

CHRISTIAN VALENCIA

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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

B.A. in Economics
Universidad Católica Boliviana, 2012

WORKING PAPERS

Visa Regulations, Agricultural Employment, and Productivity (Job Market Paper)
[\[link\]](#)

The H-2A visa program provides US farms access to foreign seasonal labor but requires employers to pay a federally mandated minimum hourly wage, the Adverse Effect Wage Rate, to both foreign and domestic workers performing comparable tasks. This paper studies how increases in the H-2A visa wage affect farms' allocation of agricultural inputs. Using county-level data from the 2002–2022 USDA Census of Agriculture and a border-county pair design that compares counties across state lines, I show that higher visa wages lead farms to substitute away from labor and toward capital and materials. I find that a 1% increase in the visa wage on average leads to a 1.2% increase in machinery values, increases intermediate input use by 3.9% on the intensive margin, and expands the range of inputs used by 1.1% on the extensive margin. I find no effect on employment or payrolls. The results are consistent with labor-cost-driven mechanization and input intensification, which together contribute to higher agricultural productivity.

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

Hiring discrimination remains widespread, raising questions about how disadvantaged workers can improve labor market outcomes. We examine if employers value soft skills and whether such skills mitigate discrimination. Using a correspondence study in Malaysia, we test the effects of two soft skill signals: leadership and teamwork. We find Malay and Indian names are 11-14 percentage points less likely to be contacted, compared to Chinese names. Signaling teamwork skills reduces discrimination by 34-43%. We present a model that uses signals to distinguish statistical from taste-based discrimination. Our results are consistent with statistical discrimination, and suggest soft skills can counteract hiring discrimination.

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. [\[link\]](#)

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 Financial Decision Making. Fall 2025

Teaching Assistant:

- Behavioral Economics and Financial 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

OUTREACH ARTICLES

- Valencia, C. and N. Paulson. "The Growing Role of H-2A Workers in U.S. Agriculture." *farmdoc daily* (15):125, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 9, 2025. [\[link\]](#)
- Valencia, C. and N. Paulson. "The role of H-2A Workers in Illinois." *farmdoc daily* (15):129, Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 16, 2025. [\[link\]](#)

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 Claire, 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: Association of Agricultural and Applied 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

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Nicholas Paulson

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