



February 14, 2005

Director of Faculty Awards and Development
Office of Academic Programs
Room S-526
State University of New York – System Administration
State University Plaza
Albany, NY 12246

Dear Sir:

Re: Nomination of Stuart M. Basefsky for the SUNY Chancellor's Award.

Enclosed are a summary presentation and vita in support of Stuart M. Basefsky as the nominee of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations for the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship. Stuart is our senior reference librarian at the Catherwood Library having assumed his responsibilities here at the school in 1993.

You will see from the attached summary presentation that Stuart has a truly remarkable record of service and innovation. It is not an exaggeration to say that over the last ten or eleven years, he has transformed student and faculty expectations about the services available from a special library collection. As the web has evolved, he has shown himself to be a leader in the introduction of services and information products which enrich the educational experience for our students as well as help all of us meet our service commitments as one of the land grant colleges at Cornell. His natural inclination to think in terms of a global presence for the School has enabled us to build several relationships which would otherwise have been difficult to achieve. The faculty has great respect for his abilities and seek out his advice not only about their research and instructional commitments but also about trends and developments in the broader context.

Stuart Basefsky was chosen as our nominee for the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship by an *ad hoc* faculty committee appointed by me and chaired by the School's associate dean for academic affairs. Input was solicited from the broad community at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations. The committee soon came to focus on Stuart Basefsky for this important recognition and is unanimously enthusiastic in its support of him as our nominee.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Lawler, Dean
Martin P. Catherwood Professor

EJL:mlc

Nomination of Stuart M. Basefsky

SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship

SUMMARY PRESENTATION

Stuart M. Basefsky's exceptional twenty-five year career as a librarian is characterized by innovation, a broad vision, high energy, remarkable skills as a negotiator, and an unparalleled commitment of quality service to users. We were successful in recruiting him to the Catherwood staff at Cornell following a nearly ten year career as a documents librarian at Duke University. This background, combined with two years study at the University of Colorado Law School, provided excellent training for the type of in-depth reference service and information products he makes available to students, faculty, Cornell administrators, and practitioners. He has been instrumental in positioning our library to meet the ever increasing expectations of a demanding clientele here on campus and around the world.

Skill in Librarianship

Stuart has developed an unequalled command of the literature in our field. In the process, he has shown himself to be a consummate teacher. Students at our school develop three important competencies they need in their career as decision makers: quantitative, analytical, and information gathering skills. The first two of these are acquired primarily through formal coursework and internships. Information gathering skills are acquired in the library. Stuart designed a unique learning experience for students by offering a credit course in which students fulfill information requests from corporations. The school's Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS) is composed of approximately 65 corporations, each of which is invited to submit requests for information on cutting edge issues. Under his tutelage, each student is assigned to research one of the topics submitted by a CAHRS member. His class lectures feature the online skills students can use to fulfill these requests. An important part of

the course is teaching students how to organize and present research findings to top level management. Initially co-taught with a faculty member from the human resources department, Stuart is now the sole instructor. Entitled, "HR Online Research and Reporting Methods for Executive Decision-Making," it is one of the most popular offerings in the school. The director of CAHRS, Professor Patrick Wright, says that "... Stuart's dedication to connecting the vast resources of the library to students is really beyond compare. In the class that I co-taught with him, I found his expertise to be outstanding, and his ability to provide students with the information tools they need for lifelong learning was incredible." Professor Lee Dyer comments that, "I have spoken to a number of our former students, now at work in the human resources field, who said they use what Stuart taught them all the time. There is no doubt that those who take his course develop skills that they really need and they appreciate having this ability to find information on their own."

Making extremely current information available to those who seek a competitive advantage is another aspect of Stuart's vision. He established the IWS (Institute for Workplace Studies) News Bureau. Acting as a reporter and journalist, he gathers stories as they are distributed to the nation's business press, selects the most relevant, and sends them out to IWS subscribers immediately after the embargo expires. Kirstin Downey, staff writer at the *Washington Post* says this service "... is my single most consistent source for economic news from Canada, Europe, and elsewhere, providing valuable international perspective." Another writer at the *Boston Globe* praises Stuart's service, saying "So often a report, etc. pops up just when I am about to begin an article on a related subject. It's been great."

One of Stuart's most striking skills is that of a negotiator. This skill has saved the library thousands of dollars thanks to his ability to convince publishers that their product should be made available in our library without cost to Catherwood or at least at a deep discount. Thanks to Stuart's persuasiveness, Catherwood is the only library in this country, except for the Library of

Congress, to enjoy depository status for publications of the International Labour Organization. The full LEXIS-NEXIS service is available for use of ILR faculty and students (including those in our Extension Division offices throughout the state) at a fraction of the normal cost. We are probably the only non-law school library to enjoy such a contract, thanks to Stuart. Based on his recommendation, we instituted the “Publisher’s Showcase” concept in our reading room. A large display case was incorporated into the library’s renovation plan several years ago. Selected publishers’ products (for example, the *Yellow Book Leadership Directories*) are on view in our Publisher’s Showcase for a brief time in exchange for free copies which we keep and then add to the collection. A set of the *Yellow Book* volumes would cost us over \$2,300 annually. We receive the entire set free of charge.

Service to the University & the Profession

Enhancing the university’s global presence is a high priority at Cornell and Stuart is playing a key role here. By traveling to and developing a relationship with the library of the International Labour Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, he was able to establish related contacts elsewhere within the ILO. This initiative ultimately led to the school’s signing a memorandum of understanding establishing internships in Europe for our students as well as opportunities for our faculty to collaborate with ILO staff on joint research projects. Professor Sarosh Kuruvilla commented that “. . . Stuart Basefsky is the ideal type of librarian for faculty whose research interests are international in nature. Seeing a role for the library beyond its traditional one . . . is important because we can leverage that in ways that benefit the university. He has been the school’s ambassador to the ILO which has resulted in the development of a unique international relationship.” Linda Stoddart, the former librarian at the ILO and now director of the Hammarskjöld Library at the United Nations, has this to say about Stuart’s work: “He is an excellent networker, putting people in contact with each other as well as facilitating access to key resources and publications. Stuart always impressed me with his professionalism and dedication . . . as well as the international perspective he brought to his work.”

Recent travel to Europe has involved more relationship building with organizations of special interest to the school and university: the European Trade Union Confederation, the European Trade Union Institute (both in Brussels), the European School of Management in Paris, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin, and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in Bonn. In coming years, the library, school, and university will enjoy a growing network in Europe in our subject field with perhaps as close a relationship as we now enjoy with the International Labour Organization, thanks to Stuart's remarkable efforts.

Regarding his service to the profession, one example deserves special mention. The Committee of Industrial Relations Librarians (CIRL) meets annually to review trends and developments in our field, to network, and share ideas to improve services to our respective users. Often, Stuart is a featured speaker at this gathering. Everyone at CIRL turns to him for advice and counsel. At the Berkeley meeting last April, he proposed that CIRL adopt a more international focus and presented a paper on this issue. The group will convene in Toronto this coming May to review progress towards this goal among CIRL member libraries and based upon the vision he outlined last year. Without his leadership during this transitional period, I fear that this group might not continue as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Scholarship & Continuing Professional Growth

Stuart's publication and presentation record is impressive and reflects an effort to address key issues faced by librarians in a rapidly changing environment. Possibly the most outstanding is his article in the August 1999 issue of *Information Outlook*, "The Library as an Agent of Change." He argues that to be successful, to secure resources and retain influence within their organizations, librarians have to become much more actively involved in helping to set the agenda of what he refers to as the "client institution." For this essay, he won the H. W. Wilson Company Award for best article in *Information Outlook* that year. This theme was further

developed in his article in *College & Research Libraries News* (February 2000), "The Other Client: Information Training for Administrators Pays Dividends for the Library."

An earlier article, "Pooled Endowments: A New Funding Idea," in *College & Research Libraries News* (June 1995) illustrates another aspect of a highly creative mind. Realizing that many donors expect recognition, Stuart proposed setting up endowments to support subscriptions for journals but with an unusual twist. The donor's name would become part of the online catalog record. Whenever anyone around the world pulled up the record for a journal underwritten with an endowment at Catherwood, the name of the donor would be displayed in the holdings statement. In addition to a printed label in each issue identifying the donor, additional recognition is granted electronically. We have used the idea with success at Catherwood and it often is that first important step for a donor in to declaring their interest in supporting our library.

Professor Harry Katz speaks of Stuart Basefsky as "... a marvel who helps make the ILR School the preeminent institution in the field of work." I believe that the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Librarianship was created to recognize truly exceptional professionals who make a substantial difference through their work as librarians. We believe that Stuart qualifies for this outstanding recognition and I urge you to give his nomination your most careful consideration.

Gordon T. Law, Jr.
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