Nancy Dhameja

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Search Committee
Department of Economics
Williams College

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am applying for the open-rank position in Economics at Williams College. I am a Ph.D. candidate in Economics at Binghamton University and expect to complete my degree in May 2027. My research examines how local conditions and information affect housing markets, health, and household decisions. My work also includes an econometrics article published in *Economics Letters* and a paper on agent-based modeling with a revise-and-resubmit decision at the *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation*.

At Binghamton, I designed and taught Economics of Poverty and Discrimination as the sole instructor. Students examined how poverty is measured, how education and labor markets affect earnings, and how economists explain discrimination. For their final projects, they evaluated a policy in a low-income state, asking whom it reached and why its outcomes differed from its aims. I have also served as a teaching assistant for ten courses, including Ph.D. econometrics and forecasting in R. My primary goal is for students to understand what they learn not memorize it, so I ask them to identify a model's assumptions, explain why the result holds, and work out what changes when those assumptions fail. I also created EconLab, an open-access platform of interactive simulations for statistics and causal inference. I am prepared to teach principles of microeconomics and macroeconomics, intermediate microeconomics and macroeconomics, advanced macroeconomics, money and banking, statistics, and econometrics, and electives in urban and real estate economics, behavioral economics, financial economics, labor economics, economics of education, the economics of poverty and discrimination, causal inference, business statistics, and data analysis in R, Python, and SQL.

I work to make economics accessible to students who arrive with different preparation and backgrounds. My own path, from engineering and fifteen years in industry across India and Singapore to a U.S. Ph.D., has shown me how much clear expectations and early support matter. As a teaching assistant for a course of about seventy students, I met individually with each student twice during the semester, which helped me identify students who were quietly struggling and support them before they fell behind. I grade homework on effort and engagement instead of correctness, so that students can practice and make mistakes without penalty, while exams and projects measure mastery. I end each session with a concrete study strategy, such as spacing practice or attempting a problem before consulting the solution, since many students were never taught how to study.

In my job market paper, *When Does Crime Enter House Prices? Evidence from Chicago*, I study the effects of crime on home prices. Linking 5.6 million police incidents to Chicago listings and sales, I find sale-price discounts across several time windows before a sale for only four of twenty-two offenses: homicide, burglary, narcotics, and vandalism. I argue that limited information may help explain this pattern. Price effects are hyperlocal even though crime predicts future incidents over greater distances,

and discounts vary with where on a property an incident occurs. Discounts also appear at closing not in asking prices. Next, I plan to use the introduction and removal of crime maps on real estate platforms to test how access to crime information affects housing prices.

My other research studies local policy and community outcomes. With coauthors, I examine whether Italy's Superbonus, a renovation subsidy program with transferable tax credits, encouraged anomalous billing by construction firms. In another project, I study whether exposure to dollar stores affects obesity, using geocoded SNAP-authorized retailers and local restrictions on new dollar stores. With David Slichter, I study whether diversity-statement requirements in faculty hiring affect the composition of new hires and subsequent graduates.

My research also engages directly with AI. As part of a large research team, I contributed to a consortium study in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* comparing AI-assisted, AI-led, and human-only teams in assessing the reproducibility of social science research. With coauthors, I am using large language models to add social context to the Schelling segregation model, and I develop Monte Carlo tests for validating agent-based models (revise-and-resubmit at *JASSS*). My *Economics Letters* article compares causal forests with penalized splines for estimating heterogeneous treatment effects.

Before my Ph.D., I earned an Executive MBA in Finance and worked for about fifteen years in industry in India and Singapore, in software engineering, business analysis, and project management at firms including Accenture and Jones Lang LaSalle. At Jones Lang LaSalle, I rebuilt revenue and sales processes as web tools and trained more than 150 users across 16 countries.

I would welcome the chance to join the Department of Economics at Williams College, to teach in the undergraduate program and contribute empirical and policy-evaluation training to the Master's in Policy Economics at the Center for Development Economics, and to work with Williams's broadly diverse students.

Thank you for considering my application. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nency Dhameja