### **Z**ACHARY TIEU

### TECHNICAL DESIGNER AND ENGINEER

# University of Southern California '25 ztieu@usc.edu

# Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Games 310-251-0859

### linkedin.com/in/ztieu

Reliable and passionate Computer Science (Games) graduate from the University of Southern California with a strong foundation in gameplay programming, systems design, and interactive storytelling. A dependable, adaptive, and communicative team player who's relentlessly eager to learn. Experienced in rapid prototyping, AI behaviors, and full-cycle development. Focused on bringing to life intuitive and flavorful mechanics that empower players to craft their own stories.

**Languages:** C++, C#, Python, JavaScript, HTML, SQL **Engines/Tools:** Unity, Unreal Engine, Godot, Twine, Git

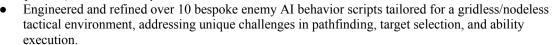
Methodologies: Agile, Concentric, Waterfall

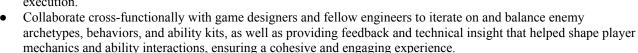
Core Strengths: Gameplay programming, systems design, AI behavior trees, prototyping, playtesting

Bilingual: Fluent in both English and Mandarin

### ${\bf Unchained}-{\it AI\ Engineer}$

Turn-Based Tactical RPG | Winner of 2025 USC Games Expo Audience Choice Award for Experimental Design | USC Capstone | Jan 2024 – May 2025





• Played a pivotal role in the project's success, contributing to a gameplay experience that was recognized with the Audience Choice Award for Experimental Design at the USC Games Expo 2025.

Gallows Manor – Lead Programmer / Designer / Producer

Horror Puzzle Game | Aug 2024 - Dec 2024

- Led a small interdisciplinary team from ideation through release, managing game development across programming, design, and production roles to bring a cohesive, atmospheric horror experience to life.
- Directed and analyzed iterative playtesting cycles, using qualitative feedback and usability testing to improve puzzle clarity, refine player onboarding, and streamline interaction design.
- Oversaw sprint planning, milestone tracking, and team coordination, ensuring timely progress and alignment with project goals despite tight academic timelines.

**Trendsetters** – *Playtest Lead / Gameplay Designer* 

Party Game | Sep 2023 - Dec 2023

- Spearheaded structured playtesting initiatives, collecting and synthesizing feedback from diverse player demographics to drive iterative design and enhancing clarity, balance, and player engagement.
- Supported rapid prototyping and agile workflows, helping the team maintain a responsive development cycle and strong team cohesion.

Cosmic Cafe – System Designer / Narrative Lead / Programmer

Cooking Sim | MEGA Game Jam | Summer 2023

- Conceptualized and pitched the original game idea, establishing core mechanics and narrative direction in a high-pressure jam environment.
- Implemented movement, interaction, and simulation systems using Unity and C#, ensuring a smooth and responsive player experience within the jam's constraints.

Crab Fight - Gameplay Lead

Board Game | Jan 2023 - May 2023

- Designed core competitive mechanics for a strategic tabletop experience focused on player dynamics and humorous gameplay.
- Conducted extensive balance testing across multiple iterations, using playtest data to fine-tune pacing, player agency, and strategic depth.
- Managed documentation and presentation of design rationale, ensuring clear communication of mechanics to teammates and playtesters alike.

### **University of Southern California (USC)**

B.S. in Computer Science (Games) - May 2025

Dean's List Honoree

Relevant Courses: Advanced Game Project, Video Game Programming, Game Engine Programming

