

Haruka Uchida

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Education

University of Chicago, Ph.D. in Economics 2020–2026

Harvard University, B.A. in Applied Mathematics in Economics, Cum Laude in Field 2018

References

Professor John List (Chair) University of Chicago Kenneth C. Griffin Department of Economics jlist@uchicago.edu	Professor Michael Dinerstein Duke University Department of Economics michael.dinerstein@duke.edu
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Professor Evan Rose
University of Chicago
Kenneth C. Griffin Department of Economics
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Research and Teaching Fields

Primary: Labor Economics
Secondary: Economics of Education, Experimental Economics

Job Market Paper

What Do Blind Evaluations Reveal? How Discrimination Shapes Representation and Quality

Reject and Resubmit at *Review of Economic Studies*

Abstract: Concealing candidate identities during evaluations (“blinding”) is often proposed to combat discrimination. I study how blinding affects the composition and quality of selected candidates, and the forms of discrimination driving effects. I implement a field experiment with an academic conference, running each submitted paper through blind and non-blind review, and collecting proxies of paper quality—citations and publication statuses five years later. I find that blinding significantly reduces gaps in reviewer scores and acceptances by student status and institution rank, with no significant changes by gender. However, blinding does not lead to selecting lower-quality papers. To understand mechanisms, I elicit reviewer predictions of future submission outcomes in a second experiment and estimate a model of reviewer scores that decomposes non-blind disparities into distinct forms of discrimination: accurate and inaccurate statistical discrimination, considerations of alternative objectives (such as favoring authors who may benefit more from acceptance, or benefit others), and bias. I find that the nature of discrimination differs by trait: student score gaps are attributable to (mis)perceptions of paper quality and pursuit of alternative objectives, while institution rank gaps are consistent with bias.

Publications

Measuring Racial Educational Disparities Over Time Amongst Top Achievers (with Udit Karna, Andrew Simon, Min Sok Lee, and John List), *Nature*, 2025

Abstract: Educational disparities remain a key contributor to increasing social and wealth inequalities. To address this, researchers and policymakers have focused on average differences between racial groups or differences among students who are falling behind. This focus potentially leads to educational triage, diverting resources away from high-achieving students, including those from racial minorities. Here we focus on the ‘racial excellence gap’—the difference in the likelihood that students from racial minorities (Black and Hispanic) reach the highest levels of academic achievement compared with their non-minority (white and Asian) peers. There is a shortage of evidence that systematically measures the magnitude of the excellence gap and how it evolves. Using longitudinal, statewide, administrative data, we document eight facts regarding the excellence gap from third grade (typically ages 8–9) to high school (typically ages 14–18), link the stability of excellence gaps and student backgrounds, and assess the efficacy of public policies. We show that excellence gaps in maths and reading are evident by the third grade and grow slightly over time, especially for female students. About one third of the gap is explained by a student’s socioeconomic status, and about one tenth is explained by the school environment. Top-achieving racial minority students are also less likely to persist in excellence as they progress through school. Moreover, state accountability policies that direct additional resources to reduce non-race-based inequality had minimal effects on the racial excellence gaps. Documenting these patterns is an important step towards eliminating excellence gaps and removing the ‘racial glass ceiling’.

Working Papers

Minimum Wage and Racial Discrimination in Hiring: Theory and Evidence from a Field Experiment (with Alec Brandon, Justin Holz, Andrew Simon)

2nd round of revisions at *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*

Abstract: When minimum wages increase, firms may respond by substituting away from disadvantaged workers. We test this hypothesis using a correspondence study with 35,000 applications around ex-ante uncertain minimum wage increases in three U.S. states. Before the increases, applicants with distinctively Black names were 18 percent less likely to receive a callback than equivalent applicants with distinctively white names. Announcements of minimum wage hikes substantially reduced callbacks for all applicants but shrunk the racial callback gap by 80 percent. The effects are only partially explained by changes in firm composition, suggesting that minimum wage hikes also reduce discriminatory hiring.

Resources or Rewards? The Impact of School District Funding and Incentives on Student Outcomes (with Clara Kyung (JMP))

Abstract: School funding and accountability are prevalent policy tools in public education, but their efficacy in improving student outcomes remains contested. We study the impacts of a statewide education reform in Texas that (1) changed the formula that links school district characteristics to funding, and, in a novel shift from test-based accountability, (2) introduced financial bonuses for districts based on high school graduates’ attainment outcomes, including college enrollment and industry-based certification. Using policy-driven, between-district variation in district spending and incentives, we find that both spending and incentives improved the composite attainment outcome targeted by the bonus policy. Effects on attainment are driven by industry-based certifications, with little effect on college enrollment. However, by focusing on high school graduates’ outcomes, the bonus structure inadvertently incentivized districts to retain 12th graders who were unlikely to meet the attainment criteria: incentives reduced graduation rates and increased dropout rates. Consequently, we find mixed evidence on college and career outcomes one year after 12th grade: neither district spending nor incentives affected the share of students who

were employed or enrolled in college, but incentives increased earnings. Our results highlight both the potential promise and design challenges of attainment-based incentive policies.

Five Facts About the First-Generation Excellence Gap (with Udit Karna, Andrew Simon, John List)

Abstract: Parents are crucial to children's educational success, but the role of parental education in fostering academic excellence remains underexplored. Using longitudinal administrative data covering all North Carolina public school students, we document five facts about first-generation excellence gaps. We find large excellence gaps emerge by 3rd grade across all demographics and persist through high school. Yet, socioeconomic status and school quality explain only one-third of the gaps. The overarching facts reveal that excellence gaps reflect deeper challenges rooted in parental human capital that manifest early and compound over time, rather than merely consequences of socioeconomic disadvantage or school quality differences.

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? Toward an Understanding of Fade-out in Early Childhood Programs (with John List)

Abstract: An unsettling stylized fact is that decorated early childhood education programs improve cognitive skills in the short-term, but lose their efficacy after a few years. We implement a field experiment with two stages of randomization to explore the underpinnings of the fade-out effect. We first randomly assign preschool access to children, and then partner with the local school district to randomly assign the same children to classmates throughout elementary school. We find that the fade-out effect is critically-linked to the share of classroom peers assigned to preschool access—with enough treated peers the classic fade-out effect is muted. Our results highlight a paradoxical insight: while the fade-out effect has been viewed as a devastating critique of early childhood programs, our results highlight that fade-out is a key rationale for providing early education to all children. This is because human capital accumulation is inherently a social activity, leading early education programs to deliver their largest benefits at scale when everyone receives such programs.

Using a Field Experiment to Understand Skill Formation During Adolescence (with Juanna Joensen, John List, Anya Samek)

Work in Progress

Selecting Courses and Teachers: How Teacher Assignments Steer Student Outcomes

Effects of Community College Advisors on Student Outcomes (with Rohen Shah)

Awards, Scholarships, and Grants

University of Chicago Provost Dissertation Fellowship	2025
Becker Friedman Institute Public Economics Initiative Grant	2025
Becker Friedman Institute Program in Behavioral Economics Grant	2025
Becker Friedman Institute Public Economics Initiative Grant	2024
UChicago Economics Department George S. Tolley Award for third-year paper	2023
University of Chicago Graduate Council Research Fund	2023
Becker Friedman Institute Political Economics Initiative Grant	2023
Association for Education Finance and Policy Roe L. Johns Student Travel Grant	2023
W.E. Upjohn Institute Early Career Research Award	2022
Social Sciences Fellowship, University of Chicago	2020 - Present
Department of Economics Research Grant, Harvard University	2017

Teaching Experience

Ph.D

Behavioral Economics, TA for Prof. Joshua Dean and Prof. Devin Pope (UChicago) *Fall 2022*

Masters

The Scale-Up Effect in Public Policy, TA for Prof. Dana Suskind (UChicago) *Fall 2021*

Undergraduate

Intro to Industrial Organization, TA for Prof. Michael Dinerstein (UChicago) *Spring 2023, 2022*

Experimental Economics, TA for Prof. John List (UChicago) *Winter 2023*

Experiments in Organizations, Guest Lecturer for Prof. Anya Samek (UC San Diego) *Spring 2023*

High School (University of Chicago summer school)

Experimental Economics, Guest Lecturer for Min Sok Lee *Fall 2019, Summer 2025*

Experimental Economics, Guest Lecturer for Fulya Ersoy *Summer 2025*

Experimental Economics, Guest Lecturer for Prof. John List *Summer 2019*

Research Experience

Research Professional for Prof. John List, University of Chicago *2018 - 2020*

Research Assistant for Prof. Benjamin Enke, Harvard University *2017*

Research Assistant for Prof. Michael Norton, Harvard Business School *2017*

Research Assistant for Prof. Michael Luca, Harvard Business School *2015-2016*

Presentations

2025: Purdue University; University of Iowa Economics; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Economics; Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis; Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago; Marquette University Economics; DePaul University Economics; Nesta UK Research Workshop; Committee on Education Workshop, University of Chicago

2024: Southern Economic Association; Committee on Education Workshop, University of Chicago,

2023: Saudi Arabia Ministry of Economy Workshop; Southern Economic Association; Society for Labor Economists Annual Meeting; Association for Education Finance and Policy

2022: Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago; ESA Special Meeting, Buenos Aires

2021: Advances with Field Experiments, University of Chicago; Experimental Economics Seminar, University of Chicago

Professional Experience

Referee: *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics; American Economic Review; Frontiers in Education; Journal of Economic Education; Journal of Political Economy; Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics; PNAS Nexus*

Additional Information

Programming Skills: Matlab, Python, R, Stata; Qualtrics

Citizenship: Japan, U.S. Permanent Resident