

CHENG GAO

University of Michigan | Ross School of Business
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APPOINTMENT

July 2018-present **UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ROSS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS** Ann Arbor, MI
Assistant Professor of Strategy (2018-present)
NBD Bancorp Assistant Professor of Business Administration (2021-2022)
Tenure clock pauses: 2020-2021; 2021-2022

EDUCATION

2012-2018 **HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL** Boston, MA
Doctor of Business Administration in Strategy, May 2018

- Committee: Rory McDonald (Chair), Jan Rivkin, Michael Tushman
- Recipient, Dean's Award for Service to the School and Society
(3 awarded out of 936 graduating MBA and doctoral students)
- Recipient, Wyss Award for Excellence in Doctoral Research
(5 awarded out of 21 graduating doctoral students across all areas)

Dissertation: Strategy and Entrepreneurship in Nascent Industries

- Recipient, Best Dissertation Award, Technology & Innovation Management (TIM) Division, Academy of Management, 2019
- Recipient, Heizer Doctoral Dissertation Award, Entrepreneurship Division (ENT), Academy of Management, 2019

2004-2008 **HARVARD COLLEGE** Cambridge, MA
A.B. in Economics with *high honors*

- Senior Honors Thesis: "Demographics and Economics: The Impact of Baby Boomers on Crime in the Post-1964 Civil Rights Era"; Adviser: Lawrence Katz
- Research Assistant to Rosabeth Kanter (2006)
- Recipient, Dunster Shield Award

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Research Interests: Strategy in Nascent Industries, Entrepreneurial Strategy, Nonmarket Strategy, Technology & Innovation Management, Organization Theory

Teaching Interests: Advanced Strategy, Innovation Management, Technology Strategy, Entrepreneurial Strategy, Nonmarket Strategy, Leading Strategic Change

RESEARCH

Publications:

- Gao, Cheng and Rory McDonald. 2022. "Shaping Nascent Industries: Innovation Strategy and Regulatory Uncertainty in Personal Genomics." Administrative Science Quarterly 67(4): 915 – 967, December 2022 (*Lead article*)
- Profiled in *Management Insights* magazine, March 2023, Issue 1

Shi, Wei, Cheng Gao, Ruth Aguilera. 2021. “The Liabilities of Foreign Institutional Ownership: Managing Political Dependence Through Corporate Political Spending.” **Strategic Management Journal** 42(1): 84-113, January 2021

- Profiled in “Do Better” Esade Insights & Knowledge hub

McDonald, Rory and Cheng Gao. 2019. “Pivoting isn’t enough: Managing Strategic Reorientation in New Ventures.” **Organization Science** 30(6): 1289-1318, November-December 2019

- Featured as a Harvard Business Review *Ideas Watch* article: “Entrepreneurship: Every Pivot Needs a Story” (July-August 2017 Issue)

Gao, Cheng, Tiona Zuzul, Geoffrey Jones, Tarun Khanna. 2017. “Overcoming Institutional Voids: A Reputation-Based View of Long Run Survival.” **Strategic Management Journal** 38(11): 2143-2329, November 2017 (*Lead article*)

- Featured on Forbes.com “Leadership”; Fifth Third Bank “Acting on Your Industry”

Select working papers:

Gao, Cheng, Alicia DeSantola, and Nina Guilbeault. 2024. “Clean” Meat? Regulatory Entrepreneurship and Jurisdictional Contestation in the Nascent Cultivated Meat Industry.

Revise & Resubmit

- Recipient, 2019 Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research Grant (\$10,000), Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise

DeSantola, Alicia, Cheng Gao, and Nina Guilbeault. 2025. Confronting Grand Challenges: Nonprofit Actors, Institutional Voids, and the Orchestration of a New Industry.

Revise & Resubmit

- Recipient, 2024 Dean’s Internal Research Grant (\$10,000), Ross School of Business

[Other ongoing projects at various stages]

Teaching cases:

McDonald, Rory, Feng Zhu, and Cheng Gao. 2014. “HomeAway: Organizing the Vacation Rental Industry,” Harvard Business School Case 615-036.

AWARDS

General and research-related

2024	Outstanding Reviewer Award, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal
2021	NBD Bancorp Assistant Professorship (Jr. Faculty Research Award)
2019	Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research Grant, Kenan Institute (\$10,000)
2019	Heizer Dissertation Award, AOM Entrepreneurship Division
2019	Best Dissertation Award, AOM TIM Division
2019	Finalist, Industry Studies Association Dissertation Award
2019	Short-list, Grigor McClelland-JMS Doctoral Dissertation Award
2018	HBS Dean’s Award for Service to the School and Society
2017	HBS Wyss Award for Excellence in Doctoral Research
2017	Best Paper Award (Strategy and Organization track), Wharton Innovation Doctoral Symposium 2017

2016	Strategy Research Foundation Dissertation Grant (\$10,000)
2008	Dunster Shield Award, Harvard College

Teaching-related

2022	Nearby WMBA Teaching Excellence Award, Ross School of Business - Awarded to one faculty member at Ross by the WMBA graduating class
2020	Nearby BBA Teaching Excellence Award, Ross School of Business - Awarded to one faculty member at Ross by the BBA graduating class
2020	Named “Top 50 Undergraduate Business Professor” by <i>Poets & Quants</i>
2020	Nominated for Golden Apple Teaching Award, University of Michigan
2019	Nominated for Golden Apple Teaching Award, University of Michigan
2016	Recipient, Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching

TEACHING

At the University of Michigan:

STR 669: Advanced Competitive Strategy (new MBA elective)

New MBA elective featuring three modules: I. Corporate Innovation and Growth; II. Technology Strategy in Nascent Industries; III. Strategic Leadership and Society

- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Winter A 2025, 68 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Winter A 2025, 67 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Winter A 2024, 71 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Winter A 2024, 67 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Winter A 2023, 72 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Winter A 2023, 72 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Winter A 2022, 45 students)

WMBA 602: Strategies for Growth

- Teaching ratings: 4.9/5.0 (Spring/Summer 2021, 71 students)
 - Recipient, 2022 Nearby WMBA Teaching Excellence Award
 - “Last Lecture” presenter in April 2022

STR 490: Advanced Competitive Strategy (new MM/BBA elective)

- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Winter 2022, 58 students)

STR 390: Corporate Strategy (BBA core)

- Teaching rating: 4.9/5.0 (Fall 2019, 77 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Fall 2019, 78 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Fall 2019, 78 students)
- Teaching rating: 5.0/5.0 (Fall 2018, 75 students)
- Teaching rating: 4.8/5.0 (Fall 2018, 76 students)
 - Recipient, 2020 Nearby BBA Teaching Excellence Award
 - Nominated, Golden Apple Teaching Award, U. Michigan (2019, 2020)

Strategy 898: Topics in Strategy Research (PhD seminar course)

- Taught one class session on “Innovation and Entrepreneurial Strategy: Qualitative Research Approaches” (January 2024)

Faculty Advisor for Multidisciplinary Action Projects (MBA core)

- FT MBA: 2025: 8 projects; 2024: 8 projects; 2023: 8 projects; 2022: 3 projects; 2021: 4 projects
- OMBA: 2022: 3 projects
- Companies include: Amazon, Biolinq, City of Detroit, DTE, EA Sports, Equinox, Fidelity Investments, Gulfstream, Headspace, MCity, Microsoft, RBGE, Remote Area Medical, Sartorius, Tata Group, TVS, University of Michigan Health, Under Armour

At Harvard University:

Economics 970: Strategy and Competitive Advantage

Instructor, Department of Economics, Harvard University

- Teaching rating: 5.0/5.0 (Spring 2016, 10 students)
- Guest speakers included former CEO, Boeing; COO, New England Patriots; MD, General Catalyst
 - Recipient, Harvard University Certificate of Distinction in Teaching

HBS 1504: Building and Sustaining a Successful Enterprise (BSSE)

- Course assistant for MBA elective on disruptive innovation, Harvard Business School

SERVICE

REVIEWING

Editorial Board Member, <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>	January 2021 to present
Editorial Review Board Member, <i>Strategic Management Journal</i>	March 2021 to present
Editorial Review Board Member, <i>Organization Science</i>	February 2023 to present
Editorial Review Board Member, <i>Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal</i>	June 2023 to present
Editorial Review Board Member, <i>Strategy Science</i>	October 2024 to present

Reviewer for various journals and award competitions, including ASQ Dissertation Award, TIM Best Dissertation Award, Heizer Dissertation Award

ADVISINGPhD advising:

2024-	Dissertation Committee Member for Akshaya Varghese (Strategy)
2023-	Dissertation Committee Member for Alaina Segura (M&O)
	- <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School</i>
2022-	Dissertation Committee Member for Hilary Hendricks (M&O)
	- <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Oxford</i>
2021-	Dissertation Committee Member for Diana Jue-Rajasingh (Strategy)
	- <i>Assistant Professor, Rice University, Jones</i>
2020-	Dissertation Committee Member for Eun Bit Hwang (M&O)
	- <i>Lecturer, University of Michigan, Ross</i>
2020-	Dissertation Committee Member for Mana Heshmati (Strategy)
	- <i>Assistant Professor, U. Washington, Foster</i>
2019-	Dissertation Committee Member for Laura Sonday (M&O)
	- <i>Assistant Professor, U. North Carolina, Kenan-Flagler</i>
2018-	Dissertation Committee Member for Aseem Sinha (Strategy)

BBA/MBA advising:

2023	MBA Independent Study Project Advisor for one student
2022	BBA Independent Study Project Advisor for one student
2021	BBA Independent Study Project Co-advisor for one student

2020	BBA Independent Study Project Advisor for two students
2018- 2019	BBA Senior Thesis Advisor for one student

SERVICE TO THE FIELD

2024- 2024; 2023	Steering Committee Member, Nonmarket Strategy Research Community (NMSRC) Co-organizer, NMSRC Virtual Doctoral Conference - Two-day virtual conference for around 20 doctoral presenters and 50 faculty and student attendees
2024 2021-2023	Faculty mentor and panelist, TIM Doctoral Consortium at 2024 AOM Elected Member, STR Division Teaching Committee - Co-organized four virtual strategy teaching symposiums for AOM community
Mar 2021 Aug 2020	Faculty Mentor, TIM Division Virtual Doctoral Research Workshop Co-organizer, TIM Division Doctoral Research Development Workshop, AOM

SERVICE TO THE DEPARTMENT

2024-2025	Organizer, Strategy Area External Seminar Series
2023-2024	Chair, Strategy Area Lecturer Search Committee
2022-2023	Organizer, Strategy Area Internal Seminar Series
2021-2022	Organizer, Strategy Area External Seminar Series
2022	Developed and launched new advanced strategy elective (STR490 and STR669)
2020	Co-Coordinator (interim), Strategy PhD program, Michigan Ross (Feb-Aug 2020)
2019-2020	Organizer, Strategy Area Internal Seminar Series
2019-2021	Strategy Doctoral Admissions Committee Member, Michigan Ross

SERVICE TO THE SCHOOL

2024- 2025	Co-Coordinator, Hosmer Research Lunch Seminar, Ross School of Business
2025	Moderator, Corporate Innovation and Impact panel, Detroit Impact Conference
2024	Search Committee Member, Executive Director - Zell-Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurship
2024	Moderator, Panel featuring CEO and CFO of Emerson (NYSE: EMR) for Ross GMC club
2022- 2024	Guest Lecture on “Qualitative Research Methods”, BA480 BBA Senior Thesis Seminar
2023- 2025	Opening Ceremony Remarks, Ross Asia Business Conference
2021- 2023	Showcase Lecture on “Business Strategy”, Ross BBA Showcase Admissions Events
2020, 2018	Guest Lecture on “History of Strategy”, Ross Doctoral Proseminar on Business Research
2020- 2022	Faculty Advisor, UM Asian/Pacific Islander American Students in Business (ASIB)
2019- pres.	Faculty Advisor, Asia Business Conference (ABC), Michigan Ross
2019	Informal Faculty Advisor, Michigan Impact Investing Symposium
2019	Guest Columnist for “Daily Fuel: LBLE Team” BBA Newsletter, Michigan Ross
2018	Judge for TAMID Management Consulting Case Competition, Michigan Ross

OTHER SERVICE

Aug 2019	Co-organizer, HBS Strategy Alumni Research Conference (1-day conference at HBS)
2013- 2017	Non-Resident Tutor in Business (Undergraduate Career Adviser), Harvard College
2015	Management Consulting Mock Interviewer, Harvard Office of Career Services
2012- 2014	Case-Team Mentor, Harvard College Consulting Group
2015, 2017	Invited Speaker on Competitive Strategy, HBS PRIMO Summer Program
2015	Invited Speaker on Career Strategies, The Franklin Fellowship, Harvard College
2014	Co-Organizer, “Off the Charts: Leapfrog Ideas in Healthcare”, HAAAA Summit

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND ACTIVITY *(presentations by co-authors not listed)*

2024	Panelist, ASQ Virtual Research Discussion on Strategy
2024	Discussant, 2024 Strategy and the Business Environment (SBE) Conference, UVA Darden
Aug 2024	Tuck Junior Faculty Strategy Research Summer Camp, Poster Session
Aug 2023	Co-organizer, Symposium on Entrepreneurial Pivoting, 2023 AOM Boston
Aug 2023	Presenter, PDW on Qualitative Research Methods, 2023 AOM Boston
Aug 2023	Tuck Junior Faculty Strategy Research Summer Camp, Poster Session
Aug 2022	Co-organizer, Symposium on Entrepreneurial Pivoting, 2022 AOM Seattle - Designated as “Showcase Symposium”
May 2022	Discussant, 2022 IACMR Macro Research Frontier Forum (virtual)
Aug 2021	Co-organizer, Symposium on Entrepreneurial Pivoting, 2021 AOM Virtual
Aug 2021	Presenter, PDW on “Role of Corporations in Governing the Commons”
Aug 2021	Presenter, PDW on “Lean Startups and Innovation Strategy: Building a Research Agenda”
Aug 2020	Co-organizer, TIM Division Doctoral Research Development Workshop, AOM
Aug 2020	Co-organizer, Symposium on Entrepreneurial Pivoting, 2020 AOM Virtual - Finalist for OMT Division Best Symposium Award; “Showcase Symposium”
Aug 2020	Panelist, PDW on “From Firm to Industry: Bridging Levels of Analysis in Qualitative Research in Entrepreneurship”, 2020 AOM
Aug 2020	Presenter, Symposium on “Categorical Visions, Aspirations, and New Market Formation”, 2020 AOM

PAPER PRESENTATIONS *(presentations by co-authors not listed)*

Nov 2024	Carnegie Mellon University, Tepper School Entrepreneurship Seminar
Aug 2024	NMSRC Junior Faculty Retreat – Chicago
June 2024	Strategy Research Forum – Montreal
Mar 2024	University of Minnesota, Strategic Management & Entrepreneurship Seminar
Oct 2023	NMSRC New Directions in Non-Market Strategy Virtual Seminar
Oct 2023	University of Michigan, Ross Strategy Area Internal Seminar
May 2023	INQUIRE Conference in Honor of Kathy Eisenhardt
Mar 2023	University of Hong Kong, Management & Strategy Seminar Series (virtual)
Mar 2022	University of Michigan, Hosmer-Hall Interdisciplinary Research Luncheon
Sep 2021	University of Michigan, Ross Management & Organizations Area Seminar
Feb 2020	Austin Technology and Entrepreneurship Conference (UT Austin)
Feb 2020	University of Michigan, Ross Strategy Area Internal Seminar
Sept 2019	West Coast Research Symposium (Stanford University)
Aug 2019	Tuck Junior Faculty Strategy Research Summer Camp, Presentation
Apr 2019	Smith Entrepreneurship Research Conference, University of Maryland
Jan 2019	Kenan Institute Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Conference (panelist)
Sept 2018	SRF Dissertation Scholar Poster Session at SMS Paris
Dec 2017	University of California, Santa Barbara, College of Engineering
Dec 2017	INSEAD, Strategy Area
Nov 2017	University of Michigan, Ross School of Business
Nov 2017	University of Pennsylvania, The Wharton School
Nov 2017	New York University, Stern School of Business
Nov 2017	Dartmouth College, Tuck School of Business
Nov 2017	Rice University, Jones School of Business
Oct 2017	Northeastern University, D’Amore-McKim School of Business
Oct 2017	University of Washington, Foster School of Business
Oct 2017	University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Isenberg School of Management
Oct 2017	SRF Dissertation Scholar Workshop at SMS Houston
Oct 2017	Wharton Innovation Doctoral Symposium (WINDS)

May 2014	Harvard Business School Strategy Unit Doctoral Seminar
Apr 2014	Harvard Business School Empirical TOM Doctoral Seminar
Dec 2013	Craft of Qualitative Inductive Research Workshop
Dec 2013	Harvard Business School Strategy Unit Doctoral Seminar

OTHER AFFILIATIONS

2023- pres.	Elected Member, Strategy Research Forum (SRF)
2022- pres.	Faculty Champion, Sanger Leadership Center, Michigan Ross
2021- pres.	Faculty Associate, Center for Positive Organizations (CPO), Michigan Ross
2020- pres.	Member, Non-Market Strategy Research Community (NMSRC)

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

June 2024 – present	Barton Malow Member of the Board of Directors	Southfield, MI
2010- 2012	Oliver Wyman <i>Management Consultant (Consultant, 2010-11; Senior Consultant, 2012)</i> Conducted engagements in business strategy, operations, and risk management for Fortune 500 clients. Co-captain of the Harvard campus recruiting team	New York, NY
2009- 2010	Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) <i>Principal Research Assistant to the Scholl Chair in International Business</i> Conducted field research with senior policymakers and stakeholders on political strategies for free trade agreements; Managed a team of five interns and researchers	Washington, D.C.
Summer 2005	APCO Worldwide <i>Summer Intern</i> Helped formulate political and strategic communication strategies for MNCs Conducted due diligence on potential Chinese market-entry by MNC	Beijing, China

OTHER

2009 – present	Harvard College alumni admissions interviewer
2024 – present	Y Combinator (S24)-backed startup angel investor