

Marcia A. Grant, Ph.D.

Le Bourg
19500 Branceilles
France

CTI Selection Committee for Leadership Program

Dear Committee Members:

I am delighted to write a letter nominating Dr. Celeste Schenck to train as a leader for CTI's leadership program. I have just completed the leadership course in May that took place in Sitges, and I can well imagine Celeste as a remarkably thoughtful and perceptive guide in the program. Moreover, I am excited about the possibility that Celeste can help to take the Leadership Program to the academic world. I think that Celeste's vision for how the program can be translated for academics is huge.

Celeste is an outstanding academic leader, whom I have known for over a decade, when we were both working in Paris. I have been a career academic and administrator myself, and, in a second flowering of my own career, I have also been an academic entrepreneur in global higher education, first helping to found a women's university in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and then planning the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the Aga Khan University in Karachi, Pakistan. I have most recently served as Vice President for Academic Affairs of the American-style, Foreman Christian College in Lahore, Pakistan. Celeste and I have worked together in two different university organizations, and I have seen her create a consortium of universities which started with a program of great importance for Anglophone academic libraries. Today, with support from the Mellon Foundation, this consortium has grown to include 26 American universities abroad that stretch across Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, and deals with issues of first importance for all of these universities—enrollment, technology, but most important, academic collaboration.

Over the years, I have been able to observe Celeste's academic leadership skills develop at the American University of Paris (AUP), where she is now President. While her field is French language and literature, she has mastered the technical and human skills needed for the leadership of a complex university. She has worked very successfully as a Dean, bringing together a faculty which has felt threatened by change. When she was Vice President she had to deal with a very difficult President when his term was unraveling. She succeeded in holding the university together financially, as well as in terms of human relations, as the agreement with New York University was terminated by mutual agreement and the American University of Paris set off autonomously. It was not at all a given that as part of AUP over a long period she would have been chosen to be President, and this tells a lot about her capacity to work with members of the Board and the selection committee during a time of great upheaval.

As President in a French context, Celeste has faced down enormous leadership challenges in leading the faculty and negotiating with their unions; in identifying and securing funding to maintain AUP during an economic downturn when the university already had financial difficulties; and in articulating a vision of what the AUP can become. I have watched her identify and hire key people to be the academic dean and the director of finance, showing her skills in team-building. (She really does exhibit the ability to create from the other!) We have talked about her vision for the University, and she is clear about where

she wants to position AUP. Recently, she was able to convince the Faculty Senate to vote for a major change in the direction of academic excellence – a decision that could have a strong impact on those faculty members who are weak. I think that one of the reasons that Celeste has been successful at AUP is that she shows real understanding and compassion for her faculty and staff, and she has created trust within the institution.

Finally, there is one more quality that Celeste exhibits that will make her an outstanding leader in the leadership program. It is her willingness to take risks and think outside the box. Her desire to be a leader in the Leadership Program shows how remarkably open to new ideas and possibilities she is. (Imagine taking this on as a major commitment while being president of a university.) I am excited just thinking about having her train as a leader, and it makes me want to do this, too. Universities are institutions of learning, yet there is little teaching about how to teach, and little training about how to lead in these institutions. I think that Celeste has a great insight into the need for training academics as leaders – and she has a vision for how to begin to achieve this.

In a larger context Celeste Schenck is a remarkable leader in higher education across the globe. Her belief in the liberal arts and in the special qualities of American-style global education has had a major impact on many universities around the world. Her vision of what is possible for the leadership of these universities with training for them based on the insights of CTI's leadership program tells us that her impact will continue to grow internationally.

For all of these reasons, I warmly recommend Celeste Schenck for the leadership program. If you have any questions or want to follow up on my comments, I would be happy to be reached by e-mail at grantmarcia@yahoo.com or by telephone at 33-5-55-25-43-93.

Yours sincerely,



Marcia A. Grant

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Foreman Christian College (Pakistan)

Former Director for Planning, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Aga Khan University (Pakistan)

Former Founder, Effat University for Women (Saudi Arabia)

Former Dean, American Graduate School (Paris, France)