Zahra Shaikhali

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EDUCATION

The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX   May 2028
Bachelor of Science, Computer Science - Minor in Entrepreneurship and Data Science   GPA 3.7
Relevant Coursework: Computer Architecture, Data Structures, Discrete Mathematics, Statistics and Probability

EXPERIENCE

Teach Together, Austin, TX   August 2024 - Present
Startup Founder and Developer
- Founded **Teach Together**, a platform that provides **teachers** with **human-AI support** to reduce teacher **burnout**.
- Designed **Lesson Lift**, an AI tool that **generates real-world, personalized lessons** across **multimodal formats**.
- Connected **25+ teachers** with **teaching teams** and **in-class support** from college student teaching assistants.
- Conducted **100+ teacher interviews**; **97% of pilot testers** stated the MVP addressed their **largest pain points**.
- Selected for **SEAL Accelerator**, where I built a **C-Suite advisory board** and secured **mentorship** from a **VC**.
- Pitched Teach Together to investors; placed **3rd ($500 prize)** at the **Sell Your Impact Pitch Competition**.

Lion's Den DFW, Dallas, TX   June 2025 - Present
Graphic and Web Design Intern
- Developed the **company website** (Elementor, Figma), driving **300+ attendees** to a startup-investor conference.
- Managed **logistics** for monthly events (150+ attendees), coordinating startups, investors, and keynote speakers.
- Directed **event branding** and **social media campaigns**, creating cohesive graphics to maximize engagement.

Social Entrepreneurship Learning Lab, Austin, TX   August 2024 - Present
Ideator and Incubator Fellow → Partnerships Lead
- Completed a **year-long fellowship** focused on **research**, **design**, and **product validation** for Teach Together.
- Lead the **Legacy Program,** driving **strategic visibility**, **funding**, and **mentorship** for early-stage **startups.**

Convergent, Austin, TX   August 2024 - Present
Product Lead
- Led **product strategy and development** of two **mission-driven products** from concept to **functional prototype**.
  - **SkyPal**, an accessibility overlay that visually guides elderly users through website navigation.
  - **Step Up**, an impact-focused news app that provides users with action steps after reading articles.
- Managed **cross-functional tech/design teams** using **Agile development** practices; facilitated **iterative testing**.

Southwest Airlines, Dallas, TX   June 2023 - August 2023
LEAD Ops and Scheduling Intern
- Supported training logistics for **1,000+ crew members**; streamlined **scheduling systems** and **inventory tracking**.
- Coordinated with multiple teams to improve **cross-functional operations** and internal documentation.

PROJECTS

SideKick — AI-Powered Martial Arts Coach (Jan 2025 - Present)
- Building a **Python app** (OpenCV + Media Pipe) to analyze taekwondo movements and give real-time feedback.
- Designed a **gamified experience** to help kids **stay active** and build **self-defense skills** using interactive practice.

PrepPal — Personalized Meal Planner for College Students (Feb 2025 - August 2025)
- Built a **full-stack app** (React, Node.js) to generate meal plans based on **dietary needs, budget**, and **health goals**.
- Integrated **nutrition APIs to filter recipes** and **auto-generate grocery lists** aligned with the user's meal plans.

SKILLS

Product: Product Strategy, User Research & Market Analysis, Investor Pitching & Stakeholder Communication, Agile (Scrum) & Cross-Functional Team Leadership, Product Design & Prototyping (Figma, UI/UX, Wireframing)
Technical: Web & Full-Stack Development (React, Node.js, Firebase, Python, HTML, CSS), Systems Knowledge (Assembly, Operating Systems, C), AI/ML (Prompt Engineering, Copilot), Data Structures (Java, Python)

AWARDS

- **1st Place** - YETI Innovation x Sustainability Summit Hackathon (2025) | Selected by YETI Executives
- **Finalist** and **Best Pitch** - Texas Product Hackathon (2025) | Selected by Austin Venture Capitalists
- **3rd Place ($500)** - Sell Your Impact Pitch Competition (2025) | Selected by Investors and Venture Capitalists
- **2nd Place Nationally** - Tests of Engineering, Applied Mathematics, and Science (2024) | Out of 500+ teams