Paris, June 12, 2012

Recommendation Letter for Gabby Staal

Leadership Program Leader Application

Dear CTI Leadership,

As a leader, Gabby Staal is an *astronaut*, a metaphor that we coined when we were in the same leadership tribe, the Bats, four years ago. The word bubbled to the surface when we were debriefing the ropes course in one of the first retreats, during which Gabby, utterly at ease at those heights, permitted himself to be leaned into by several members of our tribe who found this exercise a challenge. Watching him above our heads pairing with Anniken Lange, age 78, we were all momentarily transported. Up there in the trees, comfortable in his body, showing no fear, he was a strong, solid, nurturing, holding presence for a partner who, at that moment, was finding it difficult to be co-active. This quiet, embodied, resolute masculine strength is very particular to Gabby Staal’s leadership style and it informs everything he does. It does not overwhelm. In all its uncompromising force, yet compelling safety, it invites others over their own edges. In our tribe, he moved from someone stiff in his body—staal, or rock, is his name—to someone completely at home there, offering an enrolling, partnering surround to the women exploring their own femininity and a place to land to the men in our tribe who were venturing as well into their own physicality, their own capacity for intimacy with their own gender. His way of being in the world models a balance of masculinity and femininity that he brings powerfully into his own work—including his work inside corporations. There is a light side to all this too—a humor type, he combines an astronaut’s solidity and a way of taking things lightly that both shifts the space and keeps it safe.

In the wake of Leadership four years ago, Gabby, a husband and father of three children, took the risk of leaving his lucrative bank job and jumped into the unknown, setting up his own company, LeaderQuest. His entrepreneurial consultancy bloomed quickly, allowing him to support his family. And at the same time he stepped into leadership positions in the coaching and business worlds of The Netherlands (president of the ICF—driving out the toxic relations that governed that organization for years; president of the Lions Club—with a goal of bringing intimacy and emotional intelligence into that “old boys’ network; and president of an advisory board of a social housing organization). He introduced and organized ORSC courses to The Netherlands, and set up a franchise organization YouMeWe, a platform for the improvement of intimate relationships. A long distance runner, part of his discipline as a leader, he also formed a Roparun Team (the world’s longest team tag race raising money for people suffering from cancer). And LeaderQuest blossomed during these years as well, permitting him to work with managers and teams of organizations such as Shell, ING, Volkswagen, and The European Commission. I think it is meaningful that he cites as one of his greatest accomplishments since Leadership that of becoming an ever better father and husband, with more range and more awareness of impact. This is evidence of the way Gabby Staal approaches everything—his work, his home life, his social commitments, his volunteer work, and his friendships. The impact of his leadership in the world can be felt in the way he models integrity, strong masculinity in balance with an unabashed feminine side, an astronaut’s weightlessness and his solidity, as well as mastery.

Gabby Staal is a leader’s leader—having just accompanied the Stags on their journey. It is clear to me that becoming a Leadership Program leader will both support LeaderQuest and Gabby’s broader vision of serving emergent leaders in a world that has need of them.

Sincerely,



Celeste Schenck

President

cschenck@aup.edu

Additional Ref. letter, see next page.

**Additional Ref.letter from Martia Fridhjon, CEO CRR Global**

June 10th 2012

Dear Karen, Henry and Leadership Tribe,

I am writing in support of Gabby Staal in his application to lead CTI Leadership Courses and to join the Leadership Tribe.

I have had very close experience with Gabby over the last few years with him in pioneering and leadership roles. He is insightful, with a good understanding of the whole while also being able to pay attention to detail as a leader within his community as well as with client work. As a practitioner Gabby is committed to leadership as a niche in his professional development and his background in business gives him easy access to, and within corporate environments.

As a professional, he has always endeavored to excel and to improve and to grow. He is passionate, has a strong training background in systems work and is ORSC Certified.

As an individual, he is relationship oriented, compassionate and committed to his own growth as well as that of others. He also is willing and able to bring rigor in all areas for the sake of transformation.

Should you need any further information from me with regards to Gabby, I will gladly do so. I can fully support his application and know that as member of the Leadership tribe he will serve well.

Warmly,

**Marita**

Marita Fridjhon

CEO, CRR Global.

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