

Effective Letter
(2nd Year Appraisal)

April 12, 2004

Jane Jones, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology
Any Florida University
Sunny, FL 33333

Dear Dr. Jones:

The purpose of this letter is to provide written feedback on your progress, to date, toward promotion and tenure. I will comment on your performance thus far in teaching, research and service.

In the area of teaching, I am basing my comments on my observations of your classroom teaching and on informal feedback from students. (I would remind you again that you must complete the SPOT evaluations in the fall semesters and would encourage you to have these evaluations done in other semesters as well.) Overall, I found your class quite enjoyable. You were obviously well-prepared and used an interesting strategy for reviewing the course content for the test. It appeared that the students were well versed in the material you had covered. You knew all of the students' names, which is a sign to me that you have taken the time to get to know your students. I would encourage you to continue this level of energy and commitment to your teaching. I would also encourage you to be timely in your feedback to students on their performance and written work.

I have heard from three students, two in SOC 5105 and one in SOC 3221, that you either have not returned their papers or that you did so several months after the class had ended. Students must be given such feedback in a timely manner. Please arrange to return all student papers by the end of the semester in which the course is offered.

In terms of your research and scholarship, your vitae and evidence of performance indicate that you have one book chapter, a case study, and two book reviews since coming to AFU. You also indicated that you had submitted one article that was presented at ASA to the Journal of Symbolic Interaction. Two additional articles are to be submitted in summer 2004. You have presented a total of five papers since 2001 at either the ASA or MSA meetings. While your presentation rate is good, I would encourage you to continue submitting for

publication the papers you prepared for presentation. A modest goal would be to achieve at least two publications per year, one of which is in a peer-reviewed journal. You should also plan to submit some of your work to ISI high-impact journals (e.g., American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Annual Review of Sociology). As I have discussed with you previously, it would also strengthen your research program to have some type of funded project. I would be glad to assist you in locating an appropriate funding source and in providing the support staff and services necessary to complete a proposal. As I have already assigned a doctoral student to you this semester for this purpose, (Smith), I expect that you should have a concrete plan for preparing a proposal.

The obtaining of such grant support would strengthen your ability to conduct either community-based or educationally-based research and add to your stature as a researcher and scholar. While such efforts are sometimes frustrating and time-consuming, they are well worth your while.

With respect to your service activities, I realize that you have spent considerable time this year, as Chair of the Specialization Committee, in organizing and generally “cleaning up” the program. You have done an outstanding job in this area. I would urge you to use your committee and support staff to the fullest so you do not end up having to do everything single-handedly. Obviously, your leadership is essential, but the other faculty involved can certainly share some of the burdens. Your other service activities to the School, to the University, and to the discipline (ASA and SSA work) are all excellent. Here again, I would encourage you to consider combining somehow your interests and efforts in sociological education with the need for scholarship. Some of your conference paper presentation topics would be ideal candidates for subsequent publication. More of this type of “dual” payoff will build your reputation as a scholar.

I would also encourage you to approach tasks and activities in the Department with a spirit of cooperation and respect for colleagues. While I believe you have the best interests of the Department in mind, there have been occasions in which other faculty have interpreted your actions or memos as somewhat brusque and abrupt. I do not think that was your intention. Be aware that the impact you have on others often affects their willingness to work cooperatively with you in the future. I am giving you this feedback with the intention of being helpful and supportive. Please do not hesitate to ask for my advice and consultation whenever you need it.

It is obvious to me that you are working very hard to do the kinds of things that will further your career and enhance the reputation of the Department. I hope that you continue in this level of activity and take my suggestions into account.

Let me know if there is anything that I can do to help support you in these efforts.

Sincerely,

Marx DeConstruct, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor

(Sample letter composed by Dianne F. Harrison, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies.)