

Handout #9 – Example Department Head Letter (with comments)

17 June 200x

National Science Foundation CAREER Program
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Program Representative:

On behalf of the Department of Civil Engineering at Texas A&M University, I am very pleased to support Dr. John Doe's application for the National Science Foundation CAREER Award. Dr. Doe has proposed a comprehensive and innovative research and education plan that will contribute to the Department's initiatives in integrating research and education into our engineering programs.

Comment [LD1]: States how the proposed project supports departmental priorities

Dr. Doe is working in an exciting research area at the boundary between various fields of science and engineering. His research proposal on the "Career proposal title" draws from laboratory methods, turbulence theory, and numerical analysis to produce results that can be used in the context of the sciences, ocean engineering and other branches of civil engineering. It addresses the basic understanding of [technical details and applications]. He is also a dedicated teacher working on enlarging the curriculum in coastal and ocean engineering and enhancing international cooperation with other institutions of higher learning.

Comment [LD2]: Clearly states the research and education benefits of Dr. Doe's research. Includes details of the project that makes it clear the DH has read the proposal.

The Department of Civil Engineering is fully committed to providing Dr. Doe with the support he needs to further develop his academic career. As a demonstration of the Department's commitment to his development and success, the Department will provide substantial funds, up to \$xxxx in institutional support, for the purchase of the laboratory equipment required for his proposed research. In addition, the Department will provide Dr. Doe with academic release time of 20% for nine months (one day per week) during each year of the project and one-and-a-half months of summer salary support during the first year of the project. This will allow Dr. Doe to focus his efforts during this important time. The Department will also commit to providing \$xxxx per year (\$xxxx maximum) in travel funding for Dr. Doe and his students and up to \$xxx per year for publication costs. Most importantly, the Department will provide mentoring support for Dr. Doe through ongoing relationships with senior faculty.

Comment [LD3]: Discusses tangible support for the PI and project. The PI's startup package can be mentioned here as institutional support.

I have read and I endorse this career-development plan. I attest that Dr. Doe's career-development plan is supported by and integrated into the educational and research goals of the Department and Texas A&M University. I personally commit the Department to the support and professional development of Dr. Doe. I verify that Dr. Doe is eligible for the CAREER award: as of the date of this letter, Dr. Doe holds a doctoral degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, is untenured, has not previously submitted a CAREER proposal, and is employed in a tenure-track position at Texas A&M University.

Comment [LD4]: This section is required (see solicitation for exact wording).

Sincerely,

Dept. Head, etc.