

# Daniel Chang

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Palo Alto, CA

Department of Genetics  
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Education      **Stanford University**, Palo Alto, CA      Sept 2024 - Expected May 2029  
Doctor of Philosophy in Genetics

**University of Minnesota Twin Cities**, Minneapolis, MN      Sept 2023 - May 2024  
Master of Science in Computer Science  
Thesis Advisor: Chad Myers, PhD  
Research focus: Transfer learning for *in silico* CRISPR/Cas9 genetic interaction screens  
GPA: 4.0/4.0

**University of Minnesota Twin Cities**, Minneapolis, MN      Sept 2020 - May 2023  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science  
Thesis Advisor: Jaeyun Sung, PhD  
Research focus: Machine learning for gut microbiome-based health monitoring  
*summa cum laude* with high distinction  
GPA: 4.0/4.0

Publications      <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=nwQ70xkAAAAJ>

\* - co-first author; # - co-corresponding author

## Submitted, under review, or in revision

**Daniel Chang**, Xiang Zhang, and Chad Myers. “Ridge Regression Baseline Model Outperforms Deep Learning Method for Cancer Genetic Dependency Prediction”. submitted. [[bioRxiv](#)][[code](#)]

## Published or in press

**Daniel Chang**<sup>\*</sup>, Vinod K. Gupta<sup>\*</sup>, Benjamin Hur, Sergio Cobo-López, Kevin Y. Cunningham, Nam Soo Han, Insuk Lee, Vanessa L. Kronzer, Levi M. Teigen, Lioudmila V. Karnatovskaia, Erin E. Longbrake, John M. Davis III, Heidi Nelson, and Jaeyun Sung. “Gut Microbiome Wellness Index 2 enhances health status prediction from gut microbiome taxonomic profiles”. *Nature Communications* (2024). [[html](#)][[pdf](#)][[code](#)]

Dong Hyeon Lee<sup>\*</sup>, Hyunbin Seong<sup>\*</sup>, **Daniel Chang**, Vinod K. Gupta, Jiseung Kim, Seongwon Cheon, Geonhee Kim, Jaeyun Sung<sup>#</sup>, and Nam Soo Han<sup>#</sup>. “Evaluating the Prebiotic Effect of Oligosaccharides on Gut Microbiome Wellness Using in vitro Fecal Fermentation”. *npj Science of Food* (2023). [[html](#)][[pdf](#)]

**Daniel Chang**, Vinod K. Gupta, Benjamin Hur, Kevin Y. Cunningham, and Jaeyun Sung. “GMWI-webtool: A User-friendly Browser Application for Assessing Health through Metagenomic Gut Microbiome Profiling”. *Bioinformatics* (2023). [[html](#)][[pdf](#)][[code](#)]

Vinod K. Gupta, Utpal Bakshi, **Daniel Chang**, Aileen R. Lee, John M. Davis III, Sriram Chandrasekaran, Yong-Su Jin, Michael F. Freeman, and Jaeyun Sung. “TaxiBGC: a Taxonomy-guided Approach for Profiling Experimentally Characterized Microbial Biosynthetic Gene Clusters in Metagenomes”. *mSystems* (2022). [[html](#)][[pdf](#)][[code](#)]

Honors & Awards      Minnesota Supercomputing Institute Research Exhibition Poster Award - \$1,000      2023  
University of Minnesota Emerson Scholarship - \$3,000      2022  
Delta Sigma Phi Men of Courage Award - \$400      2021  
Dean’s List (6 semesters)      2020-2023  
University of Minnesota Presidential Scholarship - \$40,000      2020-2024

Presentations      **Daniel Chang**, Suzie Hoops, Dan Knights. “Metagenomic MAGIC: Dissecting the Structure and

Function of the Developing Gut Microbiome”. *Minnesota Supercomputing Institute Research Exhibition*. Minneapolis, MN. Apr 25, 2023. [\[pdf\]](#)

**Daniel Chang**, Vinod K. Gupta, Jaeyun Sung. “Gut Microbiome Wellness Index 2 for Enhanced Health Status Prediction from Gut Microbiome Taxonomic Profiles”. *Mayo Clinic Individualizing Medicine Conference*. Rochester, MN. Nov 2, 2022.

**Daniel Chang**, Vinod K. Gupta, Jaeyun Sung. “Gut Microbiome Wellness Index 2 for Enhanced Health Status Prediction from Gut Microbiome Taxonomic Profiles”. *Cold Spring Harbor Microbiome Meeting*. Cold Spring Harbor, NY. Oct 27, 2022.

Research  
Experience

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**

Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

Computational Systems Medicine Laboratory (PI: Jaeyun Sung, PhD)

March 2021 - Present

- Developed GMWI-webtool, a browser application for computing the lab’s previously published Gut Microbiome Wellness Index (GMWI), a gut microbiome based health status predictor. GMWI-webtool was used by the lab to apply GMWI as a quantitative tool for measuring the prebiotic effect of oligosaccharides on the gut microbiome.
- Conducted a pooled analysis of 8,069 stool metagenomes from 54 independent studies across 12 health and disease phenotypes to develop Gut Microbiome Wellness Index 2 (GMWI2). Using Lasso-penalized logistic regression, GMWI2 achieved a cross-validation balanced accuracy of 80% in predicting disease presence from gut microbiome taxonomic profiles (nearly 10% higher than that of its predecessor).
- Developed software for the lab’s TaxiBGC pipeline, a computational tool for detecting biosynthetic gene clusters in metagenomes by first identifying the microbes likely to harbor them.
- Proposed a computational framework for investigating the role of Human Endogenous Retroviruses (HERVs) in human disease. Used structural bioinformatics tools to identify HERV gene products that potentially induce autoimmunity via molecular mimicry.

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Knights Laboratory (PI: Dan Knights, PhD)

Spring 2023

- Analyzed the lab’s Microbiome, Antibiotics, and Growth Infant Cohort (MAGIC), a longitudinal birth cohort of 386 children. Used computational techniques to dissect the structure and function of the developing gut microbiome.
- Used multivariate ecology methods to observe long term species-level taxonomic composition effects of perinatal antibiotic exposure.
- Inferred microbial growth rates by computing peak-to-trough ratios (PTR) of genome read coverage, identifying microbes with significantly different growth rates between infants with and without perinatal antibiotic exposure, and discovering that microbes rapidly colonize the gut in the first few weeks after birth followed by stagnation.
- Developed a reference genome- and assembly-free computational framework for discovering novel biological entities and ecological relationships in metagenomic data *de novo*.

**Master’s Thesis**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Myers Laboratory (PI: Chad Myers, PhD)

Sept 2023 - May 2024

- Developed predictive models of cancer genetic dependencies using data from the Broad Institute’s cancer dependency map project (DepMap).
- Conducted a re-analysis of a previously published deep learning method for predicting cancer genetic dependencies, concluding that the method fails to outperform simple baseline models.
- Explored the use of network smoothing and utilized gene expression prediction from mutation profiles as a pre-training task to better represent functional effects of cancer mutation profiles.

Teaching

**Teaching Assistant**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

CSCI 5481: Computational Techniques for Genomics (Instructor: Prof. Dan Knights)

Fall 2023

- Graduate teaching assistant for a class of 90 students about computational techniques for analyzing biological data generated by genome sequencing, proteomics, and cell-wide measurements of gene expression changes.
- Held weekly office hours to provide conceptual help on programming assignments and readings.

- Wrote Gradescope autograder scripts for automatic code validation to help students debug programming assignments.
- Developed interactive Jupyter notebook exercises covering supplementary topics related to programming homework assignments.

**Section Leader**

Stanford University (virtual)

CS106a: Code in Place

Spring 2021

- Section leader for Stanford University's free, non-credit, remote course CS106a ("Code in Place").
- Created engaging programming lessons and discussions for introductory Python for a group of 10 students online.
- Held office hours and provided feedback and grading on programming assignments and exams to improve class.

STEM Outreach

**Robotics Instructor**

Youth Enrichment League, Rochester, MN

Robotics Evolution Challenge Camp

Summer 2021

- Led a summer robotics camp, teaching several groups of 5-10 grade school students the fundamentals of LEGO EV3 robotics, modular programming, problem solving, and teamwork.
- Prepared the students with teamwork and programming skills to compete in the LEGO robotics FLL competition.

**Co-founder and officer**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

UMN GopherHack

Spring 2021 - Spring 2023

- Co-founded GopherHack, a student organization at the University of Minnesota focused on learning hands-on offensive cybersecurity through capture-the-flag (CTF) competitions.
- Helped develop presentations for learning reverse engineering principles, underlying implementation details of web technologies, and vulnerability exploits.