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SUNY Potsdam Reappointment Committees

I write in support of the reappointment of Dr. Supraja Gurajala. I have had the pleasure of auditing her first offering of CIS 475 Introduction to Cryptography in Spring 2018. I attended the class because Dr. Gurajala has experience with more recent public-key crypto systems (and relevant course work) than I; it also gave me a chance to observe her teaching over a full semester.

Dr. Gurajala was successful in teaching the course because of her attention to detail, her creativity in assignments, and her obvious enthusiasm for the material. This course used no required textbook but rather relied on the extensive work Dr. Gurajala did on the chalkboard. I rediscovered note-taking muscles that I had not used in a very long time; the students, too, learned to take notes at a very rapid clip.

The quality of the work on the board translated directly into the quality of our notes and we all benefited from Dr. Gurajala's preparation. This is particularly important in that she worked complex examples of enciphering and deciphering in various cryptographic systems; she worked from her own complete notes and the class followed along without getting lost.

The one downside of no textbook was that students had to take notes at the speed of light. Dr. Gurajala's subsequent offering of CIS 475 in Spring 2019 is presenting a slightly narrower collection of crypto systems at a slightly more sedate speed. Dr. Gurajala's adjustment of course content to better reach our students shows one of her many strengths as a teacher.

The implementation assignments, where students were to write computer programs using the mathematics taught in the classroom, were presented to the class in encrypted form. The students were set the puzzle of deciphering the assignment before they could begin the actual programming task. Some students were frustrated at first but Dr. Gurajala offered enough hints and assistance to get them past this. The assignments themselves were important for understanding the systems presented in the class.

Dr. Gurajala's enthusiasm for all things computer science comes across in all of her classes (or so the students say). I have no specific examples from the class I took with

her; it was the general spirit she brought into class. She constantly presented the next mathematical area to study to extend what she presented, even when (or especially when) the class would not be able to cover that material. This made it possible to use the class and notes as a starting point in a further journey into the Chinese remainder theorem or other crypto-related mathematics.

Dr. Supraja Gurajala offered a fast-paced, thorough Introduction to Cryptography in the Spring of 2018. We have talked, fairly extensively, about what worked and what needed adjustment for her current offering. Her ability to tune the content and presentation is a result of her complete understanding of the material and strong desire to teach *our* students. I look forward to working with her for many more years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brian C. Ladd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Brian C. Ladd
Associate Professor of Computer Science