

**Report on Overseas Research Programme at UNIST, Korea
- Professor Charles K. Kao Research Exchange Scholarship 2024/25**

In summer 2025, I was honored to join Professor Dong-Young Lim's laboratory at the Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology (UNIST) in South Korea for two months, supported by Professor Charles K. Kao Research Exchange Scholarship. I worked on a project that explored how large language models (for example, ChatGPT) might be evaluated. However, the most valuable outcome of this experience extended far beyond the project itself, I gained academic growth, cultural exchange, and deep personal development.

When I first arrived at UNIST, I happened to catch the Institute's International Festival. The lively campus activities quickly helped me transit from unfamiliar to feeling more connected with the campus. Although the UNIST campus is not very large compared to CUHK, its environment is very nice and quiet, which is ideal for researchers to focus on their work.



Figure 1: The International Festival in UNIST [May 31, 2025]

In the laboratory, I was welcomed into a culture that encouraged creativity and collaboration. My colleagues were generous with their knowledge, and I quickly learned that asking questions and sharing ideas were essential parts of the research culture there. Instead of simply following instructions, I was encouraged to think independently and contribute my own perspectives. This helped me build confidence and begin to see myself as an active participant in scientific discussions rather than a passive learner. Working side by side with skilled researchers also shaped the way I view research, teaching me that progress often arises from open communication and teamwork.



Figure 2: (left to right) Me, Professor, My Colleague [July 10, 2025]

Living abroad for two months also became a lesson in independence. It was my first time staying in a foreign country for such a long period, and at the beginning I felt both excited and uncertain. There were small but real challenges, such as adapting to new surroundings, managing daily life on my own, and communicating across a language barrier. Over time, I realized that these difficulties were shaping me into a more adaptable and resilient person. I learned to balance the intensity of research with moments of relaxation and exploration. This ability to find balance and to overcome unfamiliar situations is something I will carry with me beyond this programme.

My time in Korea was also enriched by cultural experiences outside the laboratory. In Ulsan (蔚山), I visited Daewangam (大王岩), a coastal park famous for its dramatic rock formations and sea views. On weekends, I traveled to Busan (釜山), where the seaside impressed me with its beauty and energy, and to Seoul, where I explored landmarks such as Gyeongbokgung Palace (景福宮), the Blue House (Cheong Wa Dae 青瓦臺), and the bustling streets of Myeong-dong (明洞). These visits gave me not only memorable moments but also a better understanding of Korean history and daily life.



Figure 3: Gwanhwamun Gate (光化門) of Gyeongbokgung Palace (景福宮) [May 28, 2025]

To me, the casual conversations with lab members over lunch or coffee was even more meaningful. We exchanged views on science, culture, and education. These dialogues reminded me that science truly crosses borders, and collaboration between people from different backgrounds is one of its greatest strengths.



Figure 4: Me (the first one on the right, in black T-shirt with patterned) and My Colleagues [July 11, 2025]

This exchange also inspired me to think about my academic pursuit. I now have a clearer sense of the direction in which I would like to continue my research in. Although my work in this summer was only the first step, it opened my eyes to the vast potential of language models and the important responsibilities associated with them. I hope to explore further on how such models can be used responsibly and fairly, as well as how they can be applied in creative and meaningful ways. At the same time, I hope to remain closely connected to the spirit of international collaboration I experienced at UNIST, and I plan to seek more opportunities to work in research environments abroad.

Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the support of Professor Charles K. Kao Research Exchange Scholarship. These two months gave me far more than a research project. They strengthened my confidence, broadened my vision, and left me with unforgettable friendships and memories. I return home not only with skills and knowledge but also with the determination to grow into a researcher who values openness, cross-cultural understanding, and collaboration in building new knowledge for the future.