Memorandum

To: Faculty Recommenders for the Truman Scholarship

From: Nationally Competitive Scholarships in the Office of University Scholars and Fellows (OUSF)

The student presenting this document is applying for Duke’s nomination for the Truman Scholarship. Your recommendation is vital to this process, and will be a determining factor if the student should win the national honor. At this time, we do not need a full letter from you, simply an email a couple of paragraphs highlighting the student’s strengths in the area they have asked you to speak to in order to help us select Duke’s four nominees. A polished letter for the four nominees will be due in mid-January.

We hope this note will help you understand the process and clarify any questions you may have. If at any time you need our assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Babs Wise 660-3071 or email ncs-ousf@duke.edu.

Name of Student: ___________________________________  Major: ______________ GPA: ___________

You are asked to reflect on this student’s: ______________________________________________________________

What is the Truman?
The Truman Scholarship is the US Government’s living memorial in honor of our 33rd President. It annually honors 60-65 college juniors around the country who plan careers in public service with up to $30,000 for graduate school. Additionally, Truman offers a summer leadership institute between the junior and senior years of college and offers honorees assistance in finding internships/work in the public sector. Recent Duke Truman scholars include: Daisy Almonte, Kushal Kadakia, Claire Wang, Maya Durvasula, Logan Beyer, Dominique Beaudry, Jay Ruckelshaus, Andy Cunningham, Lindsay Wallace, and Kristen Lee.

What is the Duke process?
Duke is allowed to nominate up to four candidates each year. OUSF is charged with selecting Duke’s nominees. To do this, we run an on-campus competition in November. Students submit completed applications, including emails of the three required recommendations. A committee of faculty and administrators reviews the applications, and interviews the candidates. The students chosen to go forward then work with committee members to finalize their applications prior to the scholarship deadline in February. The Chair of the committee will author an institutional endorsement letter for our nominees using information from your recommendation, the interview process, and committee members’ notes.
Who is on the committee?
Members of the committee have included: Connel Fullenkamp, Colleen Scott, Janie Long, Domonique Redmond, Stephanie Kellar, Stephen Bryan, and Babs Wise.

What are we/Truman looking for in your outline?
Each student turns in three recommendations – one each for “Leadership Potential and Abilities,” “Commitment to a Career in Public Service,” and “Intellect and Prospects for Continuing Academic Success.” The first page of this memo should indicate which letter you are writing. Please list the category as a header in your outline. In our collective experience, the only helpful recommendations are those that add specific examples and other details to the high praise that such letters almost uniformly contain. So, list the details you might mention.

What are the deadlines for the various stages?
November 30 at 8am Please email outlines to: ncs-ousf@duke.edu.

January 25, 2021: Final letters due electronically to OUSF.

What have we told the student?
The students have been told to make an appointment with you stating that they want you to recommend them to our committee. They should give you a resume, a copy of their transcript or academic history, and tell you about their post-graduation goals. They are also advised to let you say no if you don’t think you are the right person to write the recommendation.

Note:
Truman is looking for the best American students who are change agents; our potential candidates have only three letters of recommendation, plus our endorsement to argue the case that they are one of the very few. If you cannot write a letter for the candidate such as one you would write for the student who is applying to a top graduate or professional program, it might be better to decline to write the recommendation.

Questions?
At any time, please let Babs Wise babs@duke.edu (919-660-3071) know if we can assist you in any way with this process.