

Sawyer Alston

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EDUCATION

University of Texas at San Antonio

B.S. Computer Science

GPA: 3.75

San Antonio, Texas

Expected Graduation: May 2028

WORK EXPERIENCE

Midwest Commercial Painting, *Software Engineering Intern*

6/25 – 8/25

Chicago, Illinois

- Developed and deployed a new **interactive company website** leveraging **frontend** languages such as HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and relevant frameworks
- Led total **database revamp**, increasing company data clarity and reducing workload for **10+ employees** using implementation of automation and data handling using Python and relevant libraries such as pandas, openpyxl, matplotlib, and more
- Developed and deployed proprietary painting bid **automation, printing, and data handling** to **speed up the process by more than 400%** compared to previous approach

U.S. Department of State, *Diplomatic Technology Intern*

12/24 – 2/25

Abuja, Nigeria

- Worked as a DT Intern, where I **developed and deployed** the Embassy RTTI application (see Projects section)
- Learned **secure system management**, worked with sensitive **government networks and systems**, and resolved IT issues around the Embassy daily
- Continue to work with my department to support the upkeep of the RTTI application

U.S. Consulate General - Chennai, *Community Liaison Office Assistant*

06/23 – 07/23

Chennai, India

- Led an initiative to **digitize record-keeping processes** while working as a summer-hire assistant
- Organized multiple social events for the Consulate community
- Served as editor for CLO weekly newsletter

PROJECTS

Embassy RTTI Program

12/24-Present

- Developed and deployed an **AI-powered** program using an **NLI model** to automate nationwide RSS news feed collection for the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria
- Designed a **filtering system to extract security-relevant articles**, compiling them into a daily report for the Regional Security Office, Overseas Intelligence, Public Diplomacy, and other key Embassy departments
- Leading **ongoing expansion** efforts to scale the project globally across all U.S. Embassies and Consulates while integrating more advanced AI models for enhanced analysis

Pure Math MNIST Multi-Layer Perceptron

02/25-07/25

- Developed a 2-layer neural network from scratch in NumPy for MNIST digit classification, **implementing core machine learning algorithms** without reliance on high-level libraries
- Engineered **training optimizations** including mini-batch gradient descent, momentum-based weight updates, and L2 regularization to enhance model convergence and generalization
- Designed **evaluation tools** to measure performance metrics (accuracy, loss), demonstrating an understanding of foundational ML principles through hands-on implementation

Research Paper on AI-Powered Query Systems

02/24-04/24

- Developed a theoretical framework to balance user autonomy and safety in AI-powered query systems like ChatGPT and Gemini
- Analyzed the impact of guardrails on accuracy and freedom of information, proposing ethical pathways to enhance user experience while maintaining responsible AI practices

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Rowdy Creators

2025-Present

San Antonio, TX

- Hold the role of JO PR officer, where I work to expand the outreach of the club during a critical club rebrand
- Lead the artificial intelligence group project where we developed a 2-layer MNIST NN from scratch using only NumPy and Pandas (see Projects section)

Association for Computing Machinery and ICPC

2025-Present

San Antonio, TX

- Engaging with a community of like-minded peers passionate about technology through ACM
- Active in ICPC to keep my problem-solving skills sharp and to prepare for a career in the field
- Collaborate with peers to tackle complex LeetCode problems, exposing myself to alternative methods for approaching challenges I am passionate about solving

Code.EXE

2022-2024

Chennai, India

- Helped run the coding club at my high school for two years
- Used my experience with Python, Java, and Arduino, among other languages, to help lead group instructional lessons for different projects
- Led an initiative for Code.EXE's club outreach to increase both member count and retention

AWARDS & HONORS

UTSA President's List

Spring '25

UTSA Honor Roll

Fall '24

Folds of Honor Higher Education Award

2024

AISC Vision of a Learner Award

2023

U.S. Department of State: Certificate of Recognition

2021