To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my unequivocal support for Prerna Ravi in her application to the CIS/Starr Student Travel Fellowship for presenting her research at UNESCO’s Digital Learning Week in September. As Prerna’s PhD advisor, I have witnessed firsthand her exceptional research capabilities, her innovative approach to problem-solving, and her unwavering dedication to making meaningful technological advancements.

I have known Prerna for the last two years and I have watched her grow manifold as a researcher, educator and engineer in a short span of time. She has shown immense potential and promise as an educational technology researcher. She has exhibited deep understanding of the problem space, is extremely enthusiastic about expanding her knowledge by immersing herself deep in the literature and does not shy away from exploring multiple dimensions of the field. She has displayed ingenuity and an excellent work ethic by being very proactive with all her responsibilities. Her dedication and attention to detail is clearly visible within the projects she has undertaken at our lab. She goes above and beyond to always take the extra initiative and achieves much more than what is expected of her. At the same time, she never compromises on her values of what she wants to accomplish and she walks through life with the poise of a compassionate heart, leading her exactly where her technology and people-oriented goals intend to, both professionally and personally.

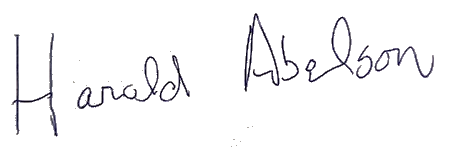
Prerna has done an exceptional job in organizing our group’s research around the field of AI-powered tools for teacher assessments. Her passion for helping teachers in STEM learning is ever apparent, a factor in her success this year in recruiting fellow grad students, UROPs, and staff to help her develop several teacher professional development (PD) initiatives and tools. Her leadership has resulted in initiatives on several research fronts, including a new project-based learning curriculum that lends itself to alternative means of teacher assessment as well as innovative teacher workshops to provide professional development for these new tools.

Prerna's research efforts in the Generative AI space stand out for their originality and impact. Her ability to apply machine learning techniques to human-centered problems has not only advanced the academic discourse but has also translated into practical applications that address real-world challenges. Her tools and curricula demonstrate a profound understanding of the technical aspects of AI while simultaneously considering ethical and societal concerns. ​​

Her dedication to interdisciplinary collaboration has been instrumental in bringing together various labs within the MIT RAISE (Responsible AI for Social Empowerment) initiative, fostering a culture of innovation that transcends traditional academic boundaries. This collaborative spirit, coupled with her effective communication skills, has enabled her to lead and contribute to projects that are at the forefront of technology and society. Furthermore, Prerna's commitment to education, as evidenced by her role in developing the Data Science curriculum (to be presented at UNESCO’s Digital Learning Week) and conducting App Inventor workshops, underscores her belief in the importance of technology literacy. Her efforts to make technology education inclusive and accessible reflect her passion for equity and her vision for a world where technology serves as a tool for empowerment.

Prerna's academic contributions, including her publications and presentations, are a testament to her research excellence and her ability to convey complex ideas with clarity and precision. Her work has received well-deserved recognition, highlighting her role as an emerging leader in the field. She has followed an aggressive plan in the last year to share her findings by writing and co-writing several well-received conference papers and journal submissions with her MIT RAISE colleagues. She is always willing to open her research efforts to feedback from practitioners and others in the education community. She also does a phenomenal job with articulating her ideas at every step by explaining her views very concisely and giving compelling and persuasive arguments backed by concrete evidence from the educational literature.

Prerna Ravi embodies the qualities of a pioneering researcher and educator. Her work not only contributes to the advancement of technology but also ensures that these advancements are ethical, inclusive, and impactful. I have no doubt that Prerna will continue to excel and innovate, making significant contributions to any conference fortunate enough to have her as part of their team. I am thus extremely confident that Prerna will make good use of the CIS/Starr Student Travel Fellowship funds to share her work at UNESCO’s Digital Learning Week.



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