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To whom it may concern

I am delighted to write a letter of recommendation for Paul Visco in support of his application for Multimedia Specialist at Canisius College. The job ad reads as if it were tailored for someone with the exceptional technical and social skills Paul Visco brought to the task when he assisted me in my function as Director of a state-of-the-art Macintosh Language Lab (LLC) at Northern Arizona University during 1999/2000.

I designed and implemented the LLC in 1991; it was renovated under my direction in 1994, 1998, and 2000. During this time, I was assisted by three to five student workers who staffed the lab during open access hours. In the Fall of 2000, I returned full-time to teaching German to be able to support new program initiatives. The LLC is currently managed by a university staff member (program coordinator) who is responsible for technical maintenance.

As a result of its mission to offer faculty support and materials development in addition to giving access to language courseware, the LLC purchased a variety of peripheral hardware and courseware authoring tools. Equipment includes digital video capture & editing PCI cards, flatbed scanners, a digital camcorder, CD-ROM/CDRW writers, and web cams. These are used for desktop and web multimedia development as well as technology training. In addition to applicable applications bundled by Apple Computer (e.g. iMovie), Software acquired for courseware authoring and lab management includes Photoshop, Premiere, Director, PowerPoint, Dreamweaver, Lasso for Dreamweaver, Gollve, Flash, Fireworks, Illustrator, FreeHand, FileMaker Pro, Excel, Word, Quark XPress, PageMaker (German version) and Network Assistant (par of ANAT).

Unfortunately, the courseware development goals were difficult to attain by myself, the sole faculty member with technical skills. Lab assistants typically

had little technical know-how and experience with software in this area. This changed when Paul Visco was hired. Paul started the job as student assistant and finished it as technical manager and technical support analyst. Paul brought the most varied and extensive background to the job of any of the LLC assistants I ever had, including one who served from 1991 to 1996. More importantly, the few Macintosh hardware and software applications in this multimedia lab that Paul was not familiar with, he taught himself at an amazing speed, not stopping until he had in-depth knowledge of the equipment or program. For example, Paul had never worked with FileMaker Pro, the database development software. When I took up the software in my lab, he started from scratch to develop a lab visitation database application that he integrated with an I.D. card reader to automate the registration and sign-in process for students. I should mention that he managed to interface a card reader model made for Windows only with an iMac due to his astute technical skills and relentless efforts in searching the WWW until he found a solution.


There are two important testaments that I would like to make in regard to Paul and with a view of the position for which he is applying. First, after eight years of being a Macintosh lab manager, and — at the time — after almost 15 years of experience with Macintosh applications including desktop publishing, digital video, courseware authoring, MIDI, and image editing, Paul was the first person I met who knew more about the Macintosh in some areas than I did. As a result, I entrusted him with administrative duties such as system software maintenance, equipment and software trouble-shooting, as well as software installations. This freed up valuable time for me to meet my teaching, research, and service obligations while I was assured that the job in the LLC would not only get done on time but also effectively.

Second, I was thrilled to have a student worker in my lab who was intrinsically motivated to do everything in his power to ensure smooth technical operation, to search for new ways to improve lab management, and to identify software that could get certain tasks done better than the one the LLC had at the time. Paul's work for the lab went above and beyond the call of duty. He always put in extra hours just to learn new software or solve a problem, taking responsibility for attending to essential administrative and technical tasks without having to be assigned. I am convinced that to a certain (healthy) degree Paul identified with his workplace, a type of involvement in the daily and special routines that I had never seen in a student assistant before.

Paul was very pleasant to work with. Due to his exceptional skills and reliability, our work relationship quickly turned into one of cooperation and trust. He was well liked for his friendly personality and much admired for his expertise by his fellow lab assistants. Students using the lab were thrilled to have a peer who knew every facet of the lab and could solve their technical problems on the spot. Faculty frequently commented that they appreciated Paul's hiring because when they needed help and could not meet up with me, they knew they could receive qualified support in the lab from Paul.

I give Paul my highest recommendation because his technical skills, his sincere curiosity about everything Macintosh, and his open and cooperative demeanor make him an ideal candidate for the position of Multimedia Specialist in an educational and Macintosh dominated workplace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Bernd Conrad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K' and 'C'.

K. Bernd Conrad