

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

- *SAT Scores: Math 790 | Reading & Writing 790 | National Merit Scholar | Highest Academic Honors*
- *Relevant Coursework: Quantum Mechanics, Multivariable Calculus, Statistical Thermodynamics, Modern Physics, Genetics*

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Growth, Lightweight Labs

June. 2024 – July. 2025

Lightweight Labs

San Francisco, CA

- Worked directly under founders David Yang (Founder of Fullstack Academy) and Aaron Iba (Founder of Etherpad, ex-YC GP) leading redesign and growth of accounting company.
- Led baseline redesign of frontend and spearheaded demand generation engine.

Growth, Principal Software Engineer

Oct. 2024 – Feb. 2025

Kardn

San Francisco, CA

- Developed and led a strategic go-to-market plan for AI startup, leveraging data-driven analysis to uncover revenue streams and optimize market penetration
- Directed a rollout of a browser application (React, Next.js), ensuring alignment between product and client

AI Researcher at NYU Langone Health

June. 2023 – Nov. 2023

NYU Langone Health

New York City, NY

- Engineered and optimized NLP models (Doc2Vec, BioBERT) to predict early termination of clinical trials, using deep learning frameworks to enable risk assessments and financial analysis of clinical trials.
- Developed data pipelines to preprocess and synthesize datasets from clinicaltrials.gov, isolating key risk factors for trial discontinuation and delivering semantic insights through feature engineering and predictive analytics.

FOUNDING EXPERIENCE

Engineering, Founding Team

May. 2025 – July. 2025

Robust

New York, NY

- Co-led product development and ideation
- Helped jumpstart operations for the Summer – pre-seed led by Z Fellows and Link Ventures

Co-Founder, Developer at USC Lavalab

Jan. 2025 – May. 2025

LavaLab @ USC

Los Angeles, CA

- Built Trifect, a ML-based 3PL Matchmaking Company at USC's premier startup incubator
- Pitched to a board of investors and leaders in the transportation and logistics industry

Captain of Varsity Water Polo, 3-Time All-American Athlete

Sep. 2023 – Jun. 2024

Phillips Exeter Academy and Greenwich Aquatics

Exeter, NH and Greenwich, CT

- Guided team to a 2nd-place finish in the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC)

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Languages: Python, C/C++, Java, Clojure

Frameworks: React, Node.js, LangChain,

Developer Tools: Git, Cursor, VS Code, Visual Studio

Libraries: Pytorch, pandas, NumPy, Matplotlib, scikit-learn