

Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs

July 22, 2024

To whom it may concern

It is with great enthusiasm that I am writing to nominate Dalal Hanna for the Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs Science Promotion Prize. Dalal is a new Assistant Professor in our Department who came to us with a strong history of promoting biology. Over the last decade, she has founded a science outreach organization, led and participated in numerous other activities focused on encouraging popular interest and participation in science, as well as developing science abilities that have had a wide reach.

Dalal co-founded a Canadian Charity called Riparia (www.riparia.ca) that works to connect young women to science on the water. Every year, Riparia brings a group of high-school aged girls on a week-long canoe-camping trip during which they learn about the fundamentals of freshwater science from both Western and Indigenous perspectives. Dalal also led the creation of an accredited land-based learning environmental science program run by the Matawa Education and Care Centre during which youth from several Matawa First Nations collect environmental data that is in turn used to inform freshwater management (see a copy of the 2019 [program report here](#)). Dalal has also been involved with numerous science outreach programs, participating in multiple year-long National Geographic-led exchanges between Explorers and Educators during which she shared her passion for freshwater conservation with hundreds of elementary to highschool-aged students. She works to make her scientific research findings accessible to a broad audience through participation in popular outreach videos (e.g. [National Geographic Into Water Series](#)), authoring articles that summarize her research findings in language that is accessible to a broad audience in varied outlets (e.g. [Current Conservation](#), [Canadian Geographic](#)), and engagement with the media (e.g. [Interview with CBC's The Current](#)).

In Dalal's new role as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biology at Carleton University, she continues to place the promotion of science at the forefront of her work. After starting her position in September 2023, she acquired a Trebek Initiative grant, which is a joint National Geographic Society and Royal Canadian Geographic Society funding venture, to develop "Freshwater Live!". This project will connect Canadians - and especially Canadian classrooms - to a series of interactive online sessions focused on freshwater conservation held between September 2024 and June 2025. As part of this project 10 classrooms around the country are receiving free Water Rangers (www.waterrangers.ca) and MacroBlitz (www.macrobilitz.org) kits, that they will use during monthly local field trips to collect information about freshwater water quality and biodiversity. The general public will also be

invited to participate in this monthly sampling. The website for this project will launch in September 2024. It will also house information about a complementary National Geographic Society funded research project led by Dalal assessing the long-term effects of timber harvesting on freshwaters in Canada. This project's core team, assembled by Dalal, includes a filmmaker and storymap designer to help ensure the findings of their research are of popular interest.

Dalal is also taking steps to bring biology into public spaces. She is currently developing audio content all about freshwater plants and fish for a new public art piece funded by the city of Ottawa that will be permanently installed along the Rideau River in the fall of 2024. The piece's sculpture of local native and invasive aquatic plants will be accompanied by QR code that leads visitors to a website where they are navigated through an hour-long audio experience that changes alongside the seasons.

These examples are just a glimpse into Dalal's involvement in the promotion of sciences, which is why I believe she is deserving of the Canadian Council of University Biology Chairs Science Promotion Prize. I hope the evaluation committee will be as excited about her contributions to the promotion of biology as I am.

Sincerely,



Bruce McKay
Chair
Department Of Biology
Carleton University