How to apply:

- https://cs.gmu.edu/prospective-students/phd-program/admissions/
- deadline: **Dec. 1, 2021** (for fully-funded Ph.D. students)

Basic requirements:
  - Bachelor or Master's degree on CS or CS-related major
  - Self-motivated; strong interest in Security
  - Solid programming skills (experience on contests such as ACM-ICPC/DEFCON-CTF is a plus)
  - Experience in Security/System research (publication in Security/System areas is a plus)

Prospective students may send email to **xiaokuan.zhang.cs@gmail.com** with:
  - (1) semester to apply (Fall 2022/Spring 2023)
  - (2) CV
  - (3) research interest and past research experience
  - (4) summary of one of Xiaokuan's papers, and discuss pros/cons/extensions.

Please put `[Prospective PhD Student]` in the email subject when sending emails.

About GMU-CS:

GMU is an R1 university, and the CS ranking is 48 (security: 38) according to csrankings.org; 68 according to US news. New hires in security include: Giuseppe Ateniese, who was the chair of CS department at Stevens; Evgenios Kornaropoulos, who just finished his postdoc at UC-Berkeley working with Dawn Song. Besides, there are a group of security researchers at GMU-CS, including Dov Gordon, Foteini Baldimtsi, Eric Osterweil and Songqing Chen. Moreover, another well-known security researcher, Kun Sun, is at GMU-IST, and there is a new Cyber Security Engineering department with many new faculties. Students will have the opportunity to work with them on state-of-the-art security problems. GMU is only miles away from DC, and it is also very close to Amazon HQ2. There will be a lot of work/intern opportunities.

About Xiaokuan Zhang:

Xiaokuan Zhang will be joining the CS Department, George Mason University as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2022. He graduated from Ohio State University in Aug. 2021 under the supervision of Prof. Yinqian Zhang (yinqian.org). Currently, he is a postdoc researcher at Georgia Tech, working in the SSLab (gts3.org) with Prof. Taesoo Kim (taesoo.kim). His research interests mainly lie in System Security and Privacy, including side channels, mobile security, IoT security, blockchain security, etc.

During his Ph.D., he has published 10+ papers in well-known security conferences, such as ACM CCS, USENIX Security, NDSS and ACSAC, 5 of which he is the first author. He is also one of the three winners worldwide to receive the 2020 NortonLifeLock (formerly Symantec) Graduate Fellowship, which is one of the most competitive awards in computer security. Former winners of this award include Brendan D. Saltaformaggio, Christian Rossow, Prateek Saxena, Kevin Butler and David Brumley, which are well-known security researchers. His discoveries of iOS cross-app information leakage received three CVEs issued by Apple and our proposed countermeasures were integrated into recent versions of iOS/MacOS. His papers were selected as the top 10 finalists of NYU Cyber Security Awareness Week (CSAW) applied research paper competition in 2016 and 2018.

Students working with Xiaokuan will have a lot of opportunities to collaborate with researchers from other universities, such as SJTU/SusTech (China mainland), CUHK/CityU (HK, China), NTU (Singapore), CISPA (Germany), OSU/Duke/Gatech/IU (USA). Students can also be referred to intern at industrial research labs such as Microsoft Research and Baidu X-lab.