

# Charles Gao

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## EDUCATION

### Presidential Scholar at the University of Southern California

B.S. in Cognitive Science and AI

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

Los Angeles, CA

Aug. 2024 – June 2027

### Phillips Exeter Academy

High School Diploma

Exeter, NH

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

Robust (Seed, Z Fellows)

May. 2025 – Aug. 2025

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

Los Angeles, CA

LavaLab (USC's Premier student-run Incubator)

- 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

New York, NY

Lightweight Labs (Seed, Quiet Capital)

- 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

New York, NY

NYU Langone Health

- 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**