Initial Report Last Modified: 01/16/2018

1. Recommender's Name:

Text Response
Eric Jardine

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

2. Recommender's Email Address:

Text Response
ejardine@vt.edu

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

3. Applicant's name for which you are providing a recommendation:

Text Response
Davon Woodward

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

4. How long have you known the applicant and under what circumstances have you become familiar with the applicant's academic abilities?

Text Response
I was asked by Davon Woodward to draft a letter of support for his application to the 2018 VT Data Science for the Public Good Program (DSPG). I was happy to do so. Having reviewed the requirements and expectations of the Fellowship position, I am certain that Davon would make an excellent addition to the program. Without reservations, I therefore support his application. I am an assistant professor of political science at Virginia Tech. My research focuses on measuring cybersecurity, big data analytics and the uses and abuses of the Dark Web. I first met Davon in the fall semester of 2017, when he took my course GIA 5374. This course focused on the role of data and algorithms in society, with a focus on of how algorithms work, where the hidden biases in algorithms come from (design, use, etc.) and how to govern algorithms to help encourage fairer decisions. Davon did excellently in the course. He consistently leveraged his extensive background in statistics and data analytics to contribute substantive comments to the weekly discussions. He was also able to leverage his past work, such as designing a predictive analytics algorithm for Chicago to predict illegal cigarette sales, to further the whole room's understanding of how algorithms are designed and implemented in practice. These skills, mentioned offhandedly in the context of the course but clearly exemplified in Davon's curriculum vitae, demonstrate his curiosity with the social world and his ability to leverage data to produce sound policy-relevant prescriptions. They also highlight his knowledge of statistical platforms such as R. Davon is also intellectually flexible. While he is most comfortable using data analytics to draw conclusions, he took a step outside of this zone for the final paper in my course. Quite creatively, he developed the concept of what he called connected publics. He then used this notion to help explain voter behavior by marrying the idea of connected publics (people who are interconnected and get news and exposure to ideas via networks) to a voting choice model. The final result was a very intriguing and persuasive look at how digital technologies and networks might affect voter behavior. Throughout the course, Davon remained cordial, engaged and support of this peers.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

5. Please assess the applicant's ability to contribute to the Data Science for the Public Good Fellowship Program.

Text Response
Beyond his performance in my course, it is clear that Davon possesses both the academic background and work experience necessary to excel as a part of the Data Science for the Public Good Program. He has over 10 years of experience working on public policy projects and an extensive background with data analytics. In short, he will excel as a part of the fellowship program. As I mentioned before, based upon what I know of Davon, I strongly support his application for this program.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

6. How would you describe the applicant's motivation and initiative in pursuing his/her academic and career goals?

Text Response
Davon is very driven. In my course, he submitted every assignment on time. On the larger assignments, such as the final paper, his work progressed well during the semester, indicating a truly self-motivated personality and drive. He was also more than willing to help others out despite pressing constraints on his own schedule. For instance, he helped another student with some web scraping because he knew the code in R. Overall, I think he is remarkably driven and will excel at any task he is asked to undertake.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1