

UChicago–Taiwan Student (UCTS) Exchange Program Reflection

The UChicago–Taiwan Student (UCTS) Exchange Program has been one of the most transformative experiences of my life—filled with new friendships, professional growth, cross-cultural understanding, and personal reflection.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful for the warm and engaging environment of the 2025 UCTS cohort. Spending the summer together allowed us to build meaningful connections through shared experiences in the dorms, during our trips, and throughout various activities. Every participant in the program was kind, talented, and full of fascinating stories and knowledge. It was a true privilege to learn from and grow alongside such inspiring peers, whose diverse perspectives broadened my own worldview.

I also found myself thriving within the strong Taiwanese community at the University of Chicago, whose kindness and guidance made the summer even more rewarding. Faculty members such as Prof. Ching, Prof. Hsu, Prof. Chen, and Prof. Kao generously offered their time and mentorship, whether through informal conversations, academic discussions, or organized activities that brought us closer together. Their encouragement and insights into graduate school and research careers were invaluable. Additionally, the NTU Alumni Association in Chicago provided tremendous support—hosting gatherings, sharing life and career advice, and helping us navigate both academic and personal challenges abroad. These connections not only strengthened my sense of belonging but also inspired me to one day give back to future students in the same way.

Professionally, the UCTS program significantly enhanced my research and technical skills. Working in a diverse and collaborative research group, I learned to utilize high-performance computing and write efficient Bash scripts for large-scale data analysis. More importantly, I contributed to a high-impact project on whole-mouse spatial transcriptomics—a pioneering approach that enables organism-level studies of cell-type dynamics across different tissues and disease models. Through this project, I was able to propose new ideas for developing a deep learning model tailored to this data, as well as refine existing analysis pipelines to improve their usability for in-lab applications. This experience deepened my understanding of computational biology and strengthened my confidence in contributing to interdisciplinary research teams.

Beyond technical skills, the constructive feedback I received on my research presentation, writing, and graduate school applications has been invaluable. I am sincerely thankful for the mentorship, collaboration, and friendship I experienced throughout the program. The UCTS exchange not only allowed me to grow as a researcher but also reaffirmed my passion for pursuing an academic path that bridges computational science and biology. I am truly grateful to have been part of such an inspiring and supportive community.

Overall, the UCTS experience has been an unforgettable milestone in my personal and academic journey. It allowed me to grow as both a researcher and an individual—developing new skills, building meaningful friendships, and finding inspiration from mentors and peers alike. This program not only expanded my professional network but also reaffirmed my desire to contribute to science with an open and collaborative mindset.



UCTS'25 cohort



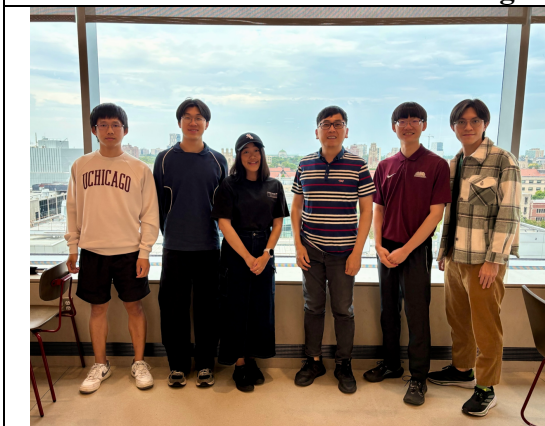
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NTU alumni association in Chicago



UCTS PME and Prof. Hsu



UCTS and Prof. Ching



Chevrier Lab