

## College Procedure: 400.11 – References for Employees

Policy Reference: 400 – Employee Ethics and Conduct  
Responsible Department: Human Resources  
Approval Authority: Cabinet  
Procedure Owner: Vice President, Human Resources  
Effective Date: 02/25/2013

Version Number: 3  
Legal Counsel Reviewed (yes/no): No  
Scope: College-wide

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### Reason for Procedure

Kirkwood's position on providing references and recommendations for employees is that the reference provider must follow established guidelines in order to comply with the legal constraints in providing references. The law provides protection for providing good faith references.

### The Procedure

All inquiries from prospective employers concerning employment-related information on current and former hourly, non-exempt and administrative employees should be directed to Human Resources. Inquiries concerning current or former faculty members should be made to the Dean of the department. It is the policy of the college to disclose, upon a prospective employer's request, only the following information about current and former employees:

- 1) date of employment;
- 2) job title; and
- 3) description of the job duties performed.

If an employee/applicant asks you to serve as a reference and you agree, all information provided in a reference check must be accurate and in good faith. The reference provider must not knowingly provide false information or have malicious intent. Reference providers should confine their information to the questions that are asked and refrain from volunteering information. The reference provider should never make inappropriate comments, which could be interpreted as malicious. Providing opinions about an employee's performance and competence is acceptable, as long as they are honestly held opinions. If an employee/applicant asks you to serve as a reference, and your opinion is negative towards that individual, it is best to decline such a request.

Information provided during an employment reference check should be specific and work-related in nature. Descriptions of performance and conduct should be based on work behavior. Appropriate topics include performance, achievements, general work habits, abilities and on-the-job conduct. Reference

providers need to use caution so that information provided does not violate the employee’s civil rights such as information that reveals age, appearance (including pregnancy), citizenship, disabilities, race, religion, workers’ compensation claims or other information that is protected.

Prior to providing a reference, the reference provider should verify the identity of the person requesting the reference. If a verbal reference check is requested, the identity of the reference seeker can be obtained by requesting a callback telephone number and returning the call.

When providing a verbal reference, document the questions you are asked and your responses. When providing a written reference, make a copy of the reference letter or form. Retain the notes, forms and letters after providing a reference for one year.

## Revision Log

*Table 1 Revision Log*

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
1	02/25/2013	Jim Choate, Vice President, Finance	New procedure
2	05/15/2017	Mick Starcevich, President	New template
3	07/15/2019	Cabinet	Procedure template