

Excerpted From: Laws, Policies, Practices and Procedures

6. Using Simmons Letterhead

From time to time, I receive inquiries from faculty concerning the “rules” about the use of their Simmons letterhead when corresponding with people and organizations outside of Simmons. My advice is usually the same.

First, do you want to use your letterhead for a communication directly related to your work and responsibilities at Simmons? Are statements made on behalf of your department, your program, your school? Is the letter being written in the normal course of your job (like a letter of reference), and with-in the scope of your professional responsibilities to Simmons? Or is the letter of a more personal nature, expressing your own opinions on a matter that interests you because of your professional experience or training (like a letter to the editor of a local newspaper). If the letter is expressing your personal opinion which is based on your considerable professional expertise, it should NOT be sent on Simmons letterhead.

Second, have you reviewed Section 1.4 of the Faculty Policy Manual, which sets forth the AAUP’s statement regarding the special obligations that faculty have when communicating with the public. Subsection (c) of Section 1.4 states:

College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institutions by their utterances. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate they are not speaking for the institution.

Third, if you still aren’t sure about whether to use Simmons letterhead, have you consulted with your Dean? Your Dean may have some thoughts on this matter and can offer guidance.