January 4, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of OER advocates from across Canada, it is my great pleasure to nominate Shifrah Gadamsetti from Mount Royal University in Calgary for the Open Education Consortium’s Student Award. Ms. Gadamsetti is an extraordinary young student leader who has both benefited from the use of OER in her undergraduate classes and worked hard to ensure that thousands of other students across the country are able to reap the same benefits.

Ms. Gadamsetti speaks eloquently in her video about the importance of the cost savings associated with OER adoption, the power of open licensing in enabling adaptations that suit a local context, the flexibility of being able to access OERs across a variety of media and formats, and the value of students working to co-create OER.

In her role as President of the Mount Royal Student Association, Ms. Gadamsetti has worked tirelessly with her peers to raise awareness of the problem of textbook unaffordability and of the availability of OER by advocating to students, faculty, and administrators and organizing workshops, lectures, and other events (see <http://www.samru.ca/oer)>.

In addition to her efforts to encourage OER adoption at her own campus, Ms. Gadamsetti has been an especially effective advocate on the national stage. As Chair of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations and a representative of more than 250,000 students across the country, Ms. Gadamsetti has been instrumental in lobbying the federal government to develop a strategy for OER and to accompany this strategy with support in the form of $8 million to support OER development and distribution (see <https://youtu.be/eAWIy2mE7Ms> for a video clip of Ms. Gadamsetti speaking to the Government of Canada’s Standing Committee on Finance and <http://www.casa-acae.com/casas_2018_prebudget_submission> for CASA’s full pre-budget submission document).

Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Gadamsetti, who stressed the innovative learning benefits associated with OER, in December 2017 the standing committee on finance directly adopted CASA’s recommendation to “*Support a pilot grant through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research that would provide students and faculty with an incentive to develop open educational resources”* (for the full report see <http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FINA/Reports/RP9312006/finarp21/finarp21-e.pdf>). Although we await the release of the next federal budget, the endorsement of CASA’s recommendation represents a hugely important step in the Open Education movement in Canada, where support of OER creation has thus far been limited to individual Provinces (with only British Columbia and Ontario actively supporting Open Education projects).

As will be evident to you from Ms. Gadamsetti’s nomination video and her testimony to the federal government, she is a passionate and articulate young leader who has been able to mobilize support for open education by influencing her peers, educators, and policy makers. As OER advocates from across Canada, we believe that Ms. Gadamsetti has already made extraordinary contributions to advance openness in education and we are delighted to recommend that her work be recognized through the OEC’s student award.

Sincerely,

Rajiv Jhangiani, Ph.D.

*Special Advisor to the Provost in Open Education, Kwantlen Polytechnic University*

*Associate Editor, Psychology Learning and Teaching*

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Co-signed: