August 2, 2023

Faculty Search Committee,

Dear Committee Members,

I write to apply for the Assistant Professor position in the XYZ dept. I am a doctoral student in the Agricultural and Applied Economics department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I expect to complete my degree by May 2024. My research interests encompass health, aging, welfare, human capital, social security, and social inequity in both the US and India. A major part of my research involves evaluating technological shocks on individual health and human capital outcomes, using modern economics methods in DID and MRDD and my research has been funded by agencies including NIA and SSA.

My job market paper uses the advanced difference-in-differences (DID) technique with individual-level panel data and provides causal evidence of the impact of the staggered rollout of high-speed internet (broadband) technology on mental healthamong older adults. I find that high-speed internet positively affects the mental health of older adults, primarily due to improvements in novel channels like an increase in *social connectedness* anda decline in *social isolation*. These findings contrast with the recent evidence in economics highlighting the detrimental impact of social media on the mental health of college students, primarily attributed to unfavorable *social comparisons*.

During my Ph.D., I mentored undergrad students, including students with diverse backgrounds like first-generation. I could connect with them based on being a first-gen scholar myself and being from the lowest socioeconomic background in Indian society with a lack of resources and social capital and facing discrimination throughout life. Also, I have experience teaching undergraduate guest lectures that involve health, development, agricultural technological innovations, and gender inequality. I have acquired various research funding for my research and am working on a project to submit an NIA R01 grant to study cognitive health in developing countries. I was also involved in departmental and outside departmental services, like reviewing for journals, conferences, and faculty and student hiring committees that helped me develop training for administrative services. Finally, I collaborate with scholars from interdisciplinary backgrounds, including economics, sociology, public policy, and public health.

I look forward to discussing this position with you and will be available for interviews. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

*Sincerely,*

*Vikas PD Gawai*

**Enclosed:** Curriculum vitae, job market paper, research statement, diversity statement, and teaching statement.