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To Whom It May Concern,

### **Endorsement of Prof. Nadar's Teaching in Writing for Publication Workshops and Supervision**

Prof. Sarojini Nadar has asked me to write a letter of motivation for her application for promotion, describing the areas of her teaching which I have been involved in over the last two years. Having encountered Prof. Nadar in the classroom during my undergraduate years, I was impressed by her interactive style of teaching, her progressive thinking, as well as her encouraging and approachable nature. I therefore requested her supervision for my Honours degree – despite her having moved out of my discipline of Biblical Studies, into Gender and Religion. Under Prof. Nadar's excellent supervision I was completed my Honours degree *cum laude* in 2011, and so approached her again, asking that she supervise my Master of Theology. Within one year, due to her professional and enthusiastic leadership, I again completed my M.Th *cum laude*.

Last year I was invited by Prof. Nadar to participate in a writing workshop, with at least twenty other students, which was designed to direct and assist students in producing articles. The four, weekend-long workshops were structured in such a way, that by the end of the year each participant would have an article which we could be confident enough with to send to a journal for publication. The design of the four, weekend workshops provided a natural development of the individuals' articles, and the stimulating and supportive environment allowed for tremendous growth within the group.

The project was originally started by Prof. Isabel Phiri, in conjunction with Prof. Nadar, although it was soon taken over and became primarily dependant on Prof. Nadar with the departure of Prof. Phiri to Switzerland. The workshop was based around the theme, *Transforming Faith Communities into Safe Space: Conversations on Gender, Health, Religion and Culture*, and it was expected that each participant would relate their research from each of their various areas of interest to this.

Prof. Nadar's style of teaching is engaging and enabling. Within each step of the workshop, there was a teaching on a particular subject, which could be responded to. These areas included a thorough analysis and teaching of what an abstract is and what it must include, the structure of the article and how to isolate what information to include and focus on, among other things. After each teaching, the participating students put what they had learnt into practice, so for example; after the workshop on abstracts, each student wrote the abstract for the article which they intended to write. These drafts were then projected, one at a time, onto a big screen, and were edited and critiqued by the entire group. This process was incredibly helpful – both when it was our article being reviewed as well as when we were looking at another's – as we learnt to look more objectively at our own work. Common mistakes were highlighted and we were shown how to recognise what it was that we should be aware of or what we were aiming for within our articles. This process was then repeated a number of times with the body of the articles themselves. Another benefit from this approach was the introduction to the peer review system which the journal's editors utilise, as well as offering many of us students who haven't published before, the confidence to submit our articles.

The entire workshop was an interactive experience under the facilitation of Prof. Nadar. Any contributions and queries were welcome, and were responded to. Prof. Nadar's professionalism, insight, guidance and encouraging nature allowed for the discussion to move freely, yet productively. Her breadth and depth of knowledge across all the disciplines meant that she was able to provide constructive criticism and give helpful suggestions to each of the students – despite their vast array of interests and subject matter. Prof. Nadar also drew in other experts who are outside of the field of theology to offer different insight and give helpful suggestions during the workshop. This provided refreshing perspectives and useful research suggestions.

The one-on-one teaching time that Prof. Nadar set aside to discuss and formulate the different topics with me was invaluable. Her creativity inspires. The manner in which she works through the drafts was instrumental in developing and sharpening our writing skills, as she sat with each of us individually and worked through the work which we presented to her. The process of simultaneously reading through the draft together, correcting it, highlighting areas which need attention and making suggestions of where improvements could be made was far more helpful than receiving a document back which had simply been edited with track changes. This style also enabled me, and the other students, to take ownership of our work, as we discussed the corrections which were being made – ensuring that the work was truly our own.

This idea of interactive learning was extended to slightly bigger seminars which were organised and run by Prof. Nadar. All of the students which she supervised were invited to come together to discuss where they were in the process of writing and completing their respective papers, thesis and dissertations. Like the writing workshops, this collaborative exercise provided a safe space to raise fears, to work through issues in research investigations or data capturing and to make suggestions which may help each other. The opportunity to hear about other student's work was also motivating as it made each of us aware of the great extent of available research and the work of the greater community of academics. These day seminars were considered to be so helpful and productive, that they were often attended by other post-graduate students who were not under the supervision of Prof. Nadar.

Prof. Nadar's influence on my academic career has extended beyond that of my Honours and Masters' thesis. Through her suggestion and some of her connections she has provided an opportunity for me to get involved with the World Council of Churches, where I was asked to be a part of the drafting team for the Unity Statement. The Statement is pivotal within the life of the World Council of Churches, and the exposure that has come with my involvement with the international, drafting team of theologians has been instrumental in motivating my further pursuit of academics.

Towards the end of last year, with the encouragement of Prof. Nadar and some of the other lecturers at UKZN, I began applications for scholarships and to Oxford University to complete a second Masters degree. For all of these applications I asked Prof. Nadar to be one of my references. Due to my strong academic results and involvement with the World Council of Churches, among other things, I made it through to the final round of the KZN and South-Africa-at-large Rhodes Scholarship interviews. Although I was unsuccessful in that application, I was awarded the scholarship from my next application, to the Cecil Renaud Overseas Educational & Charitable Trust. Therefore I leave in early October of this year to begin a Master of Theology at Oxford University.

It is because of Prof. Nadar's outstanding work-ethic, her passion, her quest for knowledge which will make a positive contribution to the University and the world and her investment into her students, that I offer my full support of her application for promotion.

Should you have any enquiries, or request and further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on 072 297 1678 or [alicefabian@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alicefabian@yahoo.co.uk) .

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'fabian', written in a cursive style.

Alice Fabian