PURPOSE
To outline the appropriate guidelines for written or verbal references for students and alumni.

ORGANIZATIONAL SCOPE OR AUDIENCE
Current students, alumni, faculty, staff

DEFINITIONS

POLICY
When a request is made for a student reference, college personnel must be fair and factual.

PROCEDURE
Reviewing and assessing the qualifications of student and alumni for employers will be limited to only those skills, education, training and qualifications needed to perform duties associated with positions posed by employers without regard to race, religion, color, disability, national origin, gender or age. Below are guidelines that should be used when providing references for students or alumni.

Written References
1. Provide written references only if a student has given your name as a reference and you are willing to be used as a reference;
2. If using Ivy Tech letterhead, state the following in your reference letter: “This recommendation is my personal observation and does not reflect any official position of Ivy Tech Community College”;
3. When preparing a reference letter, be factual, do not editorialize, and avoid vague statements;
4. Respond to the specific inquiry about the student, alumnus/alumna, or job applicant. Direct the response to the particular person who requested the information;
5. If a “to whom it may concern” reference letter is requested, document that this is the type of reference requested and that the student, alumnus/alumna, or job applicant takes responsibility for disseminating the letter to the appropriate person(s);
6. Relate references to the specific position for which the individual has applied and the work the work that is to be performed;
7. Do not give personal opinions or feelings. However, if you provide subjective statements or give opinions because they are requested, clearly identify them as opinions and not as fact;
8. If you give an opinion, explain the incident or circumstance upon which you base your opinion;
9. Be able to document all information you release;
10. State in the reference letter: “This information is confidential, should be treated as such, and is provided at the request of [name of student, alumni, or applicant], who has asked me to serve as a reference.” Statements such as this provide justification for the communication and leave no doubt that the information was not given to damage the individual’s reputation;
11. Do not include information that might indicate the individual’s race, religion, color, disability, national origin, gender, or age;
12. In the event you are unable to provide a positive recommendation, then you should decline to provide one.

Verbal References
1. Do not disclose information regarding an individual’s educational record without the written consent of the student or alumnus/alumna. Release of information consent forms may be completed in the Office of the Registrar
2. Informal “lunch” discussions or “off the record” telephone conversations with prospective employers regarding a student or alumnus’ performance are inappropriate and should not occur;
3. Information provided should be factual, based upon personal knowledge and observation of the student, alumnus/alumna or job applicant through direct contact;
4. In the event an employer contacts the College and advises that a student, alumnus/alumna, or job applicant has given permission for the College to give a verbal reference, verification of this permission should be obtained from the individual prior to providing any information. Verification should include a written confirmation from the student, alumnus/alumna, or job applicant granting permission to serve as a reference;
5. When giving a verbal reference, the guidelines listed for written references should also be followed;
6. If you are unable to provide a positive recommendation, then you should decline to provide one.

REFERENCES
5.7 Career Services [http://www.ivytech.edu/policies/career-services.pdf]
RESOURCE PERSON
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs