hours, attending extra review sessions, etc. If you still don’t have enough references from professors you know well, ask faculty in whose class you did very well. Set up an appointment so you can talk and the person can learn more about you.

**Character References**
Possible references include: employers, coaches, volunteer coordinators, or anyone who knows you well enough to speak to your personality. Be sure this person speaks to your character; you do not need them to speak to your intelligence (that will be done in the other reference letters.)

**Making the request**
- If at all possible, make the request face-to-face
- Have a resume or list of activities ready to give to the reference
- Give the reference at least one month to complete and submit the letter, preferably more
- Give any additional information needed or information that will be requested by the institution to which you plan to apply (specific name or title of the program by way of example).

**Follow Up**
With one week until the deadline confirm that letter was sent with the institution or service to which the letter was to be submitted. If the letter has not been submitted, follow up with the references about the status of the letter. After the letter has been submitted, send a hand-written thank you note to the reference. Keep the reference appraised of your progress as you apply, interview, and select a program.

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