



RHODE ISLAND
COLLEGE

Department of Anthropology

3 October 2020

To the Departmental Advisory Committee of James P. Adams Library,

I am writing in support of Dragan Gill's application for tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor. I have engaged with Dragan in her roles as a librarian; as department liaison to the Anthropology Department; and as a colleague on campus. In all of these roles I have found in Dragan someone who is committed to ensuring that the library remains an effective and integral part of RIC and that RIC continues to be successful in its academic mission. Her qualifications, expertise and contributions are well documented in her supporting materials, demonstrating her excellence in the areas of teaching, professional competence and service. Here I touch on some aspects of Dragan's work that I -- someone who values the role and resources of the library on campus, incorporates them into her teaching and uses them in her research -- find particularly compelling.

It is clear that libraries play an important role on campuses, and RIC is no exception. It is also clear that that role has been evolving and continues to change, with an increasing focus on empowering users to navigate and discover information and, ultimately, to create knowledge. Much of Dragan's work at Adams Library (and beyond, such as in LIBS 150) has revolved around facilitating this process for students. For example, through her various modes of library instruction she supports "students in developing the habits of mind and skills of a researcher," using her time with them as "time to practice with support." This approach well supports pedagogy in other classes (including my own) that aims to develop skills rather than solely providing content; pedagogy that highlights process and tries to make the process of learning more transparent.

Her thinking about process and the nature of user experience has gone beyond teaching. It has included the co-development of studies (in some of which I participated) of user experiences of the library's website in order to make navigating it easier and more seamless for both students and faculty. She also understands that this needs to be complemented by appropriate wayfinding aids for the physical spaces of the library; as an anthropologist I have appreciated the need to think about people's experiences 'on the ground' (even on virtual ground) and have enjoyed my conversations with her about how to make experiences of navigating the library better. This 'on the ground' engagement with users is also reflected in the library displays that Dragan has curated. "Curiosity", "A Potion for Memory and Wisdom" and "The Book: Art and Artifact" (co-curated with Amy Barlow) all ask users -- especially students -- to re-vision aspects of the library and to be active participants in their engagements with what the library offers.

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I see Dragan's work with OER in a similar way. It not only demonstrates her leadership and ability to guide a statewide initiative; it is also an aspect of her commitment to facilitating access and emphasizing process and transparency in the engagement with information. She notes that "the arc of campus participation in OER is typically: adopt, adapt, create" and has worked to help bring about the infrastructures needed to allow faculty to create the content that they need in their classes and to become more comfortable with open-access publishing more generally. Not only has she conducted workshops through the FCTL but, in my experience, has also been consistently available to answer questions as they have arisen. I have benefitted from her thoughtful considerations of my questions, borne out of her facility and expertise with open-access issues, and I deeply appreciate the fact that she has been working to provide faculty more options and tools with which we can attain our varied pedagogic and academic goals.

In all she has done, it is clear that Dragan Gill has demonstrated an excellence that has benefitted RIC. Her enthusiasm for her work is clear, and she has been a valued colleague with whom I have enjoyed working and whose work in turn has facilitated and enriched my own pedagogic and academic endeavors. I hope that the DAC supports her application for tenure and promotion, and I look forward to the continued contributions to RIC that Dragan is sure to make.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Praveena Gullapalli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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