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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for Theresa Wills as a candidate for the Online Teacher Excellence Award. I have collaborated with Dr. Wills for the past five years. During that time our collaboration has included co-planning instruction, reviewing one another's teaching materials, consulting one another regarding student mentoring issues, and engaging in reflection about our mathematics teacher educator roles.

As I reflect on my vast interactions with Theresa, a common theme about her teaching is illuminated: her intentional practice towards empowering her learners. When she creates learning materials she is purposeful in her design so that her learners develop a shared sense of ownership in the content, pedagogy, and communication modalities. In doing so, she empowers her learners to take action within their own environments, implementing the topic that Dr. Wills offers within the lesson. I, personally, have experience this empowerment as her collaborative colleague. As we discuss our teaching decisions and plan for instruction, Dr. Wills makes explicit her intentionality and through her transparency I am empowered to emulate her pedagogical techniques within my own instruction.

Upon review of her Curriculum Vitae, you'll notice that Theresa's learners are not only Mason students but also a national audience of in-service teachers with whom she corresponds with as a result of her recent book publication as well as her regularly offered professional development sessions. No matter if she has known the learner for minutes or years, Dr. Wills is able to cultivate a safe online learning environment that showcases a variety of learning modalities and encourages a shared collaboration. Her efforts are commendable, and it has been an honor to learn from her.

Sincerely,

Laura E. Bitto, PhD  
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