

Aakansha Jain

Department of Economics, Iowa State University
173 Heady Hall, 518 Farm House Lane, Ames, IA 50011

aakansha@iastate.edu · aakanshajain.com · [Google Scholar](#) · [LinkedIn](#)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics , Iowa State University	Aug 2022 – May 2027 (expected)
M.Sc. in Economics , Shiv Nadar University, India	2018–2020
B.Sc. in Economics (Minor: Mathematics & Statistics, First-Class Honours), Lady Brabourne College, University of Calcutta, India	2014–2017

FIELDS OF INTEREST

Labor Economics, Agricultural Labor, Development Economics, Rural Development, Migration, Applied Microeconomics

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Manternach, R., Jain, A., Orazem, P.F., & Soborowicz, L. (2025). “Are College Towns Really Recession Proof?” *Growth and Change*, 56(4): e70064.

Book Chapters

Jain, A., Montenegro, C., & Orazem, P.F. (forthcoming, 2026). “Youth Labor Markets in High- and Low-Income Countries.” In K. Leicht (Ed.), *Oxford University Handbook on the 21st Century Economy*. Oxford University Press.

WORKING PAPERS

“The Rise of H-2A: Causal Evidence on Guestworker Substitution for Settled Farm Labor”	<i>Job Market Paper</i> <i>solo-authored</i>
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Abstract. The U.S. settled non-citizen agricultural workforce has declined substantially since the mid-2000s, while H-2A temporary guestworker certifications have grown more than fivefold over the same period. This paper asks whether the rise of H-2A reflects a causal response to the decline in settled farm labor, and estimates the substitution elasticity between the two workforces. Using a panel of settled non-citizen agricultural labor (PANCAL) constructed from the American Community Survey across 740 U.S. commuting zones over 2008–2024, I instrument for changes in the settled workforce using a shift-share design that interacts baseline 2000 non-citizen agricultural labor shares with two sources of national variation in immigration enforcement: Border Patrol budget shocks and agricultural-season border encounters. IV estimates imply that each settled non-citizen agricultural worker lost is replaced by 1.7 to 2.5 H-2A certifications (Hansen J $p = 0.128$). The findings show that the expansion of H-2A has been driven by the contraction of the settled farm workforce, reshaping the composition of U.S. agricultural labor and raising design questions for guestworker policy.

“Trends in College Wage Premiums in India, 1987–2012 [link] ”	<i>Solo-authored, 2025</i>
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Abstract. This paper traces how the college-versus-high-school earnings gap evolved in India during the decades when tertiary enrollment expanded rapidly. Drawing on five waves of the National Sample Survey, I estimate conventional Mincer wage equations and complement them with two-part Cragg models that separate the extensive margin (labor-force participation) from the intensive margin (weekly pay, conditional on work). Repeated cross-sections are organized into synthetic birth cohorts to track wage premiums over

time. The college premium rose throughout the sample period despite a near-tripling of tertiary enrollment, and rose unevenly across cohorts: older cohorts continue to command rising premiums while the youngest has begun to flatten. I plan to interpret this divergence through a nested CES framework following Card and Lemieux (2001) and Keng, Lin, and Orazem (2017), and to estimate the elasticity of substitution between young and old college-educated workers.

“An Overview of the 2024 Iowa State University Alumni Survey
[RePEc]”

with A. Andrade, J. Eyles, K.
Kimle, P.F. Orazem, and R.
Unal

Abstract. This paper documents the design, sample construction, and descriptive findings of the 2024 Iowa State University alumni survey, a follow-up to the 2008 survey (Jolly, Yu, and Orazem 2009). Covers cohorts graduating from 1982 to 2023, with over 5,000 usable Bachelor’s-degree responses. Reports patterns of entrepreneurship, employment, education, and geographic mobility across 41 years of ISU graduates, with results weighted to reflect the underlying alumni population. Serves as the primary data reference for subsequent policy briefs and working papers drawing on the 2024 survey. Working Paper 25007, Department of Economics, Iowa State University.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Does Broadband Close the Rural Education Gap?”

with L. Han and J.V. Winters

Abstract. This paper examines whether federally subsidized broadband in high-cost areas raises college enrollment among rural high-school graduates. The mechanism is a reduction in the information frictions that constrain the college-going decision. Identification exploits the Connect America Fund Phase II Price Cap program, whose block-level eligibility was determined ex ante by a 2014 FCC engineering cost model and is therefore plausibly exogenous to local education outcomes. The empirical strategy is a staggered difference-in-differences design that compares eligible census blocks by the timing of broadband deployment, with never-deployed eligible blocks serving as the comparison group. The analysis links HUBB deployment records to restricted-access American Community Survey microdata through the Iowa State University Federal Statistical Research Data Center (access pending).

“Returns to Farming Among ISU Alumni”

with I. Cho and P.F. Orazem

Abstract. This paper estimates the earnings returns to entering farming among Iowa State University graduates. Using the alumni surveys with propensity-score matching and an endogenous treatment-effects model, preliminary estimates suggest that farm households earn substantially less than comparable nonfarm households, roughly 33 to 38 percent less overall and 47 to 48 percent less than the nonfarm self-employed. The gap is largely geographic: within rural areas it falls to about 12 to 16 percent and is no longer statistically significant, suggesting that much of the penalty reflects rural versus nonrural location rather than farming itself. Entry into farming is driven mainly by a parent’s farming background and family-business experience, with rural upbringing and local conditions mattering little once family background is accounted for.

“Firm Entry and Serial Entrepreneurship Among ISU Alumni”

with D. Lin and P.F. Orazem

Abstract. This paper examines how economic conditions at graduation and entrepreneurial background shape business formation among Iowa State University alumni, using the pooled 2008 and 2024 alumni surveys. About 20 percent of graduates start a for-profit business, and roughly a quarter of those start more than one. Graduating into higher local unemployment delays early business formation, an effect that emerges around year five and fades within a decade; over a full career it leaves little mark. Entrepreneurial ties dominate instead: graduates with a business-owning friend, parent, or family-business experience are substantially more likely to start a business. The early gaps by graduation-year economy nonetheless persist decades later.

POLICY REPORTS

- Crespi, G., and Jain, A. (2026). “Where Do They Go? Migration Patterns of Iowa State University Alumni.” *Agricultural Policy Review*, Winter 2026. Center for Agricultural and Rural

Development, Iowa State University. [\[link\]](#)

- Andrade, A., Eyles, J., Jain, A., Kimle, K., Orazem, P.F., & Unal, R. (2025). "How a Land Grant College Affects Business and Job Creation." *Agricultural Policy Review*, Fall 2025. Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University. [\[link\]](#)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Media Mentions

- "Iowa State college graduates left for bigger cities, but they're returning to Iowa." *Axios Des Moines*, April 21, 2026. Coverage of Crespi and Jain (2026). [\[link\]](#)

Outreach Writing

- Jain, A. (2024). "How to Compute Real Income or Real Value of a Given Currency?" *Ask an Economist*, Department of Economics, Iowa State University, November 6, 2024. [\[link\]](#)

CONFERENCES AND PRESENTATIONS

- Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Meeting, Houston, TX Nov 2026
Selected Paper: JMP.
- Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO Jul 2026
Selected Paper: JMP.
- Midwest Economics Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL 2025
"Are College Towns Really Recession Proof?"

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, Iowa State University

ECON 3530: Money, Banking, and Financial Institutions Spring 2025
Instructor of record for 60 students. Designed the course syllabus, prepared all lecture slides, managed homework and in-class quizzes using the Pearson platform, and coordinated with a teaching assistant for grading. Topics included monetary policy, central banking, financial regulation, and international finance.

Teaching Assistant, Iowa State University

- ECON 1020: Principles of Macroeconomics Spring 2026
Assisted with Friday lectures and prepared and graded weekly quizzes.
- ECON 2070: Quantitative Methods in Economic Analysis I Fall 2025
Conducted weekly math-focused lab sessions for 30 students; opened each session with a guided example and supported students in applying quantitative methods to economic problems.
- ECON 3530: Money, Banking, and Financial Institutions Fall 2024
Attended all lectures to provide continuous student support; conducted review sessions before exams, solved practice problems in class, and graded written exams.
- ECON 1010: Principles of Microeconomics (Online, Accelerated) Winter 2024
Taught an intensive one-month asynchronous section; recorded comprehensive review sessions and hosted live Q&A discussions.

- ECON 1020: Principles of Macroeconomics Fall 2023
Led independent biweekly recitations reviewing lecture content and exam materials; facilitated in-class discussions and addressed conceptual questions.
- ECON 1010: Principles of Microeconomics (Online) Spring 2023
Managed student communication in a fully online course; resolved queries via email, maintained virtual office hours, and supported engagement in an asynchronous format.
- ECON 1010L: Principles of Microeconomics Lab Fall 2022
Guided students through core microeconomic concepts in weekly lab sessions; clarified problem-solving methods, graded lab assignments, and provided individualized support.

Mentorship

- Help Room Tutor Spring 2023 – Fall 2024
Assisted students across principles and intermediate courses during weekly help-room hours. Ranked top 3 of 25 TAs; recommended for ISU Teaching Excellence Award.
- Graduate Mentor, “Saturday Morning Breakfast Club” Spring 2023 – Present
Mentor undergraduate and graduate students through their own research projects in a weekly research program in the ISU Department of Economics, founded by Peter Orazem in 2014. Advise students on research questions and data sources, and guide them through dataset construction, cleaning, and Stata programming. Several papers listed above originated in Breakfast Club collaborations.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral

- Research Assistant, Iowa State University Jul 2025 – Present
Led data construction and analysis on the ISU Alumni Surveys across several projects: rural–urban migration patterns across graduating cohorts, and entrepreneurship among alumni using the pooled 2008 and 2024 surveys, estimating how graduation-year economic conditions and family business ties shape whether and when graduates start businesses.
- Research Assistant, Iowa State University Summer 2024
Supported the 2024 ISU Alumni Survey data pipeline; cleaned raw Qualtrics survey responses, constructed employment and entrepreneurship measures, and produced descriptive tabulations used in subsequent policy reports and working papers.
- Research Assistant, Iowa State University Spring 2024
Contributed empirical analysis to college-town business-cycle resilience project; assisted with data construction and supported undergraduate researchers.

Pre-Doctoral (India)

- Research Assistant, Indian School of Business Summer 2022
Contributed to pilot RCT evaluating Bihar’s Public Distribution System; managed survey logistics and data cleaning.
- Research Assistant, IFMR LEAD Aug 2021 – Mar 2022
Analyzed differential impacts of COVID-19 on mental well-being of men and women using difference-in-differences; data analysis in Stata and geo-coding in R and Google API. PIs: Amrita Dhillon (KCL), Farzana Afridi (ISI Delhi), Sanchari Roy (KCL).
- Research Assistant, King’s College London Jun 2020 – Jul 2021

Developed composite measures of state performance for MGNREGA and PMGSY; supervised team of RAs for data quality control of large administrative dataset. PIs: Amrita Dhillon (KCL), Farzana Afridi (ISI Delhi), Arka Roy Chaudhury (Shiv Nadar).

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- Referee: *Growth and Change, Journal of Development Effectiveness*
- Elected Chair, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Graduate & Professional Student Senate, ISU 2023–2024
- Senator, Department of Economics, Graduate & Professional Student Senate, ISU 2023–2024

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Mentee, Association for Mentoring and Inclusion in Economics (AMIE) 2025–2026
- Preparing Future Faculty Course (GRST 5850), Iowa State University Fall 2025

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Software: Stata, R, Python, L^AT_EX, Google API (geo-coding), Excel

Data: IPUMS (CPS, ACS, Decennial Census), USDA NASS Census of Agriculture, DOL H-2A administrative records, ISU Alumni Survey, NSSO (India), DISE (India education)

Methods: Panel data, difference-in-differences, shift-share/Bartik IV, event study, regression discontinuity, RCT design and evaluation

Languages: English (fluent), Hindi (native)

REFERENCES

Dr. John V. Winters

Co-Major Advisor, Professor

Iowa State University

winters1@iastate.edu

460B Heady Hall, Department of Economics

518 Farm House Lane, Ames, IA 50011

515-294-6263

Dr. Peter F. Orazem

Co-Major Advisor, University Professor

Iowa State University

pfo@iastate.edu

267 Heady Hall, Department of Economics

518 Farm House Lane, Ames, IA 50011

515-294-8656