

CHRISTIAN VALENCIA

Email: cav5@illinois.edu | Phone: (217)819-8762

416 Mumford Hall, Urbana IL 61801

Website: <https://valenciac.github.io>

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Expected May 2026)

M.A. in Economics

Universidad de San Andrés-Argentina, 2019

BA (Licentiate) in Economics

Universidad Católica Boliviana, 2012

PUBLICATIONS

Peer pressure: Experimental evidence from restroom behavior (with B. Cardinale Lagomarsino, M. Gutman, L. Freira, M. Lanzalet, M. Lauletta, L. Malchik, F. Montano Campos, B. Pacini and M. Rossi). *Economic Inquiry*. Vol 55 (3), 2017. [\[link\]](#)

WORKING PAPERS

Visa Regulations, Agricultural Employment, and Productivity (Job Market Paper)

The H-2A visa program addresses labor shortages in agriculture by allowing farms to bring foreign temporary workers into the United States. Farms that use the program must pay both foreign and native workers performing comparable tasks a minimum hourly wage known as the Adverse Effect Wage Rate. This paper studies how farms choice of agricultural inputs is affected by these higher visa wages. Using data from the USDA Census of Agriculture from 2002 to 2022, I implement a border-county pair design that compares counties across state lines. I find that a 1% increase in the visa wage leads to a 1.2% increase in the value of machinery and equipment suggesting labor cost induced mechanization. In addition, higher visa wages lead to an increase in the use of agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and fungicides, in both the intensive and extensive margin. The input substitution might have contributed to an increase in agricultural productivity.

Soft Skills and Hiring Discrimination (with Sarah Janzen, Yashodhan Ghorpade and Amanina Abdur Rahman) [\[link\]](#)

Hiring discrimination remains widespread in labor markets, raising questions about what workers can do to improve their chances of being considered for jobs in such settings. This paper examines whether soft skills are valued by employers and whether they can help mitigate discrimination. Using a correspondence study in Malaysia, we test the effects of signaling two soft skills: leadership and teamwork. We find that Malay and Indian sounding names are 11 and 14 percentage points less likely to be contacted, compared to Chinese sounding names. Soft skills are not explicitly demanded by employers, but signaling teamwork skills significantly reduces the discrimination gap in 43% and 33%

for Malay and Indian candidates. We present a model that uses the soft skill signal to disentangle if the nature of discrimination is statistical or taste based. Our results are consistent with statistical discrimination and highlight the potential of soft skills as a strategic signal to counteract hiring discrimination.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

- Research Assistant for Professor Nicholas Paulson, Summer 2025
- Research Assistant for Professor Sarah Janzen, Summer 2024
- Research Assistant for Professor Marieke Kleemans, Summer 2020 - Spring 2022

The World Bank, Social Protection and Labor

- Short-Term Consultant, Summer 2022-Spring 2023

WORK EXPERIENCE

CAF Development Bank of Latin America, Buenos Aires - Argentina
Research Officer Aug 2017 - Jun 2019

Ministry of Production, Buenos Aires - Argentina
Technical Advisor, Feb 2016 - Jul 2017

Banco Mercantil Santa Cruz, La Paz - Bolivia
Product Analyst, Apr 2014 - Feb 2015
Institute for Advanced Development Studies, La Paz - Bolivia
Junior Researcher, Jun 2013 - Nov 2013

Aru Foundation, La Paz - Bolivia
Research Assistant, Nov 2011 - Feb 2013

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Instructor:

- Behavioral Economics and Consumer Decision Making. Fall 2025

Teaching Assistant:

- Behavioral Economics and Consumer Decision Making. Spring 2025
- Global Agribusiness Management. Spring 2025
- Environmental Justice and Food Security. Fall 2024
- Applied Statistics Methods and Data Analytics. Spring 2024
- Big Data Analytics in Finance. Fall 2023
- Environmental Economics. Fall 2022 – Spring 2023
- Intermediate Microeconomic Theory. Fall 2020 – Spring 2021

Universidad de San Andrés:

Teaching Assistant:

- Introductory Economics. Fall 2016 - Fall 2018
- Labor Economics. Spring 2016

Universidad Católica Boliviana:

Teaching Assistant:

- Microeconomics. Spring 2010

PRESENTATIONS

2025: Midwest International Economic Development Conference, Bogotá Experimental Economics Conference, Illinois Economics Association

2024: World Bank Global Solutions Group - Skills Seminar, Illinois Economics Association

2016: Argentinian Association of Political Economy

2015: Argentinian Association of Political Economy

GRANTS

2015: Partnership for Economic Policy \$22,000. Evidence on the impacts of Minimum Wage on Labor Market Outcomes: The case of Bolivia (with Marcelo Claure, Alejandra Leyton and Vanessa Sanchez)

SERVICE

2025: Reviewer for the Midwest International Economic Development Conference

2023-2024: International Policy and Development Seminar Graduate Student Coordinator

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2025: American Association of Agricultural Economics. Post Conference Workshop on Agricultural Labor Economics

2015: Study Visit at Universite Laval, Quebec-Canada. Financed by Partnership for Economic Policy.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Python, R, Stata, SQL, LaTeX, QGIS

LANGUAGES

Spanish (Native), English (Fluent), Portuguese (Fluent)

REFERENCES

Sarah Janzen

Associate Professor

Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

sjanzen@illinois.edu

Marieke Kleemans

Assistant Professor

Department of Economics

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

kleemans@illinois.edu

Nicholas Paulson

Professor

Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics

University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

npaulson@illinois.edu