**The Importance of the WUSA Recommendation:**
Summary: This guide is a resource to aid you in asking for a recommendation for the WUSA application process. This guide explains how to ask a recommender to fill out the recommendation form as well as helps to address some common areas of concern, such as a potential recommender saying no or your recommender not filling out the recommendation form prior to the application deadline. You can use this recommendation guide to help you along the process.

The First Year Center values recommendation forms because they provide us with another method to really get to know who you are as a person. In particular, the WUSA recommendation form is a short form for recommenders to answer questions about your communication skills, dependability, role modeling, approachability, concern for others, and collaboration skills. **Please inform your recommender ahead of time that this form should not be a large time commitment for them and that they are not writing a letter of recommendation but rather are filling out a form.** One key thing that we would like for your recommender to write about is your ability to be a leader either at WashU or in the past. Recommendations can speak to your strengths as well as your weaknesses. They tell us the type of person you are, both in and out of the classroom, and allow us to see how you interact with individuals around you, such as your peers. We want you to pick an individual who can write you a strong recommendation, so we can better understand you and your strengths as a leader.

**Statement about Pandemic Times:**
In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we fully understand that it may have been difficult to forge connections with your professors, RAs, or WUSAs. We also understand that communication in the virtual era is challenging. However, we still value recommendations because they give us insight into your character from a different perspective than what the rest of your application reveals. Please select a recommender who can help us understand you more deeply and your motivations for applying to be a WUSA. **Please note that your recommender does not need to be a member of the WashU community.** If you have forged strong relationships with another individual in the past who can speak to your strong leadership abilities, please feel comfortable putting them down as your recommender. We want you to have the strongest application possible, so please select the person who you feel most comfortable writing your recommendation. Select someone who has experience working with you and can speak to your leadership and mentorship skills.
**How to Ask a Recommender to fill out your WUSA Recommendation Form:**

1. Identify a list of 3-5 individuals who you feel could support your WUSA application. Ideally, you have interacted with these people consistently and they can speak to your personality and goals. Here is a non-inclusive list of examples of people you can ask:
   a. Ask your WUSA for a letter of recommendation if you have frequently had 1:1 calls with your WUSA or have attended WUSA Hours. WUSAs are great options because they have served in this capacity for the past year and can help you to present your application in the best way possible. They know of the qualities that would help someone be a great WUSA and thus would be able to speak to the qualities that would help you in the role of a WUSA.
   b. Ask your RA for a letter of recommendation if you feel that you have fostered a strong connection with your RA and that they can really speak to who you are as a person.
   c. Ask a professor that you have frequently attended office hours for and if the professor knows you well as an individual. Professors can be a great option as they can speak to your ability to work with others, your dependability, and your character.
   d. Ask your four-year adviser if you have developed a strong relationship with them throughout the course of your first semester. You may have discussed career goals, extracurriculars, and other aspects of your life that they may be able to speak about to present you as a dependable candidate for the WUSA role.

2. Select the recommender who you think could write you the strongest recommendation, including insight into your character, your interests and experiences, and why you would be a great addition to the WUSA role.
   a. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the WUSA position description so you can explain to your recommender why you want to be a WUSA and why you would make an excellent WUSA. The clearer your motivations and reasons for wanting to be a WUSA are, the stronger your letter of recommendation will be. Think of this as an opportunity to tell the FYC why you really want to be a WUSA. This will only reinforce your application.
   b. Although not necessary, it may be beneficial to attach a resume or CV that your recommender can refer to in order to help them further understand you and your interests.
   c. You should also send a reminder to your recommender about what capacity you have worked with them in the past. It may be helpful to personally reflect on your past experiences with this person and the interactions you had with
them, so they can speak to your personal qualities and traits, especially your work ethic.

3. Thank your recommender after they have submitted a letter of recommendation. They spent time writing your recommendation and supporting you, so you want to express your gratitude.
   a. After you get confirmation that your recommendation form has been submitted, you should take the time to thank them for supporting your application. You should also keep them in the loop about the process whether or not you get the role because they are rooting for you and want you to succeed.
   b. To thank them, you can email your recommender or give them a phone call.
   c. It is important that you thank your recommender because it shows that you value their time. Remember that they are doing you a favor by writing your letter of recommendation, and it is important that you understand that their time is just as valuable as yours.

**What if my chosen recommender says no?**
There may be times when someone will turn down your request. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including the recommender not feeling like they know you well enough to give you a strong recommendation. Regardless, respect their decision and thank them for their consideration and time and select a new recommender. If you feel comfortable, feel free to ask your recommender why they were unable to fill out your recommendation. This will allow you to strengthen your relationship.

**Help...It is close to the deadline, and my recommender has not submitted their recommendation yet**
Our advice is to firmly communicate deadlines with your recommender in your initial request. You want to be clear and explicit that there is a firm deadline by which they must submit your recommendation. This is the best way to ensure your recommendation is submitted in time.

**In the event that the deadline is quickly approaching and your recommender has not yet submitted your recommendation, please do not panic.** In the WUSA application process, recommendation forms are set up to message you when your recommender has submitted your form. If your recommender has not submitted your recommendation form, you should follow up. You can tell your recommender that you appreciate that they are supporting your application and gently remind them that the deadline for recommendations is approaching. You can and should resend the link to the recommendation form in this email in case they lost
the link or are having trouble accessing the recommendation site. The FYC recommends that you send this follow-up email in your original email ask. Make sure to provide enough of a grace period to give your recommender adequate time to fill out your recommendation. You should give your recommender at least 2 weeks to fill out the form.

In the event that you are still having trouble getting your recommender to submit your recommendation, please email the First Year Center at firstyearcenter@wustl.edu for further guidance and assistance.