Statement of Purpose
Applicant: Yuanhao Xiang

I am Yuanhao Xiang, born and raised in central China. As a child, I was known for my math skills and love of books about the universe and dinosaurs. Since my junior year, I have enjoyed helping my classmates with academic questions. While many of my peers focused on internships, I volunteered at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, providing language and venue services to athletes worldwide.

My interest in research began with *Freakonomics* by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, which I read in junior high school. This book opened my eyes to how data could uncover hidden stories, such as detecting cheating teachers through answer patterns or revealing collusion in sumo wrestling through win rates. Since then, I have been driven to find insights through data analysis. I am determined to explore the social and financial phenomena behind various types of data, uncovering new perspectives that are both fascinating and valuable.

I decided to pursue an academic career in July 2023, when I learned about the role of a college professor—conducting research, collaborating with colleagues, and teaching. The freedom to explore complex phenomena, manage my time, and make an impact aligns perfectly with my career aspirations. I shared my Ph.D. ambition with my supervisor, Prof. Xuejiao Liu at UIBE, who supported me generously. This marked the start of my research journey.

From September 2023 to January 2024, I assisted with a project on commercial banks' future-oriented human capital demand after the implementation of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) model. My role involved textual analysis and data cleaning, where I used the density of keywords as a proxy for quantitative variables. This experience deepened my understanding of how accounting methods influence information management.

I also worked as a part-time research assistant for Prof. Charles Kang at the University of Hong Kong from March to June 2024, collecting data on U.S. non-profit subsidiaries and mergers. Despite the tedious data-gathering process, working directly with raw data was rewarding and deepened my understanding of complex datasets. For example, many profitable companies are also registered as non-profit organizations on search websites; Non-profit organizations that are subsidiaries of other companies are often foundations established by a profitable enterprise itself.

Building on these experiences, I initiated my own research project focused on forecast optimism in China's real estate industry, whose development has slowed after rapid

growth. I am exploring whether state ownership of brokerages affects the accuracy of real estate forecasts following a policy shift in December 2021. Guided by Prof. Liu, I have been developing this project since June 2024.

Beyond research, I have honed my technical skills in courses such as *Econometrics*, *Python and Big Data*, and *Advanced Financial Accounting* at UIBE, and *Data Science in Python* on Coursera. My empirical analysis report on regional fiscal revenue and women's education in China for the *Econometrics* course was highly rated by Econometrics Professor Dr. Wei Lin. I also minored in Italian for undergraduate years and reached B2 level of the CILS certification, adhering to the italian philosophy: "*Chi va piano va sano e lontano.*" ("He who goes slowly goes steadily and far").

Motivated by a passion for uncovering truths and sharing knowledge, I aim to become a tenure-track assistant professor at a leading university. I seek rigorous doctoral training to strengthen my research skills and academic foundation. I am confident in my ability to excel in this academically challenging environment and contribute meaningfully to the accounting research community.