RISHIKESH SADANANDAN

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign | *B.S COMPUTER ENGINEERING*   **Graduating: May 2026**

Related Coursework: Applied Parallel Programming, Digital Signal Processing & Python Lab, Analog Signal Processing, Digital Systems Laboratory, Probability with Engineering Applications, Data Structures

WORK EXPERIENCE

Co-founder and Software Engineer | Poetic   **Champaign IL |** Oct. 2021 — June 2023

- Recorded nearly 250 hours of co-working across four semesters to develop a full-stack globally distributed web and iOS app designed for aspiring songwriters, from landing pages and hosting infrastructure to written business plans and 80+ customer interviews
- Developed and migrated a Create React App on AWS Amplify with Lambda to Next 13's App Router on Vercel, yielding 26% less code
- Fine-tuned GPT-2 with Google CLP on 100MB of hand-picked lyric data to build a serverless REST API with SageMaker and Gateway to produce high-quality lyric completions, reduce latency by over 10x, and improve developer experience
- Collaborated seamlessly in multidisciplinary teams of ex-Amazon designers and University business students, ensuring cohesive integration between technical and business requirements, resulting in improved value offerings and a successful alpha launch

Program Fellow | iVenture Accelerator   **Champaign IL |** May 2023 — July 2023

- Collaborated with the top 12 student-run startups on campus, leveraging technical and interpersonal skills to impact familiar student-founders and web-based projects, fostering a growth-oriented and community-centric approach to entrepreneurship
- Worked closely within a community of 300+ entrepreneurial leaders to help steward the iVenture summer curriculum, including speaker series, workshops, and networking events, yielding continuous personal and professional development
- Spearheaded 13 team-bonding events that showcased the accelerator's civic culture and ensured guests felt appreciated through meaningful introductions and gift-giving practices, reflecting the values of the program with fervor and clarity

Cohort Member | iVenture Accelerator   **Champaign IL |** May 2022 — May 2023

- Communicated venture progress across 34 All-Hands and 42 Board meetings, highlighting key milestones and challenges while seeking advice, support, and networking opportunities from the accelerator community, demonstrating the ability to be a community member
- Engaged in a curriculum of 40+ hours of impactful lectures delivered by successful venture practitioners and renowned experts about topics including human-centered design, team roles, user research, storytelling, pricing, fundraising, pitching, and legal strategies
- Secured $17k+ in funding following acceptance into the program, no equity taken, and $27k+ in benefits including cloud AWS and GCP

EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

Speaker & Startup Representative | Engineering Open House   **Champaign IL |** Mar. 2023

- Showcased my startup at the University's premiere engineering exhibition by delivering a 2-min pitch comprising panel judges and engaging among the 50,000+ unique attendees including students, families, and professors

Speaker & Startup Representative | iVenture Demo Week   **Chicago IL |** Aug. 2022

- Delivered 5-min pitch to a high-profile audience of 200+ investors, lawyers, and UIUC alumni in Chicago's entrepreneurial ecosystem along a week-long tour across the city, meeting with influential organizations including Origin Ventures, Much Law, and mHUB
- Performed a 50s introduction as a rap with two weeks of paired-pitch practice to successfully demonstrate the product, capture the attention of a diverse audience, and garner connections at the intersection of technical industry professionals and artistic talent

Cohort Member | National Science Foundation's I-Corps   **Great Lakes Region |** Jun. 2022 — Aug. 2022

- Conducted 40+ customer interviews over eight weeks to identify and validate customer pain points, analyze and implement interview data with team members, and refine business assumptions and strategy through a lean curriculum designed by Steve Blank

Judge | Zero2One Demo Day   **Urbana IL |** Feb. 2023

- Evaluated pitches from a cohort of startups, providing constructive feedback on market potential, value proposition, and storytelling
- Engaged with teams post-pitches to refine go-to-market strategy, revenue models, and technical solutions while fostering a supportive, learning-focused environment by recognizing and commending students for innovative solutions and market alignment
- Offered practical mentorship and motivation to dedicated students by openly discussing collective entrepreneurial and personal goals, demonstrating values of trust, peer support, and connection

LANGUAGES & TECH

Web-Dev/Mobile: JS (React, Next, Remix), CSS (Tailwind, Framer Motion), HTML, HTMX, React Native (Expo), Swift (SwiftUI, UIKit)

Backend: Go, Node, C++ (CUDA), C, Python, AWS (API Gateway, SageMaker, S3, Route 53, Lambda, Amplify), SST, Vercel, GCP, SystemVerilog (FPGAs), DBs (Fire/Supa-base, PlanetScale, Prisma), APIs (OpenAI, Huggingface), Auth (session-based Go, Cognito)