

PERSONAL STATEMENT

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I would like to begin my personal statement by thanking my parents, who played an indelible role in my becoming a first-generation college student. It was because of the limited learning conditions of their youth that they expected me to receive a better education to make up for the regret of their limited education they received in their youth. Throughout my formative years, they not only devoted themselves to my education but also instilled in me the pursuit of knowledge, which supported my academic journey to ShanghaiTech University and later to the exchange program at the University of California, Berkeley, and the research program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

My experience at Berkeley enabled me, a non-native English speaker, to develop and refine my communication skills in English through both practical and academic interactions. Working at Berkeley Dining, I was accepted as part of an inclusive team. This role not only improved my English language skills but also gave me a novel a new appreciation for physical labor that I had not expected while working in academia. These skills were further honed at the Open Computing Facility, where I worked as a lecturer for the Linux System Administration Decal. Teaching and sharing knowledge in a language that was not my native tongue was a daunting challenge, but it was one that I embraced wholeheartedly and found joy in the shared learning experience.

Parallel to these personal growth experiences, my academic ambitions were shaped by my time at Deemos Technologies and participation in supercomputing competitions. Working on AI projects and engaging in computational challenges sparked a deep interest in program acceleration, especially offloading computing to accelerators, which became the driving force behind my desire to pursue graduate studies in this area.

In the midst of these transformative experiences, I also ventured into educational reform at ShanghaiTech University. As a senior student, I was acutely aware of the challenges faced by junior students who were unable to know the quality of the course before taking it in this opaque educational system. To address this, I co-founded the Course Bench application with members of the GeekPie Association, allowing for an open feedback system that demystified course quality and teaching level. It not only makes real-time feedback possible by encouraging the students to comment on the course during the semester but also provides an anonymous space for students to speak freely. This collaboratively developed web application not only honed my leadership skills, but also exemplifies the value I place on transparency, accessibility and freedom of expression in education.