Amy Huang

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Citizenship: Canadian

Research Interests: Economics of Education, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Toronto — 2028 (Expected)
Committee: Dwayne Benjamin (supervisor), Román Zárate, Elizabeth Dhuey

M.A in Economics, University of Toronto — 2022

B.Com in Finance & Economics, University of Toronto — 2021

Research

The Grade Recession: Grade Inflation in Secondary Education

The Impact of Merit-Based Scholarships on Student Outcomes: Evidence from Ontario *(R&R at Economics of Education Review)*

Persevere or Pivot? The Causal Impact of Grade Shocks on the College Major Choice with Annabel Thornton

Awards and Grants

Ontario Graduate Scholarship ($10,000)	2025
Royal Bank Graduate Fellowship In Public And Economic Policy ($15,000)	2024
University of Toronto Doctoral Fellowship ($15,000 × 4)	2022 - 2026
Department of Economics Graduate Program Award ($1,000 × 2)	2022, 2024
University of Toronto Scholar ($7,500)	2017

Professional Experience

Sessional Lecturer — 2025

- ECO 101: Principles of Microeconomics

Head Teaching Assistant — 2023 - present

- ECO 101: Principles of Microeconomics
- ECO 102: Principles of Macroeconomics

Teaching Assistant 2021 - present

- ECO 101: Principles of Microeconomics
- ECO 102: Principles of Macroeconomics
- ECO 105: Principles of Economics for Non-Specialists
- ECO 220: Introduction to Data Analysis and Applied Econometrics
- ECO 344: Labour Economics and Market Frictions
- ECO 370: The Economics of Organizations
- PPG 1002: Microeconomics for Policy Analysis (Master's level)

Research Assistant 2019 - present

- Dwayne Benjamin: Data cleaning, descriptive statistics, model estimation
- Michael Baker: Data cleaning, model estimation, report writing
- Robert Gazzale: Data cleaning, model creation and estimation
- Eva Vivalt: Data cleaning, code editing
- Jeffrey Burrow: Descriptive statistics, literature reviews, report writing

Conference Presentations

International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education (IWAEE) 2026
University of Toronto Microeconomics Brown Bag (Toronto) 2024

Academic Service

Co-President, Graduate Economics Union 2024 - 2025
President, University of Toronto Women in Economics Group 2023 - 2025

Languages

English (native), Mandarin (conversational)
Programming: Stata, R, Python, MATLAB, LaTeX

References

Dwayne Benjamin
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Abstracts

The Impact of Merit-Based Scholarships on Student Outcomes: Evidence from Ontario

(Second Year Paper)

Merit-based scholarships are widely used by post-secondary institutions to attract high-achieving students, yet causal evidence on their effectiveness remains mixed. This paper employs a fuzzy regression discontinuity design that exploits undisclosed high school grade cutoffs to evaluate a lump-sum merit-based entrance scholarship at the University of Toronto for domestic undergraduates. The estimates indicate a null average effect on yield that masks pronounced heterogeneity: the scholarship substantially raises enrolment among students from lower-income neighbourhoods and who live farther away from the University. Descriptive estimates for first-year GPA and graduation are null, which suggests that the scholarship does not substantially improve the academic quality of enrollees.

Persevere or Pivot? The Causal Impact of Grade Shocks on the College Major Choice

(with Annabel Thornton)

Using variation in exam scheduling, we estimate the causal effect of grade shocks on college major choice. Writing two exams in quick succession reduces performance on the latter by 1.05 percentage points and subsequently reduces the likelihood of majoring and graduating in that subject area by 6% and 9%, respectively. We find that a 1 percentage point drop in course grade raises the probability of graduating in a lower-earning subject area by 24%. These findings underscore the sensitivity of long-term human capital decisions to relatively minor academic disruptions.