

# SMU GUILDHALL.

## GAME DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

March 2, 2016

Hello,

I have worked with Eli Luna at The Guildhall at SMU for almost two years now. We are team-teaching a crucial class in the master's program of video game development curriculum where students learn and practice teamwork.

The class is a challenging combination of academic and professional, "real world" instruction as we prepare students to excel in the highly collaborative game development industry. Many students are facing for the first time a project that is intentionally far too big for them to do by themselves. They have to learn how to work together as a team, or the project can never succeed.

In this environment, Eli Luna is invaluable. We coordinate closely with each other as well as other classes in the school as we develop the lesson plans and structure for the course.

He is excellent at coaching and mentoring students who are facing the problem of truly working with a very diverse group of people for the first time in their lives. We have international students, lower-income students, students from very wealthy backgrounds, all facing very stressful situations. Eli takes the time to talk one-on-one with students who are struggling, and very frequently has breakthroughs with students I can't reach.

He knows how to manage, communicate, and guide very creative people who are accustomed to working in isolation as they face team dynamics challenges in teams of 8-10. He is very good at bridging the gap between artists and more technically-minded teammates.

We emphasize how critical it is to both have a good plan – and be able to be flexible with that plan as it progresses. He shares examples from his own work, and uses anecdotes as effective teaching tools. I'd hate to try to teach this class without him. He's a valued team member, and is doing a fantastic job of teaching our students how to be the best team member they can be.

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