

Sapkota, Nishchal

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Education

University of Notre Dame (UND)

Ph.D. in Computer Science and Engineering

M.S. in Computer Science and Engineering

Research Areas: Deep Learning, Computer Vision, Self-supervised Learning, AI for Healthcare

Notre Dame, IN

05/2026

08/2024

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM)

B.S. with Honors (GPA: 3.91), summa cum laude

Dual Major: Computer Science and Mathematics | Thesis: Probabilistic Analysis of Revenues in Online Games

Hattiesburg, MS

08/2020

Industry Experiences

IBM

Research Triangle Park – Durham, NC

Sr. Data Science & AI PhD Intern

05/2025 – 08/2025

- Modeled user decision patterns from web clickstream sequences using both linear (N-gram Markov models) and non-linear (Transformer-based) architectures to predict conversion outcomes.
- Engineered predictive models on session-level behavior to identify high-intent users and potential buyers with improved precision.
- Collaborated cross-functionally to translate model insights into actionable marketing interventions, driving campaign optimization and measurable uplift in engagement.

Mayo Clinic

Rochester, MN

Computational Pathology and AI Intern

01/2025 – 05/2025

- Developed multi-modal foundation models leveraging self-supervised methods, integrating unstructured pathology imaging and structured patient data for advanced diagnostics and personalized patient care in healthcare.
- Analyzed clinical and non-clinical data at scale to develop predictive healthcare models and managed its full data science lifecycle in collaboration with cross-functional teams.
- Implemented MLOps pipelines for continuous integration and deployment, ensuring scalable, reliable, and automated delivery of predictive healthcare models across production environments.

Research Experiences

The University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame, IN

Graduate Researcher

08/2020 – Present

- Currently working on surgical video segmentation for AI-assisted surgery and diffusion-based super-resolution framework .
- Developed 3 self-supervised learning models achieving state-of-the-art segmentation performances. [9][10] [11]
- Proposed data-efficient universal 3D segmentation models with 11% performance improvement on out-of-distribution data.[1][3][8]
- Developed 3 novel methods leveraging foundation models for medical image analysis and cancer survival prediction. [2][5][6]
- Built a multimodal learning framework for automated sperm analysis handling label ambiguity [4] and a shape-aware segmentation method using implicit neural representations improving data efficiency by 30%. [7]
- Collaborated with multiple biology labs, hospitals, and anthropology departments to address medical and biological research challenges using AI-powered tools, resulting in several publications. [1][4][8]
- Mentored 1 high school and 3 undergraduate students in machine learning, resulting in publications and industry placements.

The University of Southern Mississippi

Hattiesburg, MS

Undergraduate Researcher

08/2017 – 05/2020

- Introduced a novel dynamic food chain model for three species and analyzed its long-term behavior. [12]
- Analyzed online games using Markov Chain to maximum revenues for both players and the providers. [13]
- Predicted chemical compound toxicity using in-vitro computational methods and feature engineering.

Technical Skills

Programming: Python, R, C++, Bash, MATLAB, SQL

ML Packages: Pytorch, Numpy, Scikit-Learn, Keras, SciPy, OpenCV, Pandas, Tensorflow, Matplotlib, WandB, NLTK

Tools: Jupyter, LaTeX, FIJI, Microsoft 365, Adobe Illustrator, Training and Fine-tuning AI models on GPU, Docker, REST API

Concepts: Machine Learning, Computer Vision, Neural Networks, CNN, LSTM, GAN, Transformers, VLM, Auto Encoders, Foundation Models, Self-supervised Learning, Generative AI, Multimodal Learning, Transfer Learning, INR, Diffusion Models, Time Series Forecasting, Mathematical Modeling, Distributed Training

Math Concepts: Data Analysis, Numerical Methods, Real Analysis, Modern Algebra, Number Theory, Statistics

Scholarships, Grants, Honors, and Achievements

2024 IEEE International Symposium on Biomedical Imaging (ISBI2024) Travel grant (\$800)	ISBI 2024
Graduate School Professional Development Fund (\$1,250) and Conference Presentation Grant (\$450)	UND 2024
CSE Select Fellowship Award (1/40 incoming Ph.D students; yearly stipend worth \$40,000)	UND 2020-2025
Wright W. and Annie R. Cross Endowment (\$10,500) and Danny R. Carter Endowed Scholarship (\$4,000)	USM 2017-2020
First Place , Mathematics Comprehensive Exam (MFT)	USM 2019
Second Runner Up : Best Undergraduate Paper	MAA Meeting 2019
Eagle SPUR grant for Undergraduate Research (\$2,000) and Honors Keystone Scholarship (\$2,000)	USM 2019
Finalist , Integration Bee	MAA Meeting 2018
Nominated for College of Science and Technology's Outstanding Sophomore Award	USM 2017
Burner Science & Tech. Scholarship (\$800), Wallace C. & Lynn L. Pye Endowed Scholarship (\$800)	USM 2017

Teaching Experiences

The University of Notre Dame	Notre Dame, IN
Graduate Teaching Assistant	08/2020 – 05/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complexity & Algorithms (CSE 60111), Mobile App. Design (CSE 40333), Discrete Mathematics (CSE 20110)• Prepared lecture slides, graded submissions, created answer keys, and held office hours.	
STEM Project Leader Warrior-Scholar Project	06/2023, 06/2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical Image Analysis: Designed and conducted a Bootcamp to prepare veterans for undergraduate research.• Introduction to Data Science: Conducted a Bootcamp to prepare veterans for undergraduate coding classes.	

Publications

- [1] **N. Sapkota**, Y. Zhang, Z. Zhao, M. J. Gomez, Y. Hsi, J. A. Wilson, K. Kawasaki, G. Holmes, M. Wu, E. W. Jabs, J. T. Richtsmeier, S. Perrine, and D. Z. Chen. UniCoN: Universal conditional networks for multi-age embryonic cartilage segmentation with sparsely annotated data. *Nature Scientific Reports*, 2024
- [2] Y. Zhang, H. Chao, Z. Qiu, **N. Sapkota**, P. Gu, D. Z. Chen, K. Yan, D. Jin, and L. Lu. IHCSurv: Effective immunohistochemistry priors for multi-stain cancer survival analysis in gigapixel whole slide images. *MICCAI*, 2024
- [3] **N. Sapkota**, Y. Zhang, S. Perrine, Y. Hsi, S. Li, M. Wu, G. Holmes, A. Abdulai, E. Jabs, J. T. Richtsmeier, and D. Z. Chen. ConUNETR: A conditional transformer network for 3d micro-ct embryonic cartilage segmentation. *IEEE ISBI*, 2024
- [4] **N. Sapkota**, Y. Zhang, S. Li, P. Liang, Z. Zhao, and D. Z. Chen. SHMC-Net: A mask-guided feature fusion network for sperm head morphology classification. *IEEE ISBI*, 2024
- [5] H. Wang, Y. Yang, Z. Zhao, P. Gu, **N. Sapkota**, and D. Z. Chen. Path-GPTOmic: A balanced multi-modal learning framework for survival outcome prediction. *IEEE ISBI*, 2024
- [6] P. Gu, Z. Zhao, H. Wang, Y. Peng, Y. Zhang, **N. Sapkota**, and D. Z. Chen. Boosting medical image classification with segmentation foundation model. *IEEE ISBI*, 2024
- [7] Y. Zhang, P. Gu, **N. Sapkota**, Y. Peng, H. Zheng, and D. Z. Chen. SwIPE: Efficient and robust medical image segmentation with implicit patch embeddings. *MICCAI*, 2023
- [8] S. Perrine, **N. Sapkota**, K. Kawasaki, Y. Zhang, DZ. Chen, M. Kawasaki, E. Durham, Y. Heuze, L. Legeai-Mallet, and JT. Richtsmeier. Embryonic cranial cartilage defects in the Fgfr^{3Y367C/+} mouse model of achondroplasia. *Anatomical Record*, 2023
- [9] Y. Zhang, P. Gu, **N. Sapkota**, H. Zheng, P. Liang, and D. Z. Chen. A point in the right direction: Vector prediction for spatially-aware self-supervised volumetric representation learning. *IEEE ISBI*, 2022
- [10] Y. Zhang, **N. Sapkota**, P. Gu, Y. Peng, H. Zheng, and D. Z. Chen. Keep your friends close & enemies farther: Debiasing contrastive learning with spatial priors in 3d radiology images. In *IEEE BIBM*, 2022
- [11] Y. Zhang, X. Hu, **N. Sapkota**, Y. Shi, and D. Z. Chen. Unsupervised feature clustering improves contrastive representation learning for medical image segmentation. In *IEEE BIBM*, 2022
- [12] **N. Sapkota**, R. Bhatta, P. Dabney, and Z. Xie. Hunting co-operation in the middle predator in three species food chain model. *Proceedings of the LA-MS Section of the Mathematical Association of America (MAA)*, 2020
- [13] **N. Sapkota** and BSW Schröder. Probabilistic analysis of revenues in online games. *University of Southern Mississippi*, 2020

Students Mentored

- **Sirui Li** (Undergraduate Intern, 2023) – *Currently a PhD student at UCLA*
- **Santiago Rodriguez** (Undergraduate Intern, 2023) – *Now a Software Engineer at Apple*
- **Zihao Zhao** (Undergraduate Intern, 2024) – *Published author, applying to PhD programs*
- **Maria Jose Gomez** (High School Intern, 2024) – *Published author, applying to undergraduate programs*