ANJALI PAI, Ph.D

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Overview

I am an applied microeconomist with significant experience studying policies that improve outcomes for disadvantaged or underrepresented populations. My work spans multiple contexts, including K–12 and postsecondary education, job training, healthcare access, and well-being of children and families. My research methods range from large-scale randomized controlled trials to quasi-experimental analysis of large cross-sectional and panel datasets. Across these methods, I employ strong econometric skills and context-specific knowledge to isolate the causal impact of interventions and programs. I have worked on projects with academic partners and government organizations and have strong skills in working with survey and administrative data. I also bring strong writing and presentation skills that complement my quantitative expertise.

Key Skills:

- Basic and complex quantitative analysis
- Applied econometric methods, including ordinary least squares regressions, hierarchical linear models, fixed-effect models, difference-in-differences, regression discontinuity, logistic models, propensity score matching, propensity score weighting, LASSO variable selection, value-added models
- Designing and conducting impact evaluations, randomized controlled trial, and quasi-experimental analyses
- Coding languages/software: Stata (Expert), R (Advanced), QGIS (Intermediate), Python (Beginner), Excel (Expert), LaTeX (Expert)
- Writing for technical and non-technical audiences
- Public speaking and presentation
- Communicating about quantitative research with research teams, stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners
- Leading culturally-conscious and equity-focused research
- Basic qualitative analysis, theme and content-analysis, and synthesis of survey responses
- Project management
- Peer mentorship

Education

University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA
> *Ph.D., Economics*, 2024 (Dissertation: Essays on the Economics of Education [Link]; Chair: Julian Betts)
> *M.A., Economics*, 2020

Williams College, Williamstown, MA
> *B.A., Economics and Computer Science (Double Major)*, 2019, Cum Laude

Professional Development
- What Works Clearinghouse Group Design Standards certification, v.5.0 (2024)
- SREE Research Methods Webinar: Bayesian Impact Analysis (2024)
- CITI Training: Social & Behavioral Research – Basic/Refresher Human Subjects Training (2025)

Professional Experience

Abt Global, 2024– 2025

Social Science Economics Senior Analyst (2024 – 2025)

- *Major Responsibilities*: Quantitative analysis; evaluation design; econometric expertise and technical support, dissemination of results to broad audiences
- My position was eliminated in a reduction in force at Abt Global in March 2025, resulting from cuts to government funding for education research.

Projects

Senior Analyst, *Sectoral Strategies and Employer Engagement Portfolio Services (SSEEP)*. U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Chief Evaluation Office (2024 –2025).

- **Project:** Goal was to generate evidence on effective employer-engaged, scalable workforce strategies that would support regional growth in high-demand industries such as nursing and infrastructure, while creating access to high quality career paths for workers from underserved populations.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Co-designed feasible impact evaluations of SSEEP grant programs on individual and employer labor market outcomes
  - Co-wrote an evaluability assessment memo submitted to DOL
  - Identified relevant data sources, developed plans for combining datasets, and wrote data applications
  - Developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) data
  - Served as team expert on WIPS data in client calls with DOL clients
  - Co-led clarification interviews with grantees
  - Developed code in R for efficiently extracting key information from grantee interview summaries

Project Quality Reviewer and Senior Analyst, *Evaluation of the Programming the Acceleration of Computing and Equity (PACE) Framework for Computer Science Systems Change*. Education Development Center (2024 – 2025).

- **Project:** External quasi-experimental evaluation of the PACE framework, aimed to improve access and equity in computer science for middle school students in Massachusetts.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Reviewed existing analysis code for quality and comprehensibility
  - Co-led regression and descriptive analyses on student test score data and course schedule data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
  - Developed new analyses and visualizations of survey data
  - Co-drafted final project report for clients

Lead Analyst, *Health Profession Opportunities Grants 2.0 (HPOG 2.0) COVID-Cohort Special Topics Report*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (2024 – 2025).

- **Project:** To develop a brief on disparities in nurse training progressions as part of the

external evaluation of the Health Profession Opportunity Grant 2.0 (HPOG 2.0) COVID-cohorts, which provided healthcare occupational training and supports.

- **Responsibilities:**
  - Designed predictive analysis of disparities in nurse training using survey and administrative data
  - Ran logistic regression models with LASSO variable selection in Stata to identify characteristics that determined training program completion
  - Developed easily interpretable visualizations and graphics to show results of predictive models
  - Wrote proposal outlining analysis plan for clients at OPRE and revised in accordance with updated guidance from clients

Lead Author, *Analysis approaches for designs where the level of treatment assignment differs from the level of treatment-variation*. U.S. Department of Education, Education Innovation Research Technical Assistance (EIR-TA) Grant (2024-2025).

- **Project:** To develop a methodological report for educators and EIR-TA teams outlining appropriate analytic model for randomization designs where the level of treatment-assignment differs from the level of treatment-variation.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Support technical assistance teams for education RCTs by recommending appropriate analysis models for different RCT designs
  - Generate simulated data and run Monte Carlo simulations to test the performance of different regression specifications
  - Develop theoretical econometric proofs for the relative efficiency of different analysis models
  - Translate complex econometric theory in accessible reports targeted at practitioners

Impact Lead, *Collaborative to Improve Classroom Engagement and Outcomes for Native American and Rural Students*, U.S. Department of Education, Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Grant awarded to Kansas University (January 2024– March 2025).

- **Project:** Conduct and analyze a large-scale randomized controlled trial testing a classroom behavioral intervention in 124 rural and indigenous-serving schools across six states.
- **Responsibilities:**
  - Selected to lead RCT design, implementation, and analysis
  - Fine-tuned evaluation design in collaboration with research partners
  - Engaged with stakeholders and community members to inform evaluation
  - Generated guidance on addressing data sovereignty issues for indigenous populations into RCT design

Study Reviewer, *What Works Clearinghouse Preschool-to-Postsecondary Evidence Synthesis Task Orders (WWC-PESTO)*, U.S. Department of Education (2024– 2025).

- **Responsibilities:** Conducted systematic evidence reviews for literacy practice guide.

University of California San Diego, 2019 - 2024

Graduate Research Assistant, *2019 – 2024 (several limited-term employments)*

- Major Responsibilities: quantitative analysis of administrative and survey data; survey design and analysis; result dissemination to academics and government staff.

Projects

Graduate Research Assistant (to Dr. Julian Betts), *Examining Educational Recovery in California after COVID-19.* University of California San Diego (June 2023 – September 2023).
- **Responsibilities:**
    - Cleaned, processed, and validated 20 years of survey data from the California Healthy Kids Survey in Stata
    - Wrote organized, adaptable code to make data processing efficient and reproducible
    - Constructed indices of school climate and socioemotional well-being based on existing reports
    - Prepared reports documenting data differences across years and presented quantitative analyses in meetings with academics and policy-researchers

Graduate Research Assistant (to Dr. Prashant Bharadwaj & Dr. David Arnold), *Assessing the Collectability of Child Support Arrears in California.* University of California San Diego (June 2022 – December 2022).
- **Responsibilities:**
    - Led and wrote two reports for the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)
    - Evaluated the implementation of recommendations issued in a previous collectability study by synthesizing legislative and academic reports (Report 1)
    - Designed, conducted, and analyzed the results from, a statewide survey of child support agencies aimed to assess local heterogeneity in the impacts of child support policies (Report 2)
    - Presented about qualitative survey results in client meetings with DCSS

Graduate Research Assistant (to Dr. Sally Sadoff). *Examining Discrimination in Paycheck Protection Program Lending during COVID-19.* University of California San Diego (June 2021 – September 2021, January 2022 – March 2022).
- **Responsibilities:**
    - Designed maps in QGIS and R to visualize geographic differences in lending
    - Helped team assess labor market implications of lending inequality

Graduate Research Assistant (to Dr. Julian Betts). *The Effect of School Choice Programs on Students' Education and Labor Market Outcomes.* University of California San Diego (June 2020 – September 2020, June 2021 – September 2021).
- **Responsibilities:**
    - Wrote programs in Stata to validate and analyze over 10 years of school choice lotteries
    - Provided cleanly-commented code and clear documentation for future analysts

Graduate Teaching Assistant*, 2020 - 2024*

- *Courses:* Data Analytics for Social Sciences (8 terms); Public Policy (2 terms); Economics of Education; Economics of Discrimination; Intermediate Microeconomics
- *Major Responsibilities:* Provide instruction and classroom support; lead discussion sections and labs; grade homework and exams; hold weekly office hours

Course Reader, Grader, and Exam Proctor, *2019 – 2020*
- *Courses: Behavioral Economics; Business Cycles; Economics of Human Resources*
- *Major Responsibilities:* Grade homework and exams; proctor exams

Working Papers and Reports

Bobronnikov, B., Litwok, D., Ciaffone, K., & **Pai, A.** (2025). Unpublished manuscript. *Programming the Acceleration of Computing and Equity (PACE) Framework for CS Systems Change. EIR grant findings report*. Abt Global.

Pai, A. (2025). The Effect of School-Based Health Centers on Adolescent Mental Health and Behavior. Manuscript in Preparation. Retrieved from https://anjalipai.com/files/job-market-paper.pdf

Description: I examine the effect of school-based health centers - full-service clinics located on K-12 school sites - on suspension rates and dropout rates in California. Using a staggered difference-in-differences analysis and a propensity-score matched control group, I show that the opening of a new school-based health center decreases school-level suspension rates by around 1.2 percentage points (20% of the baseline suspension rate). Heterogeneity analyses suggest effects are driven by decreases in suspensions from "disruptive behavior".

Pai, A. (2024). *What You Don't Know Might Deter You: The Effect of Information Provision on Minority Retention in Undergraduate Economics.* Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved from https://anjalipai.com/files/Pai_urm_retention_paper.pdf

Description: I run two waves of a large-scale randomized controlled trial with over 1000 undergraduate students at a California university to test whether a low-touch information intervention can reduce barriers to entry in Economics majors for underrepresented minority (URM) students. Providing students with information about potential careers, income, research topics, and diversity in the field of Economics increases the likelihood of enrolling in a subsequent Economics course for URM students by around 9.9 percentage points, driven by lower-performing students.

Sullivan, T., **Pai, A.** (2024). *Gender Differences in College Major Choice and Switching Behavior: An Empirical Assessment*. Unpublished Dissertation Chapter. [Available here on June 17, 2025.](#)

Description: We use the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, a nationally-representative, longitudinal survey, to assess how determinants of major-switching in and out of STEM fields may differ by gender. A predictive model suggests that women switch out of STEM fields at higher rates than men, with the strongest differential switching occurring at low first-year GPAs in STEM courses. A quasi-experimental analysis using a propensity-weighted difference-in-differences model suggests that differential switching is not entirely driven by selection bias.

Conference Presentations

Pai, A. (2024, Nov. 21-23). *The Effect of School Based Health Centers on Adolescent Mental Health and Behavior* [Conference presentation]. Association for Public Policy and Management 46th Annual Fall Research Conference, National Harbor, MD.

Pai, A. (2022, Sept. 19-20). *The Effect of Information Provision on Minority Retention in Undergraduate Economics: Evidence from a Field Experiment* [Conference Poster Presentation]. 2022 All California Labor Economics Conference, Riverside, CA.

Awards and Fellowships

UC San Diego Economics Department's Walter Heller Memorial Prize for Best Third Year Paper (2022). Awarded annually by the UC San Diego Economics Department for the best paper written in the 3rd year of the PhD program.

UC San Diego Diversity in Economics Research Fellowship (2020). $5000 awarded for a proposed project to run an RCT to understand the impact of information provision on the retention of underrepresented minorities in undergraduate Economics.

Professional Service and Leadership

Professional Service and Memberships
Journal Peer Reviewer, *Review for Economics and Human Biology* (2024 – Present)
Member, *Association for Public Policy and Management* (2024 – Present)

Professional Mentorship and Leadership
Program Director, *Economics Department Incoming Ph.D. Mentorship Program*, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA (2020 – 2023)
Peer Mentor, *Economics Department Incoming Ph.D. Mentorship Program*, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA (2022 – 2023)
Executive Board Member and Peer Mentor, *Ph.D. Women in Economics Organization,* University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA (2020 – 2023)
Economics Department Representative, *Graduate and Professional Student Association*, University of California San Diego, San Diego, CA (2020 – 2022)
Director of Diversity, *Economic Students Advisory Council,* Williams College, Williamstown, MA (2018-2019)
Student Leader, *Representing Identities of Students in Economics,* Williams College, Williamstown, MA (2018-2019)

Community Mentorship and Leadership
Volunteer, *Promises2Kids*, San Diego, CA (2025 – Present)
Co-Founder, *Leaders in Tech: Computer Science Mentorship Program (2017 Google IgniteCS Grant Recipient),* Williamstown, MA (2017-2018)
Computer Science Instructor, *Williams Elementary Outreach*, Williamstown, MA (2016-2019)
Computer Science Instructor, *ID Tech Summer Camp*, Danbury, Connecticut (Summer 2017)