

June 18, 2024

Subject: Recommendation letter for Rishit Saiya

To whom it may concern,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing this letter supporting Rishit Saiya. I have known Rishit since August 2022, when he joined the STEEL research laboratory (<https://steel.isi.edu/>)—which I was co-leading with Dr. Jelena Mirkovic, Dr. Christophe Hauser, and Genevieve Bartlett while I was a Research Assistant Professor and Research Lead at the University of Southern California Information Sciences Institute (USC ISI). While I was not directly advising Rishit's project at the time, I would help co-advise during weekly group meetings, and I was extremely impressed with his research progress during this time—so much so that in December 2022, I invited Rishit to be my lead TA for my Introduction to Computer and Network Security course in Spring 2023—which is an upper level undergraduate course in the USC Computer Science Department. During our time working together, Rishit has displayed tremendous work ethic and an extremely effective communicator—which I believe are primary tenets of success in this field.

Rishit and I primarily collaborated on developing a curriculum for the Computer and Network Security course. The Spring 2023 semester was my first time teaching this course, and I would not have survived the first iteration of this course without Rishit's help. The course is very hands-on, and entails several security exercises implemented on the DeterLab security testbed (which is now known as the Merge Testbed <https://mergetb.org/>). For several students, this is their first time interacting with networking, systems, and security concepts, and Rishit was a shepherd for the students in this grueling course. The students had a great rapport with Rishit, and they regularly confided in him with difficulties in the course—more so than they did with me. More critically, Rishit regularly provided me feedback and suggestions for the development and validation of course assignments, examinations, as well as the complex capture-the-flag exercises—which is very difficult to manage and debug in real-time. It's a gross understatement to say Rishit made my life easier during this course. I was truly impressed with his maturity and leadership in the course despite only being a first-year Master's student.

In closing, I would like to express strong support for Rishit in his career pursuits. He demonstrated a strong fundamental understanding of security concepts in both his research and his teaching skills, and I am looking forward to witnessing his continued growth in his academic pursuits. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



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About the reference: Dr. Luis Garcia is an Assistant Professor at the University of Utah Kahlert School of Computing. His research is in the broad area of embedded and cyber-physical systems for applications in IoT, ubiquitous and mobile computing, and pervasive sensing and control. Prior to the University of Utah, he was a Research Assistant Professor and Research Lead at the University of Southern California Information Sciences Institute, where he was a co-PI at the REU site. His current interests are in problems related to making these systems learning-enabled, secure, privacy-aware, human-coupled, wirelessly-networked, and energy-efficient. More information about his research is available at his website: <https://lagarcia.us>.