

# Final Reflection on My Summer 2023 Enrichment Experience at the University of Chicago

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I have officially completed my 3-week Pathways in Economics course at the University of Chicago. This class covered both micro and macro economics, ranging from game theory to field experiments.

## **Class**

Our class took place from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 3 pm with a 1.5-hour lunch break in the middle. The morning sessions consisted of an hour-and-15-minute lecture delivered by the assigned professor, followed by a 15-minute break. Subsequently, we engaged in an hour-long discussion session with our respective TA. With a substantial size of 70 students, our class was the largest in the summer session. To accommodate this significant number, we were divided into four discussion groups, each led by a different TA. What set our class apart was that we didn't have a fixed lecturer; rather, every two days, we were instructed by a different UChicago professor or current PhD students. Our TA, Neville, recently graduated from the University of Chicago in Economics and Public Policy. He provided us immense help clarifying concepts from previous lectures and providing a deeper understanding of UChicago's academic landscape!

We delved into the Economic Approach and, more importantly, its applications. As economists, we are interested in the self-interest of individuals. We uncovered the practical applications of budget constraints, optimization techniques, and other mathematical concepts. As we examined how individuals make choices within the constraints of limited resources, we also applied the simple theory of irrational behavior. A key conclusion of the UChicago price theory is that individuals follow the economic approach when making decisions and that they are always attempting to maximize utility. Other topics included in this course were game theory, experimental economics, economic growth, and financial crises.

While I've never officially taken an econ course before, this class truly stimulated my interests in this field. It compelled me to venture beyond my comfort zone, instilling in me not only a substantial understanding of economics but also the skills of executing a good question and consistently applying the principle of optimization. I was also pleasantly surprised by the caliber of my peers—everyone exhibited remarkable intelligence and a genuine eagerness to learn! Seeing their positive attitude about learning motivated me to delve deeper into the course materials and actively engage in discussions.

## **Outside of Class**

This was the first time in my life that I've been away alone. Walking to classes, the dorm, or the dining hall became my daily routine, and I absolutely loved it. UChicago's campus has one of the most beautiful sceneries—whether it's the gothic style architecture or Harry Potter-esque buildings. Also, the weather in Chicago at the time of my program (mid-end of June) was just perfect :)

Although I loved my econ lectures, the dorm life was my favorite part of my UChicago experience. As mentioned in my previous reports, my class was the biggest on campus, so I often ran into my classmates in the dorm study lounge or the elevator. This was helpful when arranging study groups for homework or test review, and these students quickly became my best friends. Oftentimes we caught ourselves not doing actual work and simply chatting about life, but all of these memories were an integral component of my time here. In our dorm houses, we had “study breaks” twice a week where our residential assistants provided snacks for the students to indulge while working. Laughing with people while munching on a s'mores cookie or chicken nuggets is definitely one to remember.

When I first stepped on UChicago's campus for orientation day, never would I have imagined that the memories I made here would become so personal to me. The hardest part of this course wasn't the final macroeconomics exam, but it was saying goodbye to the 3 weeks that truly shaped me. I didn't just learn about fiscal stimulus or calculating the impact of a boycott; rather I gained a multidimensional view of the world and cultures of students from around the world.

With a bittersweet mix of emotions, I can proudly say that I have concluded the Pathways in Economics course at the University of Chicago. It is nearly impossible to put into words the incredible time I've had during these three weeks. Every aspect of this course, from the classes and professors to our TA and the friendships that blossomed into a second family, the dorm life, and the captivating campus, will forever hold a special place in my heart.

## **Final Remarks:**

This was my third time being sponsored by the Garwin Family Foundation, and no words can truly encapsulate the amount of gratitude I hold for this organization. These past three summers have truly been instrumental to both my personal and academic development; they will truly remain as few of the greatest memories of my high school experience. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of the GFF—I cannot thank you enough for allowing me to become a part of your very own “family!”