

Stuart Shapiro, Ph. D  
Associate Dean of Faculty  
Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy  
33 Livingston Ave., Room 536  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

February 25, 2020

Dr. Shapiro:

I am writing to provide my support for the promotion of Debbie Borie-Holtz to Associate Professor. Since 2011, I have worked for and with Debbie in the capacity of Teaching Assistant, Research Assistant, and Project Manager and today view her as a professional mentor who I believe makes a strong candidate for the Associate Professorship.

I first met Debbie in 2012 while I was a student at Bloustein finishing my Masters of City and Regional Planning. As her Teaching Assistant during the Spring and Summer semesters of 2012 for both an in-person and online Research Methods course, I taught lab classes to support her lectures, graded class assignments and exams and worked with students in an office hours setting. Debbie worked closely with me to ensure that my labs and her lectures were highlighting the most critical material for students. She also provided consistent support and guidance in addressing student questions and challenges. In one case, we were able to identify a language-related barrier for a student and then effectively work with that individual to find ways to address the barrier and ultimately help the student learn and master key concepts from the course.

While serving as Debbie's Teaching Assistant, I also worked for her as a Research Assistant at the Eagleton Institute of Politics in the Summer of 2012 on the New Brunswick Tomorrow (NBT) longitudinal study. At her suggestion, we capitalized on my knowledge of geographic information systems (GIS) and incorporated this technology into the NBT analysis for the first time. The GIS analysis enabled the team to provide NBT with a greater understanding of the people they serve and the potential impact they can have on those individuals.

During this same period, I also worked with Debbie on a project for the Center for Women and Work. Again, she identified a way to use a new technology (Qualtrics) for practical application at a project level. With her guidance, I built a user-friendly information collection system for federal grantees. My understanding is that this was the first time the Center had used Qualtrics in this manner. From this innovative use of survey software that she championed, I gained a thorough knowledge of Qualtrics and its capabilities; a skill set she nurtured that continues to be valuable in my work today.

I had another opportunity to work with Debbie in the summer of 2018. At that time, I joined Debbie and the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling as the Project Manager for the Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired survey analysis effort. As lead researcher, Debbie ensured that I was able to smoothly transition into the role and understand client needs. She also provided invaluable guidance on each step of the process, best practices in data collection, survey and data analysis, and a definitive voice on the validity of our findings. Ultimately, our efforts led to a client deliverable that exceeded expectations and provided usable analysis to improve a state agency service for the blind and visually impaired community.

In the fall of 2018, I took a new position and one part of my job is to lead our team's efforts in designing and implementing an impact evaluation framework for our program. Debbie has been instrumental in developing my passion for and knowledge of surveys and evaluation techniques. The skills and best practices I gained from working with her make me more effective in my current position to help our team better understand the impact our work has on communities around the world.

I owe my professional success to Debbie's support, guidance, and mentorship. Her ability to implement new ideas, teach new skills, and empower others make her an excellent candidate for Associate Professor.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lauren  
MCRP 2012