

Notre Dame iSURE Personal Statement

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Now I'm an exchange student at UC Berkeley and my major is computer science. I have a great interest in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and the merging of AI and user-centered design. In April 2025, I had the opportunity to attend the CHI conference. There I was deeply attracted by various HCI research, sparking my desire in exploring this field. In addition, I listened to the Notre Dame Best Paper Award talk, which made Notre Dame a very attractive school to me. I have always hoped to have the opportunity to study and live there.

During last summer, I joined the HER Lab through the highly selective HCI+ program (selected from ≈ 100 out of 550 applicants), I conducted my first formal HCI research project collaboratively with two mentors and submitted it to IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics (TVCG), where it is currently under review. Specifically, I conducted an extensive literature review and identified a gap in existing research on dyadic collaboration in virtual reality. Based on my interest in emotion perception, we developed a dataset tracking emotional changes during a movie-watching experience in VR, utilizing EEG and other signals acquired from 72 people. I was involved in experimental design, VR system construction in Unity, user study organization, and data collection, which increased my awareness of end-to-end HCI research workflows. Although I was not the leader, I participated in almost every stage of the research process and became familiar with core HCI research methods.

In addition, I participated in a HCI Summer Camp organized by Professor Shengdong Zhao. During the program, I received training in core HCI ideas and research methods, including user-centered design, experimental design, and qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches. I also had the opportunity to present my research ideas and receive constructive feedback from experienced HCI researchers and peers. This experience reinforced my theoretical background and further trained me for independent research in HCI.

After transferring to UW–Madison, I chose to participate in an exchange program at UC

Berkeley. At Berkeley, I study multiple courses about machine learning, natural language processing and computer security. Here I began to think how AI integrate with HCI research. This aligns perfectly with the goals of Project 27: Students will develop and test new interaction paradigms that make AI reasoning more interpretable and responsive to feedback—bridging the gap between user expectations and agent actions. I want to explore what kinds of systems and prototypes can truly benefit “all” users even though they are disable. At the same time, as AI increasingly reshapes our daily life, I began to consider how privacy and data security can be responsibly protected in AI-driven systems.

During my exchange at UC Berkeley, I took CS 289A-Machine Learning (advanced graduate course), where I gained substantial knowledge in deep learning and natural language processing. The course emphasized reading and discussing recent research papers, as well as team-based brainstorming and idea development, which enhanced my ability to connect theory with cutting-edge research. In addition, I took CS 160: User Interface Design and Development, a core HCI course, where I learned user-centered design and usability evaluation through hands-on projects. In the team project, I designed an accessible interface for blind and low-vision users, emphasizing usability and inclusiveness.

I am highly self-motivated with strong learning ability, as well as effective communication skills and resilience under pressure. These qualities enable me to actively explore research questions and contribute to the successful completion of projects.

I have the confidence and determination to pursue a long-term career in HCI, and I plan to pursue Ph.D. degree at US. Notre Dame has a strong CS/HCI community, which is a perfect fit for my future. I have sufficient experience and understanding in HCI, advanced AI knowledge, and the determination to complete the project with high quality. I am confident that I can contribute my unique strengths to Project 27 and actively engage with the iSURE and Notre Dame community throughout the summer.

I firmly believe that technology should always serve people rather than replace them. This principle guides my approach to HCI research and motivates my application to the Notre Dame iSURE program. I look forward to pursuing my academic and professional goals at Notre Dame.