Linguistics
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

August 15, 2022

Dear members of the selection committee,

I am delighted to support Sahar Taghipour's application for the dissertation completion award funded by the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies at the University of Toronto. Sahar is easily amongst the top students I have worked with in the past 5 years: highly engaged intellectually, exceptionally professional, and in possession of an unbeatable work ethic. Her dissertation on the complex inflectional morphology of Iranian languages is an exciting piece of work that is poised to make contributions to the literature on multiple fronts, both empirically and theoretically.

When Sahar first arrived at U of T she impressed me immediately. Her prior training was excellent, but it was largely in frameworks that we do not teach here. Right out of the gate, she demonstrated a serious and steadfast commitment to understanding novel (to her) research contexts, making tremendous progress term after term. As noted above, today she is one of our strongest students. I've had the privilege of watching her transformation up close. In her first year I taught her twice (in both cases she finished at or near the top of the class). This is when I learned that she was a student who worked at an exceptionally high level and had a genuine fascination for her subject matter. In addition to being my student in these two courses, Sahar was also assigned to me as an RA and TA in 2017-2018. As an RA she was creative, productive and reliable without exception. As a TA she was methodical and precise, and when I had to travel for workshops mid-term she stepped into my shoes and took over two lectures, with great success.

In recent years, I have mostly interacted with Sahar as a member of her thesis committee. I don't think I've ever seen a student make progress on their dissertation in such a transformative way. While I am used to watching her make swift progress (as noted above), I have to say she has in the past year achieved a whole new level of depth and performance. It has been truly amazing to watch her develop into a mature scholar. There is no question that Sahar has the ability to complete her program of study. She has already submitted drafts of several chapters and based on what I've seen, the content is excellent. I am absolutely certain that she will complete her dissertation in due course.
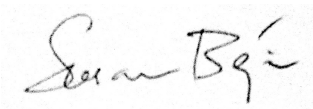
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Meanwhile, Sahar has been a vibrant presence in our department, organizing reading groups and workshops with an energy and commitment that is rare. She is completely invested in her graduate training and is taking full advantage of departmental resources and opportunities. I hope you will give her application serious consideration. This is a top student who has the potential to make a fantastic impact and she definitely deserves to be supported.

Sincerely,

Susana Bejar
Assistant Professor
Department of Linguistics
University of Toronto