

**Anjali Pai**  
ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

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**GRADUATE EDUCATION**

PhD Candidate in Economics, University of California San Diego (Expected Completion: June 2024)

Committee: Julian Betts (Chair), Prashant Bharadwaj, Sally Sadoff, Itzik Fadlon

MA Economics, University of California San Diego, 2020

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**REFERENCES**

**Julian Betts**

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**UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION**

BA Economics, Williams College, Cum Laude, 2019

BA Computer Science, Williams College, Cum Laude, 2019

Visiting Student, University of Oxford - Exeter College, 2017 - 2018

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**FIELDS OF INTEREST**

Primary Fields: Education Economics, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Secondary Fields: Behavioral Economics

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**RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD**

Research Assistant, Julian Betts (UC San Diego) 2023 (Summer)

- **Project:** Examining COVID Recovery in California
- **Contributions:** Cleaned, processed, and validated 20 years of survey data from the California Healthy Kids Survey; constructed indices of school climate and socioemotional well-being based on existing reports; documented data differences across years

- Research Assistant, Prashant Bharadwaj & David Arnold (UC San Diego) 2022 (Summer)
- **Project:** Assessing the Collectability of Child Support Arrears in California
  - **Contributions:** Wrote two reports for the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS); evaluated the implementation of recommendations issued in a previous collectability study (Report 1); designed, conducted, and analyzed the results from a statewide survey of child support agencies with the goal of assessing local heterogeneity in the impacts of recent child support policies (Report 2)
- Research Assistant, Sally Sadoff (UC San Diego) 2021-2022 (Two Terms)
- **Project:** Examining Discrimination in Paycheck Protection Program Lending during COVID-19
  - **Contributions:** Designed a set of maps (in QGIS and R) to visualize inequality in lending and to assess subsequent labor market implications
- Research Assistant, Julian Betts (UC San Diego) 2020 – 2021 (Two Summers)
- **Project:** The effect of school choice programs on students' education and labor market outcomes
  - **Contributions:** Wrote programs to validate and analyze over 10 years of school choice lotteries
- Research Assistant, Matthew Gibson (Williams College) 2018 (Summer)
- **Project:** The effect of time spent watching television on labor productivity
  - **Contributions:** Scraped data to construct an instrument for television watching and assess its validity

## **JOB MARKET PAPER**

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“The Effect of School-Based Health Care on Adolescent Behavior and Mental Health”

In the past decade, policymakers have increasingly begun to consider School-Based Health Centers (full-service health clinics located in school buildings) as potential means of addressing the worsening adolescent mental health crisis. However, there is little causal evidence on the impacts of these health centers on mental health and student behavior. This paper looks at the effect of access to School-Based Health Centers on suspensions and dropouts, two metrics that may be strong proxies for adolescent mental health status. First, using data from a statewide survey on school climate and socioemotional well-being I provide descriptive evidence that worse reported mental health and school climate are positively correlated with higher suspension rates but not necessarily with higher dropout rates. Next, I look at the effect of access to a school-based health center using a difference-in-differences analysis that leverages the timing of health center openings in California and a propensity-score matched control group. The opening of a new school-based health center decreases school-level suspension rates by around 1.1 percentage points (27% of the baseline suspension rate) within 3 years of the opening when compared to matched schools. A heterogeneity analysis reveals that these effects are driven by decreases in suspensions from “disruptive behavior”, rather than weapon possession, violence, or drug use. I find no effect on dropout rates, suggesting that the decline in suspensions is unlikely to be caused by the crowd-out of delinquent behavior by an increase in dropouts. These results suggest that school-based health centers warrant further consideration as an effective means of addressing adolescent mental health.

## **RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

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“What You Don't Know Might Deter You: The Effect of Information Provision on Minority Retention in Undergraduate Economics”

I run two waves of a large-scale randomized controlled trial to test whether a low-touch information intervention in an undergraduate Principles of Microeconomics course can help overcome barriers to entry in Economics for underrepresented minority (URM) students. I find that providing students with information about potential careers, income, research topics, and diversity in the field of Economics increases the likelihood of enrolling in a subsequent Economics course for URM students by around 12.3 percentage points and that the information induces lower-performing students to enroll. I also find that in response to the four categories of information provided, URM students primarily update their beliefs regarding the types of research topics Economists study.

These results suggest that information, (especially about the broad scope of the Economics field), may have the potential to overcome barriers imposed by low course-performance in introductory Economics courses.

“Gender Differences in College Major Choice and Switching Behavior: An Empirical Assessment” (with Tara Sullivan)

This paper aims to empirically assess the determinants of major switching in and out of STEM fields, and the way in which those determinants may differ by gender. We use the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative, longitudinal survey of first-time beginning students at postsecondary institutions in the U.S. Preliminary analysis from Sullivan’s dissertation reveals that holding GPA constant, women are more likely to switch out of STEM majors than men and that females who switch out of STEM majors often have higher overall GPAs than other students in their major. Our ongoing work aims to identify whether GPA signals are a causal determinant of major switching for women in STEM majors.

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### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

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2023 (One Term)	Teaching Assistant	Microeconomics C, Malte Lammert
2021-2023 (Five Terms)	Teaching Assistant	Data Analytics for Social Sciences, David Arnold
2021-2022 (Two Terms)	Teaching Assistant	Public Policy, Yuan Tang
2022 (One Term)	Teaching Assistant	Economics of Discrimination, Prashant Bharadwaj
2020 (One Term)	Teaching Assistant	Economics of Education, Julian Betts

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### **FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS**

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Walter Heller Memorial Prize for Best Third Year Paper (2022, “What You Don't Know Might Deter You”)  
Diversity in Economics Research Fellowship (2020, “What You Don't Know Might Deter You”)

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### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

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“What You Don't Know Might Deter You”: All California Labor Economics Conference (poster), 2022.

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### **LEADERSHIP**

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2020 - 2023	Program Director	Economics Dept. Incoming PhD Mentorship Program
2020 - 2023	Executive Board Member	UC San Diego PhD Women in Economics Organization
2020 - 2022	Economics Representative	UC San Diego Graduate and Professional Student Assoc.

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### **OTHER INFORMATION**

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Citizenship: U.S. Citizen

Coding Languages/Software: Stata, R, QGIS, Python, Excel, LaTeX

Other Instruction, Leadership, and Mentorship:

- Williams College: Economic Students Advisory Council (Director of Diversity, 2018-2019); Representing Identities of Students in Economics (Leader, 2018-2019); Leaders in Tech: Computer Science Mentorship Program (Co-Founder, 2017-2018); Williams Elementary Outreach (Computer Science Instructor, 2016-2019)
- Other: ID Tech Summer Camps (Computer Science Instructor, 2017)