

Winnie Yee

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Education

University of California, Irvine

2025 – Present

Ph.D. in Education

M.A. in Economics

Fields: Higher Education Policy; Economics of Crime; Social Mobility

University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy

2020 – 2021

M.A. in Public Policy with Certificate in Research Methods

Simmons College

2014 – 2018

B.A. in Economics. Minor: Public Policy Studies

Experience

Library of Congress - Congressional Research Service

2026

Fellow in Education and Labor Section in Domestic Social Policy Division

- Support the CRS Education and Labor section manager across the division's higher education portfolio.
- Author a CRS report on a higher education research topic of congressional interest, synthesizing the academic literature and federal data into nonpartisan analysis for Members of Congress and their staff.

RAND Corporation

2025

Summer Associate in Behavioral and Policy Sciences Division (under Jeff Wenger and Melanie Zaber)

- Conducted research on workforce demographic shifts and technological innovation, contributing to the Anticipatory Occupational Greying from Technology project.

The Brookings Institution

2021

Research Intern in Economic Studies at The Hamilton Project (under Wendy Edelberg and Lauren Bauer)

- Used the Bureau of Labor Statistics' American Time Use Survey to study the decline in labor force participation among mothers following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Researched COVID-19's impact on young adults and their decision to enroll in school relative to previous recessions using IPUMS Current Population Survey (CPS) data.
- Forecasted the impact of various community eligibility provision thresholds on food insecurity.

University of Chicago

2021

Graduate Research Assistant to Professors Dan Black and Damon Jones

- Conducted research on the migration of households by industry and occupation using the American Community Survey (ACS) dataset (Dan Black).
- Replicated results and documented baseline characteristics and outcomes reported to the National Institutes of Health for a workplace wellness randomized controlled trial (Damon Jones).

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

2018 – 2020

Research Associate in Applied Microeconomics and Macroeconomics Section

- Served as the main research associate updating and analyzing micro and macroeconomic datasets including the CPS, ACS, and Blue Chip.
- Produced forecasts leading up to the Federal Open Market Committee and Discount Rate Recommendation, and fact-checked speeches by Mary Daly, Sylvain Leduc, and Rob Valletta.
- Analyzed the slope of the Phillips Curve over time using city-level BEA data, and estimated labor quality growth using the ACS and CPS.

Working Papers

Does Management Matter? Evidence from Indigent Defense in Texas

with Kory Fenstemacher, Matthew Freedman, and Emily Owens

The majority of felony cases in the United States involve indigent clients represented by publicly financed attorneys. In this paper, we examine the effects of efforts to improve representation for economically disadvantaged defendants through the adoption of managed indigent defense offices (MIDs) in the state of Texas. MIDs impose a layer of oversight and accountability on attorneys providing indigent defense services. Taking advantage of the staggered roll-out of MIDs across Texas counties and newly compiled administrative arrest and prison records, we show that management can reduce conviction rates, with impacts growing over time. Simultaneous changes in observed sentences suggest that directly employed lawyers are less likely to enter guilty pleas for low-level offenses, while effective supervision of contracted lawyers may induce more effort in serious cases.

Does Affordability Come at a Cost? Evidence on Textbook Cost Reduction and Student Academic Outcomes

with Sabrina Solanki, Di Xu, and Richard Arum

Rising textbook costs represent an increasingly visible component of college affordability, which has prompted many states and institutions to adopt policies that expand the use of zero-textbook-cost (ZTC) course materials. While these initiatives aim to reduce financial barriers to college attendance, research on the effectiveness of large-scale implementation of these policies has been inadequate and concerns remain that replacing commercial textbooks with alternative materials could affect instructional quality and student learning outcomes. This study examines the academic consequences of a systemwide ZTC initiative in the California Community Colleges system. Using administrative data and a two-way fixed effects design that compares students' outcomes across ZTC and non-ZTC sections of the same course, we estimate the relationship between exposure to zero-cost instructional materials and students' academic outcomes. We find that enrollment in ZTC sections is associated with modest improvements in course grades and pass rates, with no evidence of weaker performance in subsequent coursework. These findings suggest that large-scale textbook affordability reforms have the potential to reduce costs without compromising academic outcomes.

Policy Publications

- **Has COVID disrupted the postsecondary pipeline?** Lauren Bauer, Veronica Clevenstine, Wendy Edelberg, Elisabeth Raczek and Winnie Yee. Up Front. The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. October 14, 2021.
- **Time Waited for No Mom in 2020** Lauren Bauer, Sara Estep, and Winnie Yee. Up Front. The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. July 22, 2021.
- **Adjusting the Unemployment Thermometer** Regis Barnichon and Winnie Yee. FRBSF Economic Letter. September 3, 2020.
- **Wringing the Overoptimism from FOMC Growth Forecasts** Kevin Lansing and Winnie Yee. FRBSF Economic Letter. February 10, 2020.

Conference Presentations

Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Conference	2026
<i>Invited sole paper presenter (Reducing the Cost of College: Exploring Student Outcomes Session)</i>	
London School of Economics and Political Science	2024
<i>Invited sole paper presenter (Does Management Matter? Evidence from Indigent Defense in Texas)</i>	

Teaching Experience

University of California, Irvine	2023 – 2024
<i>Teaching Assistant in Economics Department</i>	
• Applied Econometrics I, Global Economy, Basic Economics II	

Skills

Programming: Stata, R, Python, Latex, GitHub, Microsoft Office
Language: English, Cantonese
Data Authorizations: Special Sworn Status

Awards, Grants, and Fellowships

Innovation Policy Lab Fellowship	2025
Donald L. Basch Award in Public Policy, Simmons College	2018
President's Recognition Award, Simmons College	2018

Service

California Cradle-to-Career, Data and Tools Advisory Board Member	2025 – Present
Center for Population, Inequality and Policy, Graduate Student Affiliate	2025 – Present
Harris Student Government, Academic Committee MACRM Representative	2021 – 2022
Fed Ambassador, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco	2019 – 2020
Fellow, Asian-American Women's Political Initiative	2018

Citizenship

United States, New Zealand