Stella R. Candidate
Candidate’s Statement

Personal History
I began my career as an academic librarian in 1985 at a busy reference department in a large university library system at Penn State. It was an exciting time to be entering the field, as the utility of computers in libraries was just beginning to be explored and understood. My early experiences there helped to shape my later areas of expertise and commitment, both out of necessity and out of a genuine passion for the profession. Serving the campus community at Penn State’s Libraries gave me insight into the needs of our library users and instilled in me a deep interest and commitment to meeting those needs as well as possible. After moving from a reference librarian to the head of the reference department at a departmental library at Penn State, I developed an interest and affinity for administration and the coaching and mentoring of colleagues that remains with me still. In 1993, I was invited to apply for the position of the Head of Information & Education Services at Carnegie Mellon University Libraries, which encompasses reference, teaching, collection development and collection maintenance. The move to Carnegie Mellon provided me the opportunity to participate in a wealth of cutting edge digital library projects, such as e-mail reference services, the Automated Reference Assistant, and selecting materials for inclusion in the Universal Library. In addition, I gained responsibility for leading and administering a larger reference department and larger staff, a challenge which I welcomed and enjoyed. My success in this position allowed me to be considered, and finally selected in 1999 after a national search, for the position of Assistant Dean of University Libraries for Information and Education Services. I am excited about providing vision and leadership for the continued development of innovative user services that meet or exceed the expectations of the campus community.

Introduction
The most rewarding parts of my work as an academic librarian are meeting the challenge of meshing theory and practice, and sharing ideas and research results with colleagues. Throughout my career I have focused on three key areas of commitment and expertise: enhancing access to information, creating partnerships, and improving services to our users.

Enhancing Access to Information
My work as a librarian is grounded on my belief that information should be easily and freely available to everyone who needs it. New information technologies have the potential for enabling library users to access information more efficiently than ever before. When I was a Business Librarian at Penn State, information was just beginning to be available on compact disk. Previously, keyword searching was only available through expensive online databases, and as a result most searching was limited to grant-supported faculty and graduate students. As databases on compact disk arrived in the marketplace, they provided a wonderful opportunity to expand access to information to all campus users. In 1987, I led the planning effort to establish one of the first networked CD-ROM reference centers in the country. Campus response was immediate with more than 3,000 students and faculty making use of thirteen available databases for reference, teaching, and learning. In my article with Karen Starr, “Establishing a Compact Disk Reference Center at PSU: Some Considerations,” I describe the implications of using CD-ROM technology for reference services and collection development. Although the campus response to the CD-ROM reference center was positive, implementing and sustaining the network was difficult. In order to help other librarians learn from our research, I accepted an offer from the journal Database: the Magazine of Database Reference and Review to share our experiences, both good and bad.
As libraries begin the 21st century, my commitment to expanding access to information continues. I am particularly concerned about the costs and future availability of electronic information. There are no effective standards for archiving information and there are no guarantees that the electronic formats of today will be accessible tomorrow. In my writing and in my professional contacts, I urge librarians to take the lead in developing standards for acquiring, storing, and preserving information produced in electronic format. Although the national electronic library is not yet a reality, such examples as JSTOR and the California Digital Library are encouraging.

I believe that one of the greatest threats to expanding access to information is the increasing control over scholarly publishing, especially in the sciences, by a small number of commercial information providers. The goal of librarians is to offer library users information representing a range of views at an affordable price. The goal of commercial providers is profit. In September 1999, I joined a group of 80 academic librarians for a meeting in Keystone, Colorado, to discuss the future of academic libraries. Together we created a set of principles and action items called the Keystone Principles whereby we declared that access to information is a public good, that there is a need for bias-free information systems, that libraries should create them, and most importantly, that the library is the intellectual crossroads and hub of the knowledge network.

Because my conviction that fundamental change in the economic model for publishing will require more collaborative work was strengthened at Keystone, I am using the information and experience I gained there to educate faculty on our campus about the issues surrounding the economics of information and the role they can and should play in creating and contributing to an alternative publishing model. I was appointed recently to an Association of College and Research Libraries Task Force on Scholarly Communications. I am excited by this appointment because it will give me more opportunities to bring together librarians, scholars and publishers.

Creating Partnerships
Throughout my library career I have advocated partnerships as a means to enhance library support and visibility. In 1993, I wrote a grant to fund the position for an Economic Development Librarian at Carnegie Mellon who was to provide specialized library services to the local city/county business and professional community. The program was funded for a second grant cycle and later established as a permanent position in our Libraries. Each year, the visibility of the position increases and today the Economic Development Librarian serves a permanent member of the local Economic Development Council.

Collaboration in my view increases the library’s visibility on campus, across the state, and in the nation. At every opportunity I promote the vital role the library plays in acquiring and distributing information. As a result, our Libraries are increasingly involved in research projects and proposals. Most recently, faculty in the College of Engineering asked our library faculty to partner with them on the creation of a natural resources digital library. My success in forming good collaborative relationships is described in my article in the Journal of Academic Librarianship, “Political Networking.” In “Every Librarian a Leader,” I remind librarians that the skills we bring to the table, including our knowledge of how information is organized and our years of experience in a consultative environment, are of value both in the academic and business world.

Within the University Libraries, collaboration continues to be the key to success. In 1996, I took the lead in developing strong partnerships with colleagues in the School of Computer Science. The development of the Universal Library and the 1000 Books project (scanning 1000 books into electronic format and making them web-accessible) are all

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results of these efforts. Although cultural differences was the subject of my "Collaborating Across Cultures," presentation at the 1996 Library and Information Technology Association conference, I still believe that potential for successful outcomes is great and worth the effort.

I have always endorsed collaboration with other libraries as a way to expand services to our students and faculty and to support services in other institutions. I facilitated the Libraries' membership in Palinet and the Digital Library Federation. Within the state, we are one of handful of academic libraries to be members of Access Pennsylvania, a statewide interlibrary loan service primarily serving school and small public libraries. I serve on the Board of Directors of Palinet, a respected regional library network providing a variety of services to libraries in Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, and West Virginia. Our membership and participation in both the Oakland Library Consortium (OLC) and the Pennsylvania Academic Library Cooperative Initiative (PALCI) are further reflections of our commitment to meeting the needs of our community through collaboration and resource sharing as means of supplementing purchasing.

These collaborative efforts demonstrate to the University administration that the Libraries are vigilant in stewarding Carnegie Mellon dollars. I have always been convinced that well conceived partnerships across user communities benefit everyone. This attitude is not typical among academic librarians and there is sometimes concern from staff that we are spreading our resources too thinly, but our experience repeatedly shows that these fears are unfounded.

Improving Services to Our Users
In my article, “Reflections on Academic Librarianship,” I describe why librarians need to rethink how they are organized. Adapting organizations to meet new user demands or to improve current services is my ongoing passion. In 1993, the Carnegie Mellon University Libraries were struggling to find the resources to support both a general humanities reference desk and an arts reference desk. The inability to sustain the two separate departments became obvious when we implemented a compact disk reference center. The center was housed on the first floor with the general humanities reference department, but many of the databases available were related to the arts. This meant that fine arts librarians spent time away from the arts reference desk while they provided library users with reference assistance elsewhere in the library. The process of reaching the decision to reorganize, and its effect on students and faculty are the subject of my article, “Who Calls the Shots? The Politics of Reference Reorganization,” published in Library Journal. Now that networked resources are available via the web and access to resources is distributed throughout the Libraries, location is no longer a concern, a reality which in turn creates different challenges.

Although technology is certainly a driver in organizational change, the increased attention to just- in-time service that we see in the business sector is an equally powerful stimulus. Librarians have always prided themselves on their service ethic, and although it is true that we desire to provide maximum service, it is also true that this desire is frequently in conflict with how we organize our libraries. My early attraction to Total Quality Management (TQM) reflected my interest in deploying staff more effectively. In 1990, Penn State University embarked upon a path to improve the overall services through the use of TQM. I volunteered to lead two TQM teams in the library, one in stack maintenance and one in government services. The goal was to increase efficiencies in service to students and faculty through a model of continuous improvement.
Our success was mixed, but the lessons we learned were clearly useful to other libraries as they began TQM projects. In my chapter in *Total Quality Management in Libraries*, I discuss the ways in which we were successful and what we should have done differently.

A major challenge facing libraries is developing the organizational awareness necessary to be responsive to changing user needs. My publications and presentations on TQM highlight examples of restructuring that could improve organizational efficiency and agility. Recently, many libraries have moved from TQM, with its emphasis on incremental change, to self-managed teams where decision-making authority rests with the team. In my article, “Decision Making in a Team Environment,” I state that the fundamental difficulty with many self-managed teams is lack of clarity about who has decision-making power. To address this, I propose a decision-making scheme that defines for each level of the organization the type of decision staff have authority to make.

Although I continue to embrace the concepts of TQM and team-based management, it is clear to me that librarians need to develop their own service and organizational models. Lifting ideas wholesale from the private sector and applying them to library practices will not work. Based on my work with TQM and my experience in Information Services where we tried to create a team-based organization, I have a new view of the best kind of organization. I favor one that relies on data collection in making decisions, that utilizes the skills and intelligence of everyone in the organization, and that is structured in a relatively flat, modified hierarchy. Although this conclusion may seem obvious, keeping this organizational balance requires constant attention.

**Summary**
My professional career reflects my commitment to enhancing access to information, creating partnerships, and improving services. I chose to become a librarian because I believe that information is power and that the foundations of a literate society rest on the free flow of ideas. As a profession, we are in a difficult stage as we face competition from other information providers and struggle with a vast array of new technology. Librarians and libraries will continue to prosper if we are true to our belief in free and even-handed access to information, if we learn to use technology as a means to providing access, and if we create organizations that are agile and responsive to change.