LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of Recommendation are of great importance throughout your personal and professional life. Graduate and professional schools require them, as do most employers and many organizations. Even as an entering student, you should remind yourself that every teacher is a potential writer of recommendations and that the impressions they form of you as your progress through their classes may influence the character of the letter that may be written when you apply for a theatre position.

There is an etiquette of soliciting letters of recommendation, and any breach of it may result in a negative response. The following are some suggestions to follow when asking for letters of recommendation:

1. The person who writes on your behalf should be well-acquainted with your work and able to speak authoritatively about it. Mere friendship is not enough. The strength of a recommendation is proportionate to the professional attainments of the writer.

2. Always request permission to submit someone’s name as a reference.

3. Remember that nearly everyone is busy, particularly those who are best qualified to support your petition. Start the process in plenty of time so your advocate does not feel rushed.

4. Be judicious in the number of letters you request from one individual. Even with the aid of computers, it is a time-consuming activity.

5. To write a persuasive recommendation, a person needs to have all the facts. Write down precisely what you want to be recommended for. Always give the writer a copy of your resume to familiarize them with your work and accomplishments.

6. Always inform the writer if the letter is to be confidential or if you will have access to what has been written in the letter.

7. Provide a typed, addressed and stamped envelope for every letter to be sent. On the other hand, you may be asked to collect all the letters and then send them in a single package.

8. Make certain that you always thank the writer and make sure that you inform them of the results of their letter of support. Remember, you will probably need their reference again.

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter is a one page letter designed to introduce yourself to a potential employer and highlight your skills and accomplishments. The cover letter should be tailored to fit your needs. In today’s highly competitive job market, it is of utmost importance that the cover letter is of professional quality. The format and typeface should be easy to read and the information should be presented clearly and concisely. The printing should be letter-quality; either printed by a professional printer or on a laser-writer or ink-jet printer. The cover letter and the resume should be printed on the same color and type of paper stock; matching envelopes are a professional touch. It is recommended that you consult your advisor regarding your resume and cover letters. Proofreading is essential! A spelling mistake or typographical error will give a very bad impression to the potential employer or graduate school.