

# Yiwang Li

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## Research interests

College readiness and persistence, student achievement, student mobility, equity of access to education, special education, teacher labor markets, and machine learning applications in education.

## Education

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|------------|---|
| 2017- 2025 | Ph.D. in <b>Education Policy Analysis and Leadership</b> , University of California - Riverside                     |
| 2021       | M.A. in <b>Research, Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics</b> , University of California - Riverside             |
| 2012-2016  | B.S. in <b>Education and Public Policy</b> (w/ Minor in Sociology), Pennsylvania State University - University Park |

## Professional Experience

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| 2024-2025 | <i>Graduate Mentor</i> for the TRIO College Programs at UCR  |
| 2018-2025 | <i>Graduate Researcher</i> and <i>quantitative lead</i> for five major research grants (NSF, IES, and Haynes) at UCR |
| 2021-2023 | <i>Instructor</i> at UCR   |
| 2021      | <i>Researcher</i> for the Center for Social Innovation (CSI) at UCR  |
| 2018-2020 | <i>Teaching Assistant</i> at UCR   |
| 2016-2017 | <i>Data Analyst</i> for the New York City Department of Education (Office of Teacher Effectiveness)                  |
| 2015      | <i>Policy Intern</i> for the Talent Search Program – Federal TRIO Programs at Penn State                             |
| 2015-2016 | <i>Co-founder &amp; Treasurer</i> for the Student Together in Education Policy (STEP) at Penn State                  |
| 2013-2016 | <i>Supervisor</i> for the Information Technology Service at Penn State   |
| 2014-2016 | <i>Lab Assistant</i> for the IT Lab Consulting at Penn State   |
| 2012      | <i>Elementary School Teacher</i>   |

## Teaching

2023	Instructor for <b>Introduction to Education Policy</b> (EDUC023) at UCR
2022	Instructor for <b>Graduate Statistics and Programming</b> Bootcamp (mandatory for first-year PhD students with grants) at UCR
2021	Instructor for <b>Educational Research Methods</b> (EDUC118) at UCR
2018-2020	Teaching Assistant for Introduction to Education Policy (EDUC023) at UCR
2018	Teaching Practicum at UCR

## Working Papers

**Yiwang Li.** (2026). *A machine learning framework to predict early college persistence using high school data* (dissertation)

**Yiwang Li.** (2026). *A Hidden Markov Model Approach to Predict College Readiness*

**Yiwang Li, Yulie Park.** (2026). *Mapping books across curricula using representation learning*

**Yiwang Li, Cassandra Guarino, Lucrecia Santibañez, Robert Ream, Hana Kang.** (2026). *What is the impact of changing schools on the behavioral and social emotional outcomes of vulnerable students?*

Cassandra Guarino, **Yiwang Li, Lucrecia Santibañez, Hana Kang, Robert Ream.** (2026). *What is the impact of changing schools on the academic outcomes of elementary and middle school students?* (under review)

Lucrecia Santibañez, Cassandra Guarino, Robert Ream, Hana Kang, **Yiwang Li.** (2026). *The Extent of Student Mobility Among Vulnerable Groups in California* (under review)

Suneal Kolluri, Thomas M. Smith, **Yiwang Li, Robert K. Ream, Cassandra M. Guarino.** (2026). *Outliers for Equity: How Leaders Frame College Choice in California's Riverside County* (under review)

Anna Bargagliotti, Cassandra Guarino, **Yiwang Li, Robert Rovetti, Jelena Trajkovic, Christine Alvarado, Lisa Martin-Hansen.** (2025). *Equity of Access to Computer Science: Factors Impacting the Characteristics and Success of Undergraduate CS Majors*

Jelena Trajkovic, Anna Bargagliotti, Christine Alvarado, Cassandra Guarino, Robert Rovetti, **Yiwang Li.** (2025). *Gender Differences in the Pathway from Application through to Graduation in a Computer Science Major*

Jelena Trajkovic, Anna Bargagliotti, Christine Alvarado, Cassandra Guarino, Robert Rovetti, **Yiwang Li.** (2025). *How Does Repeating Major-Specific Courses Impact a Student's Pathway to a Computing Degree?*

Cassandra M. Guarino, Anna Bargagliotti, **Yiwan Li**, Hana Kang, Thomas M. Smith. (2026). *Did Mathematics Achievement Gaps for Students with Disabilities Widen after the Introduction of the Common Core and its Aligned Assessments?* (under review)

Thomas M. Smith, **Yiwan Li**, Cassandra M. Guarino, Anna Bargagliotti, Hana Kang. (2023). *Have Common Core State Standards and Aligned Assessments Narrowed the Poverty Gap in Mathematics Achievement?*

Fang Yun, **Yiwan Li**. (2022). *The Contributing Factors to Anxiety and Depression among Chinese International Students during COVID-19*

Cassandra M. Guarino, **Yiwan Li**, Anna Bargagliotti, Thomas M. Smith, Hana Kang. (2021). *Racial Achievement Disparities in Mathematics Pre and Post the Common Core-Aligned Assessments*

**Yiwan Li**. (2020). *The effect of Janus v. AFSCME on teacher pay*

## Conference Presentation

- 2025 “Gender Differences in the Pathway from Application through Graduation in a Computer Science Major”, Koli Calling - 25th International Conference on Computing Education Research, November 2025, Finland
- 2025 “Gender equity in access to computer science versus other majors”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2025, Denver
- 2023 “A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago
- 2023 “A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness”, Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2023, Denver
- 2023 “A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness”, Education Leadership Data Analytics 2023 Conference (ELDA2023), June 2023, New York (accepted, but unable to attend)
- 2023 “Mapping books across curricula using representation learning”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago
- 2023 “Have Common Core State Standards and Aligned Assessments Narrowed the Poverty Gap in Mathematics Achievement?”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago
- 2023 “Interplay of gender and self-management in mathematics performance when students are on the move”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago
- 2023 “Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago
- 2023 “Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?”, Association for Education Finance and Policy

	icity (AEFP), March 2023, Denver
2023	“Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?”, University of California Center for Research on Special Education, Disabilities, and Developmental Risk (UC SPEDDR), January 2023, Riverside
2022	“Mapping books across curricula using representation learning”, Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2022, Denver
2022	“Mapping books across curricula using representation learning”, Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE), September 2022, Arlington
2022	“Outliers for Equity: Choosing (and Not Choosing) College in California’s Inland Empire”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2022, San Diego
2022	“Racial Achievement Disparities in Mathematics Pre and Post the Common Core–Aligned Assessments”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2022, San Diego
2022	“The Impact of Moving Across Schools on Academic, Social-Emotional, and Behavioral Outcomes for Students in California”, Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2022, Denver
2022	“Impact of school mobility on vulnerable students’ academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes”, Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), November 2022, Washington DC
2021	“Variation in the Extent of School Mobility Among Vulnerable Students in California”, American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2021, Online Conference

## Research Grants Worked

2022-2025	<i>Graduate Student Researcher</i> for “Equity of Access to Computer Science: Factors Impacting the Success and Characteristics of Undergraduate CS Majors,” (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2020-2023, NSF, \$1,498,000.
2020-2024	<i>Graduate Student Researcher</i> for “Uprooting Children: The Risks and Rewards of Mobility for Vulnerable Students in California’s Public Schools,” (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2019-2023, NSF, \$694,964.
2020-2024	<i>Graduate Student Researcher</i> for “Uprooting Children: The Risks and Rewards of Mobility for Vulnerable Students in California’s Public Schools,” (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), Institute of Education Sciences, \$594,219.
2017-2022	<i>Graduate Student Researcher</i> for “Examining Disparities in Mathematics Achievement to Promote Educational Equity,” (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2018-2021, John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation, Major Research Grants, \$200,000.
2017-2022	<i>Graduate Student Researcher</i> for “Best Practices to Mitigate Remediation of Riverside County Students,” (PI: Dr. Thomas Smith), 2017-2020, John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation, Major Research Grants, \$199,895.

## Service

2023	<i>Reviewer</i> for K-12 Standards, Accountability, and Assessment (AEFP 2024, Baltimore)
2023	<i>Reviewer</i> for the Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE TS - ACM 2024, Portland)
2023	<i>Reviewer</i> for Division H - Section 1: Applied Research in Schools (AERA 2024, Philadelphia)
2023	<i>Reviewer &amp; Subcommittee</i> for (inaugural) SOE Graduate Research Conference (SOE GRC 2023, Riverside)
2023	<i>Chair</i> for Division L - Section 9: Policy Implementation and Going to Scale (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2023	<i>Chair</i> for Division L - Section 5: Testing, Accountability and Data Use (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2023	<i>Chair</i> for SIG-Data-Driven Decision Making in Education (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022	<i>Chair</i> for the Session 2.09 - New methods to improve policy and policy decision making (AEFP 2022, Denver)
2022	<i>Reviewer</i> for the Division L - Section 9: Policy Implementation and Going to Scale (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022	<i>Reviewer</i> for the SIG-Data-Driven Decision Making in Education (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022	<i>Reviewer</i> for the Division H - Section 1: Applied Research in Schools (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022	<i>Reviewer</i> for the Division H - Section 2: Program Evaluation in Schools (AERA 2023, Chicago)

## Awards

2025	Humanities Graduate Student Research (GSR) Grant from Center for Ideas and Society (\$1,000)
2025	Research Fund from the EDPAL program at UCR School of Education (\$1,500)
2022-2025	Multiple Conference Travel Grants from UCRSOE & GSA (\$1,500+)
2023	AERA Travel Award from the Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) in Education SIG
2021	Selected as graduate representative for the Gates Notes Deep Dive at the Gates Foundation
2017-2021	Dean's Distinguished Fellowship at UCR
2015-2016	Dean's List at PSU

## Quantitative Skills

*Statistical Software:* Stata, Python, R

*Statistical Methods:* General and Generalized Linear Models, Multilevel Modeling, Longitudinal Analysis, Causal Inference (Applied Econometrics), Predictive (ML) Modeling, Markov Models

*Other Statistics Training:* Probability Theory, Statistical Inference, Advanced Statistical Methods

*Other Tools:* Tableau, SPSS, SAS, QGIS, LaTeX, Git, PostgreSQL, HTML

*Libraries:* Keras, Scikit-learn, PyTorch, Tensorflow, Matplotlib, Tidyverse

## Professional Memberships

The American Educational Research Association (AERA)

The Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)

The Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE)

Last updated: December 10, 2025