

ACSE & UCA - YOUTH LEADERSHIP WEBIMAR



**DAVID CHU**

**JOURNEY TO**

**STARTUPS**

**&**

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**7PM CST, 5PM PST  
SUNDAY, 13 APRIL 2025**



The Association of Chinese-American Scientists and Engineers  
美国华人科学家工程师专业人士协会



**United Chinese Americans**  
美国华人联盟伊州分会

## THE ASSOCIATION OF CHINESE-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS (ACSE)

### 美国华人科学家工程师专业人士协会

Founded in 1992, is one of the largest Chinese-American professional organizations in the United States. Headquartered in Schaumburg, Illinois, ACSE is an independent, non-political, not-for-profit organization with 21 regional chapters and thousands of members across 30 states—over 90% of whom hold a Ph.D. or Master's degree. It includes 17 professional societies spanning fields such as engineering, technology, finance, medicine, law, and entrepreneurship, etc.

Guided by its mission of “Cooperation, Development, and Contribution,” ACSE is committed to building platforms and bridges that promote U.S.-China collaboration in science, technology, culture, economy, and business. Through conferences, conventions, job fairs, and seminars, ACSE connects professionals, fosters community engagement, and facilitates cultural exchange. As U.S.-China ties deepen and the Chinese-American community grows, ACSE continues to play a leading role in advancing mutual understanding and contributing to societal progress.



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# United Chinese Americans (UCA)

Nationwide nonprofit organization established in 2016. It is a national federation composed of 12 local chapters and over 30 community partners. UCA has also formed partnerships with various regional and national nonprofit organizations.

UCA is dedicated to enriching and empowering the Chinese American community and contributing to a better world through civic engagement, cultural heritage, community service, youth development, and promoting mutual understanding between China and the United States.

- Cultural Heritage
- Youth Development & Leadership
- Civic Engagement
- Community Service
- U.S. China Friendship

**Serve • Lead • Inspire | 服务 • 引领 • 激励**



**United Chinese Americans**  
**美国华人联盟伊州分会**





# DAVID CHU



- **Co-founder & CEO of Nerve**
- **Co-founder & CEO of Sift**
- **BROWN UNIVERSITY CLASS OF 2024** – Computer Science & ECONOMICS
- **VISITING STUDENT AT OXFORD** – STUDIED PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS, AND ECONOMICS (PPE)
- **TED SPEAKER** ON THE SECONDHAND CLOTHING INDUSTRY

[linkedin.com/in/dchu17](https://www.linkedin.com/in/dchu17)



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# My talk



← This is me!

# Who I am

- I am currently making a startup in Silicon Valley!
  - We are backed by Y-Combinator
- I graduated from Brown University last year (2024)
- I've had a pretty non-traditional college path to get here!



← A more  
professional  
picture of me

# My startup!

- We are a health data company! We help health organizations clean up their data using AI and make it easy for healthtech organizations to integrate into this health organizations for AI development, and clinical decision making



## My goals here!

- to be authentic with what I learned, and how things actually went.
- to share how different stages of my life contributed to where I am at today and how being in uncomfortable/non-traditional positions in my life got me to my position now.
- I don't really want to give actual startup advice, but I want to share what kind of life experiences made me go into startups, and why it is really exciting for me!



Who I am!

## Pre-high school

I was born in the US but lived in China from 1-4.

Had a lot of energy as a kid.

Didn't know how to speak english fluently until 2nd grade. Made me really value friendships later on because I couldn't make that many friends from kindergarten to 2nd grade.

I read a lot! Loved fantasy novels (Ranger's Apprentice, Michael Vey, etc...)



# High school

I wanted to play soccer in college

I didn't really start taking college apps seriously until late my sophomore year/early junior year.

I was friends with a lot of people, diverse groups of people. I had two really close friends through most of high school, but was in a lot of different social circles (athletes, honors students, etc...)



# College, pt.1: Not knowing what to do

I was pre-law initially but didn't know what to do

Felt lost about what I aimed to do. Changed from Philosophy major to Applied Mathematics/Computer science my freshman year

Tried a bunch of different things like finance and consulting but just couldn't find interest in it.

There was a moment for me late my freshman year, where I really look at myself and realized that I didn't really have any skills and I was really lost.

# College, pt.2 : Liking learning

**The book craze: I read over 200 books over the course of 2.5 years between sophomore and mid-senior year. This, arguably, had the biggest impact on my growth!**

I tried to meet a ton of people at Brown. I had a main friend group, but again was friends with a lot of different people (athletes, CS students, finance students, pre-law, pre-med, international students, etc...)





# College, pt.3: Oxford

Studied philosophy, politics, economics there!

Oxford was incredibly academic. It showed me how deep knowledge was, and just HOW many books there can be about such a narrow subject.

Compared to the US, everyone in the UK really loved their academic subject and viewed it as their main priority rather than finding a job.

**Got to meet a lot of international people**



# Main themes

I never had full certainty on what I was doing, but kept trying to just get better every day!

I didn't enjoy everything I did, and because of it, I got to know what kind of work I liked to do (I needed a job where I felt like I was learning and growing)

I got to have a wide variety of friends, who were all exceptional and what they did. But because my friends were very different, I didn't feel the need to do what everyone else did.

My journey to startups

# Initial interest in startups

The story of how I got into startups. After I realized I probably wasn't going to be pre-law I wanted to apply to all of the 'business' related clubs.

I was rejected from **every** club.

So I thought I was going to just build a business.

# The exploring stages

Had so many random ideas:

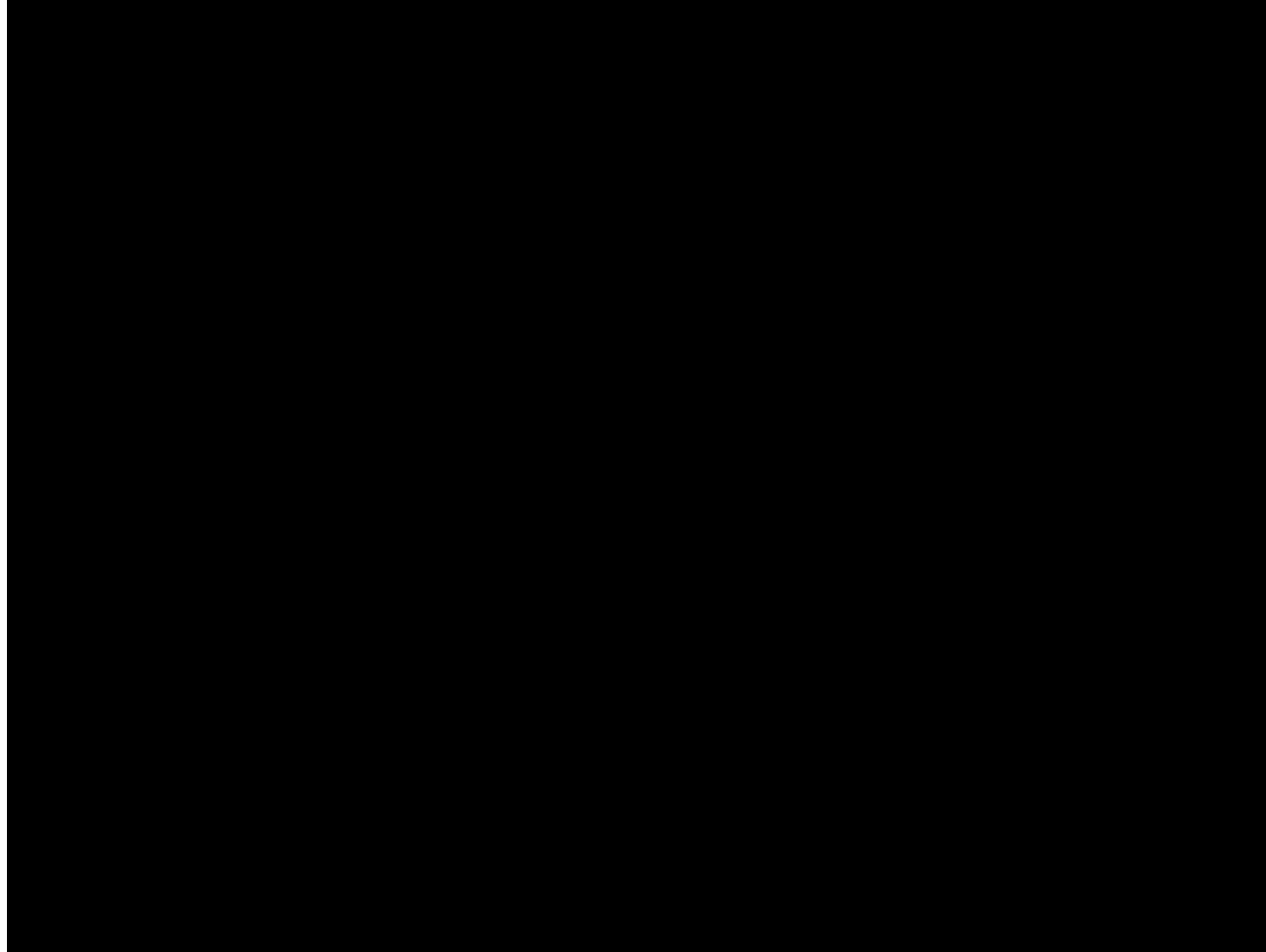
- Tutoring app
- Vegan fast-food
- Job search platform



# Startup journey #1: Sift

- Got the idea in a class:
- Making secondhand apparel as accessible as new
- **Had no idea how to build it**

## Startup journey #1: Sift



# Startup journey #1: Sift

- Had a few thousand monthly active users in three months from launch

i-lab Stories

## You’ve Heard of Thrifting, But How About ‘Sifting’?

UNIVERSITY NEWS  
**Meet Sift, a thrifty Chrome extension developed by Brown students**  
*Extension claims to save users 40% on online shopping costs*



Media by Rhea Rasquinha | The Brown Daily Herald

### Popular

How a chemistry  
accidentally made  
winning breakthr  
By Sharanya Jain and Ian

Department of Hi  
Services places Bi  
federal Title VI ir  
By Elise Haslund and Sop

Trump administr  
visas from at leas  
student, several r  
By Sophia Wotman and A

One RISD intern  
has visa revoked  
By Sanai Rashid | April 7

INNOVATOR Q&A

### Dumping fast fashion? New R.I. startup is making it easier to thrift online

Annabelle Hutchinson is the chief operating officer of Sift, a new browser extension that helps find secondhand alternatives to clothes that consumers are looking to buy online

By Alexa Gagosz | Globe Staff, Updated September 11, 2023, 6:00 a.m.



The founders of Sift, a new tech startup born out of Brown University that helps find secondhand alternatives to clothes that consumers are looking to buy online. The founders are David Chu, left, Annabelle Hutchinson, center, and Jialiang Zhou, right. JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

The Boston Globe's weekly Ocean State Innovators column features a Q&A with Rhode Island innovators who are starting new businesses and nonprofits, conducting groundbreaking research, and reshaping the state's economy. Send tips and suggestions to reporter Alexa Gagosz at [alexa.gagosz@globe.com](mailto:alexa.gagosz@globe.com).

### Sift – 2nd Place Winner (\$15,000)

Sift makes secondhand shopping insanely easy.



Jialiang Zhou '24  
Computer Science  
[jialiang\\_zhou@brown.edu](mailto:jialiang_zhou@brown.edu)



David Chu '24  
Computer Science (Economics)  
[david\\_chu1@brown.edu](mailto:david_chu1@brown.edu)



Annabelle Hutchinson '21  
Harvard Law  
[annabelle@letsift.com](mailto:annabelle@letsift.com)

# Main takeaways from Sift

- Learning how to build was really fun!
- It takes a lot of work to make even little things work
- The level of knowledge to become an expert in something is incredibly high

Startup as a career



# Getting my opportunity!

- I got into Y-Combinator during my last-semester of my Senior year.
- They gave me \$500k in funding, and a network to build in
- This allowed me to pursue Startups as a career!
- When we entered into YC, we were using AI to build data pipelines (this was a problem I had ran into with Sift).



# Failing a lot in YC : Not knowing what to do.

- Most of the people I were peers with were experienced engineers, some of my best friends from the batch were over the age of 30.
- Our team was very inexperienced.
- We didn't have a ton of expertise in anything, so we constantly changed our ideas, within data infrastructure, but didn't have great direction.

# Failing a lot after YC (3.5 months)

- Realizing that I had really lost sense of direction and why I began doing startups
  - Data infrastructure became very soulless, I wasn't really talking with people, and was just coding all day with very little results
- There was a time where I stopped enjoying what I was learning
- Had a co-founder leave the company

# Getting to health data!

- I took a hard reset.
- A lot of my friends who were doing startups/not doing startups were working in healthcare
- Realized data interoperability was one of the biggest problems in healthcare.

# Moving along!

- It was really surprising, but through failing constantly in data infrastructure, our team got to be pretty good at it.
- When we talked to CTOs at these health organizations, we ended up being much better engineers than many people in these organizations because we were trying to innovate on data infrastructure itself.
- Getting our first customers and building momentum!



# The common themes

- I failed a lot (probably more than most people my age)
- There were a lot of pivotal moments, where I made a big change and went down a path I didn't expect to but lead me to discover more
- My friends contributed a lot to who I am. A lot of them pushed me, and made me curious about different things and gave me unique perspectives.
- I lived on the intersection of so many different things and everything kept building on each other, in ways I didn't quite expect.

# My main beliefs

1. Maximize learning. Try to know things that very few people know.
2. It is okay to not know what you are doing (in fact, I never know what I am exactly doing). Figuring out what to exactly do is really really hard.
3. Don't be afraid to make big changes!
4. You can **literally** just do things. The lessons you learn will come to apply in ways you don't expect.
5. The people you surround yourself with is really important, and make an effort to meet diverse and exceptional people!

Happy to answer questions!

# Contact Us

## ACSE

- Website: [acse.org](http://acse.org)
- Email: [info@acse.org](mailto:info@acse.org)

## ACSE Youth Seminar Group

- Yulan Chen
- Michelle Wang
- Donghua Tao
- Jill Gao
- Ray Liu



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美国华人科学家工程师专业人士协会

Group: 科工专青少年  
讲座群



**4/27 2-4 PM**

**Xilin Northwest Chinese School**



美国华人科学家工程师专业人士协会  
Association of Chinese-American Scientists and Engineers



ACSE Career Panel Discussion:  
*EQ in Workplace – The Key to Highly Effective Office Relationship*  
**职场情商 – 建立有效办公室人际关系的密钥**

 <p>MC: Yulan Chen ACSE Vice President, Lead Actuary System Analyst at HCSC</p>	 <p>Panelist: Ling Zhao CFO, Tableware BU at Reynolds Consumer Products</p>	 <p>Panelist: Sophie Qu Business Analytics Lead at Rittal GmbH &amp; Co. KG</p>
 <p>Panelist: Yun Tong Vice President, LIHTC Equity and Debt Investments, US Bank</p>	 <p>Panelist: Dennis van de Graaf Senior Vice President, Data Governance, Wintrust Financial Corporation</p>	 <p>Panelist: Ronnie Huang Director, Product Engineering, Pharmacy Modernization at Walgreens Boots Alliance</p>

➢在职场上的一些常见人际关系问题  
➢为什么有效的人际关系非常重要  
➢职场建立有效人际关系的方法  
➢如何利用有效的人际关系帮助我们在职场上更好的发展

Time: April 27th, 2025 2-3:30pm  
Location: 700 E Cougar Trail, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

Co-hosts:



希林西北中學校  
Xilin Northwest Chinese School



Midwest Asian Health Association



# Contact Us

## UCA

### UCA IL Chapter

- [il.ucausa.org](http://il.ucausa.org)
- [illinois@ucausa.org](mailto:illinois@ucausa.org)



**United Chinese Americans**  
美国华人联盟伊州分会

### Group: UCA 活动群



**5/4 2-4 PM**

Xilin Northwest Chinese School

## 性別暴力: 家長需要了解什麼

了解《艾琳法案》& 如何保護孩子免於性別暴力的  
家長工作坊



United Chinese Americans  
美国华人联盟伊州分会



5/4 星期日 2-4 pm  
@ 希林西北中文學校



### 你知不知道....



- 美國的學校如何提供從學前班到12年級的性暴力意識教育?



- 如何教導 4 歲的孩子保護自己免受性暴力?

### <<艾琳法案>>如何保護你的孩子?



為什麼關於「霸凌」的教育在五年級很重要?



如果學校已經再教孩子了, 那為什麼家長還需要再接受這部份的教育呢?

### 青少年約會暴力



我孩子的一個朋友在群組裡發布了不恰當的視頻, 我的孩子只是將其轉發給另一個朋友, 這是否構成犯罪? 連未成年人也受到懲罰?



- 怎麼區分「健康」的、「不健康」的、還是「虐待/暴力」的關係?
- 健康關係與暴力的界限是什麼?

### 當事情發生時....

- 家長需要了解哪些警訊?
- 受害者有哪些權利和選擇?
- 家長如何創造一個健康、安全的空間與有需要的孩子溝通?



報名:

<https://bit.ly/GBVParentsforXilinChineseSchool>



- 地點: 希林西北中文學校教師餐廳  
700 E Cougar Trail, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
- 語言: 普通話
- 主講人: Coral Wu 珊瑚姐姐, PhD  
KAN-WIN 多語言社區倡導者  
[cwu@kanwin.org](mailto:cwu@kanwin.org)

KAN-WIN 24HR 熱線 : 773.583.0880