



Stony Brook
University

Department of Computer Science
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, New York 11794
(631) 632-2464
nick@cs.stonybrook.edu
www.securitee.org

September 27, 2019

To the ACSAC Student Travel Grants Committee –

Dear colleagues,

This letter is to verify that Babak Amin Azad is a PhD student in good standing in the Computer Science Department at Stony Brook University. Babak's main area of research is web security. Babak joined my lab in Fall 2017 and since then, he has been working on two different projects. In the first project, we are trying to understand how modern antibot services work and whether attackers can bypass them and attack the websites protected by these services. Babak has designed, implemented, and conducted a number of experiments to quantify how well modern services block malicious bots and how they could be further improved. In his second project, Babak is experimenting with automated attack-surface reduction for web applications. Through this process, one can reduce the likelihood of an application being successfully compromised by simply removing code that is not required by a given set of users. Babak presented the first set of results from this research earlier this year, in USENIX Security 2019.

Separately from the work we do together, Babak is currently collaborating with some of his old colleagues on a submission to the Industrial Control System Security (ICSS) workshop that is co-located with ACSAC. Since this work is unrelated to my research agenda, I will unfortunately not be able to cover his costs to attend that workshop.

Given that Babak joined my lab just two years ago, he has not had as many opportunities as the rest of my students to attend top-tier security conferences and be exposed to state-of-the-art research. If he attends ACSAC (this will be his first time attending), he will be introduced to new topic areas as well as fellow graduate students from different institutions, both of which are crucial for a young PhD student. At the same time, Babak is much more knowledgeable than the typical junior graduate student so I am confident that he will be able to interact with the speakers and ask questions that will improve everyone's understanding of the presented research.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at nick@cs.stonybrook.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nick Nikiforakis'.

Nick Nikiforakis
Assistant Professor