CHRISTIAN VALENCIA

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ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Postdoctoral Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), 2026-2027

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 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 [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.

Can a Soft Skill Signal Mitigate Hiring Discrimination? Evidence from Malaysia
(with Sarah Janzen, Yashodhan Ghorpade and Amanina A. Rahman) [link]. *Submitted*

Hiring discrimination remains widespread, raising the question of how disadvantaged workers can improve their labor-market outcomes. Using a correspondence study in Malaysia, we test whether employers value two soft skills, leadership and teamwork, and whether signaling them mitigates discrimination. Applications with Malay and Indian names are 11–14 percentage points less likely to be contacted than those with Chinese names; we find no gender-based discrimination. Signaling teamwork reduces ethnic discrimination by 34–43%, while leadership has no effect. We develop a model using skill

signals to distinguish taste-based from statistical discrimination. Our results indicate soft skills can counteract statistical discrimination.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer pressure: Experimental Evidence from Restroom Behavior (with B. Cardinale Lagomarsino, M. Gutman, L. Freira, M. Lanzalot, 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:

- Intermediate Applied Microeconomics. Spring 2026
- 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:
- Microeconomic Theory. 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

2026: AAEA Annual Meeting, Jobs and Development (Virtual), APPAM Fall Conference (Scheduled), Southern Economic Association (Scheduled)
2025: Midwest International Economic Development Conference, Bogotá Experimental Economics Conference, Illinois Economics Association
2024: World Bank Global Solutions Group - Skills Seminar, Illinois Economics Association

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

2025: Dunsing Fellowship, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
2019: Graduate Fellowship, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
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

COMPUTER SKILLS

Python, R, Stata, SQL, LaTeX, QGIS, AWS, Git

LANGUAGES

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

REFERENCES

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Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
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Utrecht School of Economics
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