

# JACOB LIGHT

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## EDUCATION

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### Stanford University

Ph.D. in Economics

2018 - 2024 (*Expected*)

- Fields: Labor and Public Economics
- Dissertation: Essays in the Economics of Education

### University of Michigan

Bachelor of Science, Mathematics and Economics (Highest Honors)

2011 - 2015

- Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa (inducted as a junior)

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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Prof. Caroline Hoxby (Primary)  
Economics Department, Stanford University  
(650) 723-9678  
choxby@stanford.edu

Prof. Nick Bloom  
Economics Department, Stanford University  
(650) 725-7836  
nbloom@stanford.edu

Prof. Eric Hanushek  
Hoover Institution, Stanford University  
(650) 736-0942  
hanushek@stanford.edu

Prof. Petra Persson  
Economics Department, Stanford University  
(650) 723-4116  
perssonp@stanford.edu

## PUBLISHED WORK

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**SES-Achievement Gaps in Historical Perspective**, (with Eric Hanushek, Paul Peterson, Laura Talpey, and Ludger Woessmann), Fall 2022, *Education Finance and Policy*

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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### Student demand and the supply of college courses [Job Market Paper]

Universities today face criticism for being resistant to change, raising concerns about their adaptability in an era of rapid technological advancements. In this study, I create a unique dataset sourced from course catalogs of over 450 US universities spanning two decades (2000-2022). My findings reveal marked inertia in course supply, both in terms of quantity and content. This inertia is especially pronounced in fields experiencing declining demand, and is more pronounced at public universities and those with a higher prevalence of tenured faculty. Using Natural Language Processing, I further show that while the content of existing courses remains largely unchanged after a course is created, newly-created courses gradually incorporate topics related to current events and job skills into the curriculum. Notably, selective institutions focus on broader societal issues, whereas less selective institutions emphasize job-relevant skills. Overall, my results highlight the influence of supply-side factors on universities' adaptability to the rapidly evolving technological landscape.

## **Anatomy of labor market distress** (with Eric Hanushek, Simon Janssen, and Lisa Simon)

Earnings losses after mass layoffs are highly skewed: a small number of workers experience catastrophic losses, while most workers recover quickly. This paper documents the heterogeneity in earnings losses after mass layoffs and the adjustments driving these differences. We study workers from firms in West Germany that closed between 2000-2005. For each laid-off worker, we create a synthetic control from similar workers with matching earnings trajectories who weren't laid off during that period. Which workers experience the greatest losses is not a priori predictable based on fixed characteristics, but is associated with post-layoff adaptability, like switching professions or relocating. Consequently, pre-layoff targeted policies to assist these workers might not be as effective as post-layoff interventions.

## **The importance of non-major courses in predicting college students' post-graduation outcomes** (with Merrill Warnick)

## **Instructor value-added in higher education** (with Merrill Warnick)

## **The labor and education effects of employer-sponsored higher education benefits** (with Nick Gebbia)

## **PRESENTATIONS**

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**2023:** All-California Labor Economics Conference, CSQIEP Virtual Seminar, Stanford Applied Economics Workshop

**2022:** AERA Annual Meeting, Stanford Applied Economics Workshop

## **GRANTS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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<b>Leonard W. Ely and Shirley R. Ely Graduate Student Fellowship</b>	<i>2023</i>
<b>Stanford IRiSS Dissertation Fellowship \$11,000</b>	<i>2023</i>
<b>NAEd/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship Semifinalist and Alternate</b>	<i>2023</i>
<b>Stanford H&amp;S Graduate Research Opportunities Grant</b> (with Merrill Warnick) \$5,000	<i>2023</i>
<b>George Shultz Graduate Research Fellowship</b> (with Merrill Warnick) \$3,000	<i>2022</i>
<b>Patricia Liu McKenna and Kenneth McKenna Graduate Fellowship</b>	<i>2021-22</i>
<b>Stanford Outstanding Teaching Award</b>	<i>Spring 2021</i>
<b>George Shultz Graduate Research Fellowship \$12,500</b>	<i>2021</i>
<b>Stanford Outstanding Teaching Award</b>	<i>Winter 2021</i>
<b>Stanford IRiSS Research Data Grant \$2,000</b>	<i>2020</i>
<b>Stanford IRiSS Center for Computational Social Science Grant \$1,500</b>	<i>2020</i>
<b>Stanford Economics First-Year Ph.D. Fellowship</b>	<i>2018</i>
<b>NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, Honorable Mention</b>	<i>2018</i>
<b>Ferrando Honors Prize</b> , University of Michigan Economics Department	<i>2015</i>
<b>Sims Honors Scholarship</b> , University of Michigan Economics Department	<i>2015</i>
<b>Gerald Ford Public Service Prize</b> , University of Michigan	<i>2015</i>
<b>Outstanding Achievement in Math</b> , University of Michigan Math Department	<i>2015</i>

## **TEACHING AND RESEARCH ASSISTANCE**

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**ECON 43: Introduction to Financial Decision-Making** *Spring 2021*

Outstanding TA Award

**ECON 144: Family and Society** *Winter 2021*

Outstanding TA Award

**ECON 1: Principles of Economics** *Fall 2020*

**Research Assistant for Professor Caroline Hoxby** *2019 - 2020*

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**Research Engineering Intern - Core Data Science, Meta** *2021*  
Menlo Park, CA  
**Senior Research Analyst, The Brattle Group** *2015 - 2018*  
Washington, DC

## SERVICE

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**Advanced Tax Preparer**, IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance *2015 - 2021*  
**President**, Stanford Graduate LGBTQ+ Affinity Group (GradQ) *2019 - 2022*  
**Applied Economics Workshop Coordinator**, Stanford Economics Department *2020 - 2022*  
**Social Chair, Admitted Student Day Liaison**, Stanford Economics Department *2019 - 2020*

## CITIZENSHIP

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United States