

MAA Projects & Policies

Writing Recommendations

A Guide for Improving Leadership Skills

Serve the Brotherhood —

Sith Battlemaster Kraval Novir

SBM Kraval Novir (Sith)/MAA/Dark Council

SB / GC-PoDP / SC-SoR / AC-ToSC / DC-CP / GN-AuL / SN-AgL / BN-BL / Cr-1D-3R-9A-8S-10E-4T-14Q / PoB / CF-SpF / DSS-BL / SI-AuL / SoL-TC / LS-PL / S:-1R-1AI-11C-7D-1Do

Krath Pontifex Braecen Kaeth Kunar

KPN Braeven Kaeth Kunar (Krath)/CON-EP-M:MAA/Clan Scholae Palatinae

AK / SB / GC-PoDP / SC-SoA / AC-RoF / DC-GP / GN-BL / SN / BN-BL / Cr-1D-11R-18A-20S-8E-5T-1Q / PoB-AgL / CF-PIF / DSS-AuL / SI-AuL / SoL-TC / LS-GL / S:-2R-18AI-19D-7Dk

Writing Recommendations

WHY DOES A LEADER MAKE A RECOMMENDATION FOR A MERIT MEDAL OR PROMOTION?

Leaders make recommendations to award their members for past and current activities. From fiction to gaming, and everything between, members participate in the Dark Brotherhood on a daily basis and expect to be rewarded for their effort.

DISAPPROVAL: AN INSIGHT

A great majority of the time, the primary reason for a declined recommendation is due to a lack of detail concerning member activity, or contributions, in the written reasoning - the basis of why the medal or promotion should be awarded. Generally, these recommendations are packed with content that describes the character of the individual; this is known as 'filler' in a recommendations. While it is encouraged that leaders make recommendations personal, they must first satisfy the demand of proving why a candidate is eligible. Remember that when you are writing a recommendation, you need to *convince the Master at Arms* why this award is justified.

If a recommendation is denied, do not take it personal. The Master at Arms is not doing it as a personal attack against you; rather, they are doing it because there was not enough quantified information presented. Take your original recommendation, add on to it - or make necessary adjustments - with what the Master at Arms suggests and the likelihood of success will rise.

DEFINING ACTIVITY: TANGIBLE & INTANGIBLE

Not all activity is the same. The degree of difficulty and intensity in which a member performs a task will range from levels of adequate to most rigorous. The Dark Brotherhood is a diverse organization that allows for a vast array of activity. These facets can be generalized into three, basic categories: Gaming, Writing & Leadership.

Gaming. Gaming is, perhaps, the easiest form of activity to track. One can count the number of events (Gaming Nights, Tournaments, etc), the total number of Clusters of Fire (CF) acquired and any additional awards received through participation (Crescents, Seals, etc).

Writing. While not as easy to quantify, writing is a broader range of activity. There are many platforms that allow for members of the Dark Brotherhood to write: Antei Combat Center, Monthly Topics, Writer's Corner, Dark Voice, etc. A leader can include the number of events one has participated in (Submissions) and any awards received through participation (Crescents, Dark Side Scroll, etc).

Leading. Leadership is, arguably, the toughest facet of Dark Brotherhood activity to track, gauge and appropriately reward. Leaders perform duties ranging from hosting competitions, working on projects to enhance the club and maintain an active presence - acting as role models - for general membership.

RECOMMENDING A MERIT AWARD OR PROMOTION

It may, at times, seem hard for a leader to determine what an appropriate award is and how to write a corresponding recommendation. Through this document it is hoped the reader will be able to gain enough information to understand the basic outline of writing a good recommendation that will pass the scrutiny of the Master At Arms.

First, you must determine the appropriate level of recognition. For a general insight into the levels of merit, one can reference the Dark Brotherhood Codex (http://codex.darkjedibrotherhood.com/awards_general.html) - pertaining to awards - for assistance.

Now you must write the recommendation itself. You should, firstly, identify whom you are awarding. Next you should

establish what you are hoping to award, before, finally, beginning your recommendation. Once you have begun the main body of your recommendation, you should first establish the 'hard activity' of the member. The hard activity, or reasons, must first be established before you divulge into the intangible merits of the individual.

DIFFERENTIATING: PROMOTION OR AWARD?

What do you reward a member with: medal or promotion? How do you determine what the most apt award is for a member's service and participation? Generally, medals are given out for short periods of activity, while promotions are awarded over a longer period of time.

An exception is found in the early Journeyman ranks, because it does not take a great deal of activity to merit advancement. A Shadow Academy (SA) course here, a single competition submission there can quickly add up and - in no time - a member can be ranked at Jedi Hunter. It is at this rank - the gateway to Dark Jedi Knight - that real effort is demanded. The standard 'norm' for a member to reach Dark Jedi Knight is six months if the member is highly active as a normal member and/or leader.

Remember, when picking whether to award a medal or promotion, you must ask yourself, "Has this activity been over a short period of time - approximately a month - or has this activity remained over the duration of time - six to twelve months - consistently?" Be objective when writing your recommendation; quantify the work that this member has done. Numbers, specifics, and even lists are your best tool in a recommendation.

Ultimately, you, as the nominator, must answer the question coursing through the Master At Arms' mind: "What has this member done to earn this award?" If you, as a leader, have fully explained why you are awarding this member, then it will likely be approved. Always remember though, your goal as a leader making a recommendation is to *convince the Master at Arms that this award is justified*.

REVIEW OF SUCCESSFUL RECOMMENDATIONS

Let us review some recommendations for medals that I, the Master At Arms, have searched the database for. In these reviews I have highlighted the necessary detail that was crucial in swaying my judgment. At the conclusion of each recommendation, additionally, I have detailed why the recommendation is a viable example.

Medal: Dark Cross

Recipient: Kel Tavik

Since joining the ranks of Clan Scholae Palatinae, Kel Tavik has been peerless in his activity, knowledge and commitment to the Brotherhood. He quickly ascended through the initial Journeyman ranks by completing a horde of Shadow Academy courses (Leadership Studies, ACC Initiates, and more). However, his activity did not end there. He has proven to be a venerable source of Star Knowledge (collecting six Legions of the Scholar) by competing in both varieties of Clan Trivia: Email and IRC. Additionally, he has proven an adequate writer by submitting a mess of fiction to the Writer's Corner (Where he has received one Dark Side Scroll already). In addition to that he has competed in three competitions - winning them all (3 Sapphire Crescents) - one of which was the Halloween Horror Story which was shared via IRC on Halloween with members of the Clan.

Overall this member has shown excellent activity on IRC (Clan Conclave, Trivia, general chat), participated in a ram of Competitions (House and Clan level) and helped develop the fictional element of his Character. Therefore, I am honored to present him his first Merit Medal: a Dark Cross.

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

There is a full explanation of the member's activities; gathered six Legions of the Scholar from e-mail and IRC trivia, got a Dark Side Scroll from submitting to the Writer's Corner, competed in three competitions and won them all.

The author resisted the urge to describe how good the member was since joining, instead focusing on his activity and infusing examples as they went.

Medal: Dark Cross

Recipient: Vasily Zaitsev

Clan Scholae Palatinae recently attained the honor of Second Clan in the Brotherhood Vendetta "Rites of Supremacy: Second Darkness" compiling 330 Clan points - outstripping four rival Clans to affirm their right as an Elite Clan. For contributions, participation and tenacity to ensure the Clan's wartime efforts... I award Vasily this Merit Award. Compiling 72 individual points in the MP Gaming Event and taking the rank of 62nd Overall in the Vendetta. Additionally, Vasily has compiled thirty-nine (39) Clusters of Fire (CF), two (2) Seals of Darkness, one (1) Seal of Dominance, participated in the Outer Rim War, been a valuable source of discussion and insight to our younger members on IRC (#scholae) since his transfer to House Caliburnus. His regular participation, activity and determination to assist the Clan are to be applauded.

What characteristics does this possess, making it a good recommendation?

The author specifically listed what the member did during the RoS: Accruing 72 points in the MP gaming portion, awarded 39 Clusters of Fire, two Seals of Darkness, and a Seal of Dominance. Participation is mentioned in the ORW, as is his help on IRC with guiding younger members.

Medal: Star of Antei

Recipient: Quejo Bandon Xyler

Over the course of the month, Quejo has been a constant source of activity. He has participated in the KMT, an Arcona Make-up competition; created two competitions for his battle team; writes weekly reports for his battle team; passed 5 SA courses; posted in the HOO run-on and participating in the HOO Ladder. On top of all that, he is on IRC always willing to do more to improve and further himself and has posted in a plethora of ACC battles (began the month with battles in the double-digits). Such activity is astounding and a reward is well deserved.

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

The author was extremely detailed in his discourse concerning past activities; participated in the KMT, a Clan competition, created/hosted two competitions for his Battle Team, writes weekly reports for his Battle Team, passed five Shadow Academy courses, posted in the run-on and participation in the ladder event.

The only improvement the author may have scripted was the individual courses Quejo completed and the length of tenure at his post as Battle Team Leader. Additionally, they may have included links to the various competitions for review.

Medal: Anteian Cross

Recipient: Manesh Sadow

I would like to recommend that Manesh Sadow be awarded an Anteian Cross for his recent performance in the RoS II. Manesh scored 26th place in the JO event, 9 matches, 29th place in the BF2 event, 6 matches, 17th place in the Other event, 6 matches, 6 Fiction Round One Points, and 2 Fiction Round Two Points. He has also maintained statistics for all of us to keep track of things, and encouraged hjs Clan's efforts admirably. I feel he is worthy of this award, given his exemplary service in this hectic Rite.

What characteristics does this possess, making it a good recommendation?

The author listed exactly what this member has done to warrant an Anteian Cross: 26th place in JO with nine matches, got 29th place in the BF2 event with six matches, got 17th place in the other even with six matches, got six fiction round one points and two fiction round two points. Additionally, this member was responsible for maintaining statistics for his entire Clan – using those figures as a rallying point for Naga Sadow.

Medal: Steel Cross

Recipient: Ma`ar-Tyrius Ga-Tir

Over the course of the past month, Smoke has done everything asked of him and then some. In this month alone, he has had well over 100, if not 200 MP matches played. That is an astounding number no matter who someone is. On top of that, he has also submitted to the handful of competitions that I had released over the course of the month (including posting a number of high-quality posts in the House Run-On). The above is just his "regular" activity. As House Envoy, he has done a marvelous job at not only sending out detailed e-mail to brand new members, but by also e-mailing all of the various members in the House who have been on the verge of being AWOLed. He has kept detailed records of activity levels and has ensured that nothing is overlooked at the very end of the month. On top of all that, he also continues to do all of his Aedile duties, submitting detailed reports as well as having released a number of competitions himself for members to do. He can be found on IRC numerous hours everyday and continues to be an active force over e-mail discussions. All in all, Smoke has more than shown that he is the most active member in the House, if not the Clan itself. Wonderful job!

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

The author establishes his activity as a normal member, then as an envoy, before discussing his activity as an Aedile; played over one hundred (100) Multiplayer (MP) matches in a month, submitted to a handful of competitions, sends out detailed e-mails to new members in addition to regular contact. Finally, it discusses his detailed reports and his ability to host/create a number of competitions.

Medal: Steel Cross

Recipient: Halcyon Rokir

For just over six months, DA Halcyon has been assigned as Praetor to the Combat Master. In such time, prior to my arrival, he was instrumental in being the intermediary between the staff and the CM (which I can attest to from experience as Senior Operator). Apart from that, his efforts toward the membership and assisting their growth in the Centre were above par. From training battles, to online instruction and advice, he has become the 'go to guy' for several of the Brotherhood members that enjoy the ACC. He fosters a level of participation that only few can compete with. Since my arrival, and perhaps his most pivotal contribution, was his development of the Pilot's Den Databank (<http://www.darkjedibrotherhood.com/dbjedi/acc/compendium.asp?Part=13>). For use in conjunction with the Pilot's Den, a 'flight-sim' version of the ACC battle format, the Databank houses information for 24 specific craft, including; their weapons, hull ratings, speed, dimensions and a description of each. Going even further beyond the call, he saw fit to add a Glossary of Terms and Flight Terms sections for those of us who aren't that adept when it comes to flight-sim knowledge. The impact of this work cannot be measured as its scope is so broad. Needless to say, no one will have to look far to find information on craft they wish to use, that, in itself, is priceless. DA Halcyon was awarded, for his service, under the previous CM (GC: 10/30/2004). However, due to his latest endeavors, I feel compelled to thank him with more than mere words. If it pleases you to oblige me, I would like to recommend DA Halcyon for the Steel Cross.

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

The author begins with his contributions to the Pilot's Den databank - link included - before establishing what the databank contains: twenty four (24) crafts, weapons, hull ratings, speed, dimensions and a description of each, including a glossary of terms and flight terms in sections.

By expressing the quality and importance of the final, completed project of the Pilot's Den databank... this recommendation passed the scrutiny of the office of the Master At Arms.

Medal: Grand Cross of the Dark Side

Recipient: Archean

The month of February has been an extremely active time for Arcona in general. However, for such activity to blossom, it must start from its leadership and as Aedile of House Galeres, Archean has exemplified this aspect. As a leader, Archean has more than fulfilled what has been required of him. As Aedile this past month, he was key in both coming up with competition ideas for the House as well as running them. He has also written his reports in a timely manner over the course of the month, keeping the House informed of current news as well as pushing the various competitions. He was instrumental in helping to re-organize the Battleteams in Galeres, getting them staffed and on their way. He is also a constant presence, both on IRC as well as on the messageboards, helping the various members of both Galeres and Arcona in general in any possible way he can.

His other "job" in Arcona is as the House Envoy for Galeres. There were a number of new recruits over the course of the month for the House, and Archean continues to do a superb job in that regard. He is prompt in welcome new members to both the House and Clan, and gets them whatever help that is needed. He has also taken on a Student, who has already been elevated a number of rank under his tutelage. However, for all of the work he's done for the Clan, Archean has still managed to be one of the most active members of the Clan as well. He has earned 33 Clusters of Fire this month alone, with the actual number of matches far exceeding that number. He has participated in a number of both Clan and House competitions, managing to place in the top 3 on a couple of them as well. And on top of that, he was also active within the ACC as well. An active and caring leader is worth more than can be said. A leader who then not only does his duties, but is also a member who participates in competitions is more than one can ask for. Archean has shown his worth this month, and is deserving of this honour.

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

It expressly denotes what he did as a leader, an envoy and how he is still active in a general sense. Key in coming up with competition ideas in the house as well as running them, wrote his reports in a time manner over the course of a month, keeps the house informed of the current news as well as competitions, instrumental in re-organizing the Battle Teams and getting them staffed, constant presence on IRC & Message Boards helping members in general. His promptness in welcoming new members to both House & Clan, helps new members as needed. It then discusses that he took on a student, specifically states he collected thirty-three Clusters of Fire, participated in House & Clan competitions - managing to place in several - while remaining active in the ACC.

While the information could have been broken into separate, easier-to-read sections - the recommendation, as a whole, eloquently elaborates on his activity through several positions before reflecting on his personal contributions as a general member. Overall, a good, detailed recommendation on behalf of Archean.

Medal: Grand Cross of the Dark Side

Recipient: Mononoke "Macron" Keibatsu-Goura

Macron has been a very important aspect within our clan from the day of his arrival. He has been working very hard not only at the Feud activities, but also as a strong participant in the message boards for the runons. His presence is one that

activates the clan, and provides strength and guidance. Macron fully deserves a Grand Cross. ~ Kat Pridemore, QUA of Marka Ragnos

The story of the Battlemaster Mononoke "Macron" Keibatsu-Goura is a long one. After he stepped down from his position as the Quaestor of House Ludo Kressh due to irl issues, we feared that we might lose a valuable member. Still he assured us that he was not completely gone. We were completely wrong. He is showing us the highest level of activity I could ever expect from a member of the DB. He continued his battle in the ACC, earning an Amethyst Crescent from the GMRG Lost Academy competition (1st place), taking part in the Sadow Dueling Competition where he won a Crescent Sapphire for the 2nd place. He earned two Scrolls of Indoctrination and did a Shadow Academy course. Still as if this wasn't enough he took part in the GMRG runon and the still running campaign "The reclamation of Kyataru". He continued to take part in the series of competitions for the position of one of the three Battle Team Leaders, contributing a lot of excellent posts in the competition runon. He managed to achieve the 4th place and was given the spot as my current Black Guard (which was my personal prize for the unthankful 4th place of that competition). Another Crescent Sapphire was given him from the 2nd place in the competition of the Gethsmane Incident. And one Crescent Topaz from the 2nd place in the competition "Run-on Madness". As soon as the feud started, he sent in three fictions and one image, which earned him the place 5 of all contributed points from this clan. And more to add to the list: He earned 2 Dark Side Scrolls for Dark Voice Submissions, he graded a lot of Shadow Academy courses, submitted a trivia to the Herald Muz Keibatsu and wrote another Dark Voice article about Sith Hounds. He took part in a competition of the squadron he is in, entered a create battle testing in the ACC. And last but not least he currently started and leads a fiction runon in the forum "Trayus Academy Dig", an idea that came from posts he and his new student did in the never-ending fiction runon "The Lounge" on the DB forum. We discussed in what way to reward him and the Grand Cross is the right one! Congratulations ~ KAP Xia Long, Sildrin Sadow

When writing an award recommendation for Macron you're tempted to write "just give him the medal!" For anyone who joined in the last year Macron has been one of those ever prominent members in the Clan for as long as you can remember. Excelling as Commander, Aedile and Quaestor, earning crescent after crescent and merit award after merit award, designing better and better competitions and runons that are fun and Shadow Academy courses such as Sith Alchemy and Dark Side Meditation that show a creative and innovative attitude to the Brotherhood. When he retired as Quaestor his high level of activity kept going, he's still coming up with those great runons, and he's still participating in every competition he can get his hands on, especially in the feud where his fictions were not only point winning but amusing and interesting and he was one of the top participants in the Clan with a score of 108 Therefore Macron has definitely earned a Grand Cross. ~ Malisane de Ath, Aedile of Ludo Kressh

I've always believed that anyone can become a leader independent of their position. In fact, I've been awarded medals just for that. Any member can inspire their fellow members to be active, and Macron has done just that. Despite no longer being the Quaestor of House Ludo Kressh (a job he did superbly), he has continued to be active in the Clan. He is a kindhearted man and people feel comfortable talking to him or seeking out his help. I am new to my job as Proconsul and I'm not always aware of everybody's history, but from what I know and from the recommendations above, I too recommend a Grand Cross for Macron. ~Sith Warlord Manesh Sadow, Proconsul of Clan Naga Sadow

What characteristics does this possess that make it a good recommendation?

Multiple recommendations that point out, in detail, his activity even after he stepped down from leadership; continued his battle in the ACC, earning an Amethyst Crescent from the GMRG: Lost Academy competition (1st Place), taking part in the Sadow Dueling Competition where he won a Crescent Sapphire (2nd Place). Earned two Scrolls of Indoctrination and did a Shadow Academy course, took part in the GMRG run-on and the still running campaign "The reclamation of

Kyataru", continued to take part in the series of competitions for the position of one of the three Battle Team Leaders, achieved the 4th Place and was given the spot as Black Guard. Another Sapphire Crescent was given from his 2nd Place in the competition of the Gethsmene Incident (GMRG) and one Topaz Crescent from the 2nd Place in "Run-On Madness."

It goes on to detail he submitted to three fictions and one image, which earned him 5th Place of all contributed points from his clan, earned two Dark Side Scrolls for Dark Voice submissions, graded Shadow Academy courses, submitted a trivia to the Herald - Muz Keibatsu - and wrote an article on Sith Hounds. Participated in a squadron competition, entered a 'create battle testing' in the ACC, started and leads the fiction run-on in the forum "Trayus Academy Dig", excelled as Commander, Aedile & Quaestor... earned crescent after crescent, merit award after merit award, designing Shadow Academy courses such as Sith Alchemy & Dark Side Meditation... and still finding time to participate in competitions.

Overall, the sheer amount of information from several individuals contributed to this decision. Each expressed the activity, drive and commitment of his ingenuity and leadership as a member. This is a good example of a multiple Point Of View recommendation.

CONCLUSION: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In summation, it is good to include how great of a person, the member, is that you are awarding. Give pause to remember when the Master at Arms is reading through your recommendation, they will be looking for facts that explain why the member has earned this reward.

Be specific, be concise. It is a good, general practice to draft a list of the member's activity to include in your recommendation to ensure you include all of their activity. Also, be sure to think over what level of award it is that you wish to request. Does the level of the award parallel the level of activity, and work, the member has put in?

If you can achieve those two simple tasks - defining activity and correlating an appropriate award - then it will be less likely a problem will arise when the time comes for the Master at Arms to review and approve the award.