

Aakansha Jain

Department of Economics, Iowa State University
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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, Development Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Migration

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” *Job Market Paper, solo-authored*

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.

“An Overview of the 2024 Iowa State University Alumni Survey” *with A. Andrade, J. Eyles, K. Kimle, P.F. Orazem, and R. Unal*

Abstract. 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. [RePEc link]

“Trends in College Wage Premiums in India, 1987–2012”

Solo-authored, 2025 [link]

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.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Does Broadband Close the Rural Education Gap?”

with J.V. Winters

Abstract. This project will examine whether broadband expansion raises college enrollment and slows out-migration among rural-born cohorts, and whether these effects are larger in “education deserts”—counties more than 30 miles from the nearest four-year college. Using the staggered rollout of the FCC Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase II as a source of exogenous variation in rural broadband access, we plan to estimate an event-study specification in which the treatment is the year broadband arrives in an individual’s county of birth, interacted with the pre-period education-desert indicator. Identification exploits the fact that CAF Phase II rollout timing was determined by high-cost-area subsidy thresholds rather than local education outcomes. Outcomes include college enrollment, bachelor’s completion, field of degree, residence in the birth commuting zone, and earnings. Estimation requires restricted Census data—Census Numident for county of birth linked to restricted ACS via PIK crosswalks—accessible through the FSRDC at ISU under Project 3044 (access expected June 2026).

“Returns to Farming Among ISU Alumni”

with I. Cho and P.F. Orazem

Abstract. This project will use the Iowa State University alumni surveys to estimate the earnings returns to entering farming among ISU graduates, compared with returns in non-farming occupations. Work is planned to begin in Summer 2026.

“Firm Entry and Serial Entrepreneurship Among ISU Alumni”

with D. Lin and P.F. Orazem

Abstract. This paper examines how local labor market conditions at graduation shape the timing of entrepreneurial entry among ISU alumni, using the 2008 and 2024 waves of the Iowa State University alumni survey. For each horizon from one to forty years after graduation, we estimate a probit model predicting

whether an alumnus had started a for-profit business by that point. The Iowa unemployment rate at graduation has no detectable effect on business entry in the first few years after graduation, but a significant and persistent negative effect that appears around year 5, deepens through years 10 to 14, and dissipates by year 20. The U.S. unemployment rate has no analogous effect when included simultaneously, consistent with adverse local—rather than national—labor market conditions at graduation delaying entrepreneurial entry. We plan to extend this framework with a waiting-time duration model to more formally show how long adverse graduation conditions shift the age of business entry and whether lifetime entrepreneurship probabilities are ultimately recovered.

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 (Presidential or CSWEP session): H-2A Job Market Paper.
- **Agricultural and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) Annual Meeting**, Kansas City, MO Jul 2026
Selected Paper: H-2A Job Market Paper.
- **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 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 Assistant, “Saturday Morning Breakfast Club” Spring 2023 – Present
Graduate assistant for a weekly Saturday-morning undergraduate research program in the ISU Department of Economics, founded by Peter Orazem in 2014. Several papers listed above in Publications, Working Papers, Works in Progress, and Policy Reports originated through Breakfast Club collaborations. Provided data cleaning, Stata programming, and dataset identification support to other Breakfast Club students on their research projects. Featured (quoted) in the ISU Department of Economics Breakfast Club story.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral

- **Research Assistant**, Iowa State University Summer 2025
Led data construction and analysis for rural–urban migration patterns across ISU Alumni Survey cohorts.
- **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, $\text{\LaTeX}$, 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
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