Applicant Name: Muqi Lai

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PhD Program: Economics

Institution: University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Program Year: 3

Coursework:

- Year 1: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Econometrics
- Year 2: Economic Theory, Industrial Organization, Corporate Finance

Interested Fields: Industrial Organization, Economic Theory, Corporate Finance

Research Summary: I am broadly interested in how microeconomic institutions and mechanisms determine the ownership and control of productive assets and thereby cast the industry evolution and factor misallocation patterns documented in the macroeconomic literature. I have three works in progress that feature various such institutions and mechanisms:

- Studying how capital structure and debtor-in-possession finance determine the allocation of ownership and control of the emerging firm in Chapter 11 bankruptcy
- Studying how financial and organizational factors jointly determine how a firm allocates its assets across subsidiaries
- Studying how private equity activities affect industry structure, specifically concentration, markup, and misallocation

Statement of Purpose: I want to study my interested broad question in the context of the emerging AI economy. It contains a core production chain with three industries: chip manufacturers upstream, data centers midstream, and tech firms downstream. I want to explore the institutions and mechanisms, e.g., finance of tech startups and market power of chip makers, that shape the evolution of this chain of industries. This is important because this chain has significant effects on many other industries of the economy.