SIRENA KAO

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EDUCATION

B.S. in Game Design and Interactive Media **June 2025**
University of California, Irvine
Minor: Information and Computer Science

PROJECTS

Spotify Browser – Frontend Developer **January 2025 – February 2025**
- Developed a tool for browsing and managing Spotify music data by integrating an Angular frontend with a Node.js/Express backend, leveraging REST APIs and OAuth 2.0 authentication.
- Implemented modular UI components (search, carousel, track list, artist/album pages) using Typescript and CSS to enhance usability, accessibility, and user experience.
- Designed and optimized data workflows by building TypeScript services to parse JSON API responses into structured objects, ensuring transparent and reliable data presentation.

DawnCore – Gameplay Programmer **September 2024 – June 2025**
- Prototyped and iterated on new features through Agile sprints, leveraging visual scripting and Jira to improve team collaboration and visibility.
- Engineered modular, momentum-preserving systems with linear algebra to maintain fluid player motion and evolve gameplay infrastructure.
- Designed and integrated reusable combat tools (pistol and saber) to improve system maintainability, cross-component workflows, and end-user usability.

Quickshot – Gameplay Programmer **April 2024 – June 2024**
- Created a Unity movement system with CharacterController, applying raycasting for a physics-based grapple hook and input vector manipulation for a responsive dash, elevating gameplay responsiveness.
- Implemented gun recoil using Cinemachine by dynamically modifying camera offset vectors, adding impactful feedback and enhancing weapon feel.
- Developed a persistent settings system using Unity's UI system and PlayerPrefs, enabling players to customize options like mouse sensitivity and store preferences locally across sessions.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Coding Minds – Instructor (Project-Based Programming) **May 2025 – Present**
Topics/Tech: Python, Javascript/HTML/CSS, C++, C#, Unity, Data Structures, Generative AI, Machine Learning
- Developed and delivered project-based programming curriculum, enabling students to progress from fundamentals to completing and presenting interactive games and applications.
- Taught Python methodologies and frameworks (object-oriented design, API-first, Flask, scikit-learn) through hands-on projects, helping students bridge theory with practical implementation.
- Guided students in problem decomposition and test-driven development through step-by-step milestones.
- Adapted teaching to diverse learning styles by setting micro-goals, coaching resilience, and providing iterative feedback to foster confidence, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

Sunright Tea Studio – Supervisor **January 2023 – June 2025**
- Trained new team members through one-on-one sessions, utilizing positive reinforcement to drive skill development and improve performance
- Designed and optimized bi-weekly schedules, ensuring adherence to labor cost targets while maintaining operational efficiency
- Collaborated with the assistant manager to identify and implement operational and customer-service improvements, enhancing overall efficiency