

Charles Gao

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EDUCATION

Presidential Scholar at the University of Southern California

Los Angeles, CA

B.S. in Cognitive Science and AI

Aug. 2024 – June 2027

- USC merit-based half-tuition scholarship
- *Cumulative GPA: 3.7/4.0 | Honors: Dean's List*

Phillips Exeter Academy

Exeter, NH

High School Diploma

Sep. 2021 – June 2024

- *Unweighted GPA: 3.88 | SAT Score: 1580 | National Merit Scholar | Highest Academic Honors*
- Captain of Varsity Water Polo Team, 3-Time All-American

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Python, C/C++, Java, JavaScript, TypeScript, SQL, R

Frameworks: React, Next.js, FastAPI, Tailwind CSS, LangChain, Express.js, Node.js

Developer Tools: Git, Cursor, VS Code, Visual Studio, Docker, GitHub Actions

Systems & Cloud: Linux/Unix, Bash, HTTP/REST, AWS, Lambda, GCP

Data & ML: PostgreSQL, MongoDB, matplotlib, PyTorch, NumPy, pandas, scikit-learn, TensorFlow, scipy, Tableau

ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE

Founding Engineering

May. 2025 – Aug. 2025

Robust (Seed, Z Fellows)

New York, NY

- Founding engineer at an AI startup that raised **1.25M** from Z Fellows and Link Ventures
- Iterated and developed PRDs and software for agentic browser agents, using MCP and Fireworks AI
- Led conversations with **dozens** of executives at **Walmart, Deloitte, and top VCs** for potential partnerships

Co-Founder of Trifect

Jan. 2025 – May. 2025

LavaLab (USC's Premier student-run Incubator)

Los Angeles, CA

- Co-founded a business that used transformers and contrastive learning for connecting businesses to ideal 3PLs
- Deployed **PyTorch**-based ML model using Railway with a **TypeScript/React/Next.js** full-stack web app
- **Partnered with two 3PLs** (with **100+** clients) and ran early sales conversations connecting brands to 3PLs
- Ran sales between businesses and 3PLs and pitched to investors incl. Heads of Product at **Uber** and **Lyft**

Growth, Engineering

June. 2025 – July. 2025

Lightweight Labs (Seed, Quiet Capital)

New York, NY

- Organized and led **25+** disc./sales calls with leading accountants to map workflows and **quantify pain points**
- Spearheaded re-development of the frontend and branding design utilizing **Clojure**
- Collaborated with the founders Aaron Iba (former GP at YC) and David Yang (YC acq. founder) on positioning the product for **“power users”** in accounting

Software Engineer

Oct. 2024 – Feb. 2025

Kardn

San Francisco, CA

- Built a **consumer-facing** full-stack social discovery web application using **JavaScript, React** and **Next.js**
- Worked with the founding team on launch strategy for Southern California, discussing **target user segments**

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Researcher

June. 2023 – Nov. 2023

NYU Langone Health

New York, NY

- Engineered and fine-tuned NLP models (**Doc2Vec, BioBERT**) to predict early termination of clinical trials
- Used deep learning and **21** unique features to enable trial risk assessments and observe signals of termination
- Constructed data pipelines to preprocess and curate a dataset of **400000** individual trials from clinicaltrials.gov
- Isolated key risk factors for trial discontinuation and delivering semantic insights through feature engineering

Researcher

June. 2022 – Oct. 2022

University of Cambridge

Cambridge, England

- Led a **12-week** investigation into bias within word embeddings, generating a whitepaper of insights and recommendations to improve algorithmic fairness
- Studied bias and attention in 2022-era language models through the research paper Attention Is All You Need