Selection Committee
Innovation Research Boot Camp
National Bureau of Economic Research

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to apply for the NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp. I am a Ph.D. candidate in Economics at the University of California, Merced, expecting to receive my doctorate in May 2027. My research lies at the intersection of labor economics and innovation, examining how worker mobility reshapes the production and diffusion of innovative activity within firms.

My job market paper examines how labor supply shocks arising from mass layoffs generate innovation spillovers among incumbent workers in firms that hire displaced inventors. Using a novel dataset linking LinkedIn employment histories to USPTO patent records, I track inventor mobility alongside patenting and citation outcomes. The paper demonstrates how labor reallocation reorganizes the internal production and distribution of innovative effort within firms.

While my empirical work focuses on innovation outcomes, my formal training has been primarily in labor economics and applied microeconomics. I am therefore particularly interested in strengthening my grounding in core innovation frameworks, including knowledge spillovers, idea production, organizational design, and innovation policy.

The Innovation Research Boot Camp offers an ideal opportunity to build this foundation and to engage more directly with frontier research in the field, particularly through its integration with the NBER Summer Institute Innovation Policy meeting. Looking ahead, I plan to extend this research to examine how worker mobility shapes entrepreneurial pathways and the direction of technological change.

For reference, my recommender is:
– Professor Greg Wright (UC Merced), gwright4@ucmerced.edu

I have attached my curriculum vitae and essay. Thank you for your consideration. I would be grateful for the opportunity to participate in the program and to further develop my research within the NBER innovation community.

Sincerely,
Soo Yeon Kim
Ph.D. Candidate, Economics
University of California, Merced
skim418@ucmerced.edu

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skim418@ucmerced.edu

EDUCATION

University of California, Merced May 2027 (Expected)
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

University at Albany - State University of New York Dec 2018
M.A. in Economics

University at Albany - State University of New York Dec 2016
B.A. in Economics, *Summa Cum Laude*
B.S. in Business Administration, *Summa Cum Laude*

EMPLOYMENT

Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI), Naju, Republic of Korea 2019 – 2021
Researcher, Department of Agricultural Outlook
– Operated early warning models for the international grain market (*signal approach, ordered probit, artificial neural networks*) to predict supply-demand imbalances and support policy responses
– Conducted forecasting and market analysis of overseas fruit and livestock sectors, including import volumes and domestic price effects
– Authored government reports analyzing the potential impacts of avian influenza on poultry supply and domestic prices, offering policy recommendations to stabilize livestock imports and markets

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics

WORK IN PROGRESS

Creative Destruction? Mass Layoffs and Innovation Spillovers (Job Market Paper)

New Innovation Horizons: When Employees Become Entrepreneurs, with Christian Fons-Rosen and Greg C. Wright

Ranking Firms Using Revealed Preference, with Greg C. Wright and Yuwei Jiang

FELLOWSHIPS and AWARDS

Ellis Perry Fellowship, University of California, Merced 2026
* One-semester full funding fellowship awarded for research merit.

Best TA Award, University of California, Merced 2023, 2025
* Awarded annually to top graduate teaching assistants in recognition of exceptional classroom instruction

Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Travel Grant 2025

The Center for Analytic Political Engagement GSR Award 2024, 2025

Research Data Award, University of California, Merced 2025

Summer Research Fellowship, University of California, Merced 2025

Research Award, University of California, Merced 2024, 2025

Professional Development Award, University of California, Merced 2024

Third-year Paper Award, University of California, Merced 2023

* Awarded to the most outstanding third-year dissertation proposal in recognition of scholarly promise and originality

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant (University of California, Merced) Summer 2022 – 2025
Collaborated with Greg C. Wright and Christian Fons-Rosen

- Constructed longitudinal datasets of U.S. inventors by cleaning and merging large-scale LinkedIn employment histories with USPTO patent records, and developing pipelines to standardize company names, inventor names, and patent identifiers
- Conducted econometric analyses to examine the effects of entrepreneurship and firm dynamics on innovation outcomes

CONFERENCES/INSTITUTIONAL PRESENTATIONS

"*Creative Destruction? Mass Layoffs and Innovation Spillovers*"

- Midwest Economics Association (MEA) Annual Meeting — Mar. 2026
- American Economic Association (AEA) Annual Meeting — Jan. 2026
- Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM) Research Conference — Nov. 2025
- UC Merced — Oct. 2025
- California State University, Fresno — Sep. 2025

"*The Consequences of Entrepreneurial Firm Founding on Innovation*"

- UC Merced — Oct. 2025
- Meeting of Economists in Entrepreneurship and Innovation — May 2025

REFEREED JOURNALS

Review of World Economics

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Department of Economics and Business Management, University of California, Merced

- **Instructor of Record**
  - SPRK 001: Economics of Innovation — Summer 2025
- **Guest Lecturer**
  - ECON 101: Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory — Fall 2025
  - ECON 100: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory — Spring, Fall 2024
- **Teaching Assistant**
  - ECON 101: Intermediate Macroeconomic Theory — Spring 2022, 2023, 2025; Fall 2022, 2023, 2025
  - ECON 100: Intermediate Microeconomic Theory — Spring, Fall 2024
  - ECON 110: Econometrics — Fall 2021

PEDAGOGICAL TRAINING

Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning, University of California, Merced

- Certificate in Principles of Pedagogy — Fall 2025
  (one-semester research-based and inclusive teaching series)
- Certificate in Fundamentals of Teaching — Fall 2021
  (one-week training in inclusive teaching)

MENTORSHIP

Albert Chen (undergraduate student at UC Merced) Spring 2024 – Present

- Guided data cleaning, company name standardization, and automation pipelines using R and LLM-based tools
- Supported development of independent research skills, leading to a paper targeted for journal submission in Spring 2026.
- Provided academic and career advising, including preparation for graduate school applications and professional development

SKILLS

- Statistical Analysis Suites: R (RStudio, R Markdown, tidyverse, data visualization, reproducible reporting; proficient), STATA (econometric modeling; proficient), SAS (data management and statistical analysis; proficient)

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Ph.D. Coursework

Microeconomic Theory I
Microeconomic Theory II
Advanced Macro/Growth
Advanced Labor Economics I
Economics and Data Science
Quantitative Analysis of Political Data
Advanced Applied Research Methods
Metrics III: Applied Methods
Econometrics II
Methods in Economic History
Political Economy
Immigration Economics & Policy

M.A. Coursework

Microeconomics
Macroeconomics
Quantitative Methods I
Quantitative Methods II
Mathematics for Economists
Economic Surveys & Forecasting
Special Topics in Economics (Econometrics)
Game Theory
Economics for Global Affairs

Essay
Soo Yeon Kim

My research examines how labor supply shock reshapes the production and diffusion of innovation. I focus on high-skilled worker reallocation as a mechanism through which knowledge moves across firms, recombines within organizations, and generates new innovative activity. More broadly, my work seeks to connect labor market dynamics to the internal organization and output of innovation.

My job market paper examines how labor supply shocks generate innovation spillovers within firms that hire displaced inventors. Using a newly constructed dataset linking LinkedIn employment histories to USPTO patent records, I track inventor mobility alongside patenting and citation outcomes. The paper departs from prior work by examining how displaced inventors affect incumbent coworkers rather than focusing solely on displaced workers themselves.

I find that firms hiring displaced inventors experience significant increases in incumbent innovation, with gains concentrated among lower-productivity incumbents of approximately 30 to 40 percent. These patterns point to mechanisms rooted in knowledge recombination, expanded collaboration opportunities, and the reorganization of innovative effort within firms. The findings suggest that labor reallocation shocks do not simply change the overall level of innovation produced by firms; rather, they reshape who produces innovation and how ideas are generated.

While my research is firmly situated within the economics of innovation, my formal graduate training has been primarily in labor economics and applied microeconomics. As a result, my engagement with innovation theory, including models of idea production, superstar spillovers, organizational innovation, and innovation policy, has developed largely through self-directed learning. Developing deeper grounding in these frameworks is essential both for interpreting my empirical findings and for advancing my broader research agenda.

The NBER Innovation Research Boot Camp provides an unparalleled opportunity to build this foundation. Its focus on knowledge spillovers, the production function of ideas, organizational design, and innovation policy directly aligns with the conceptual mechanisms underlying my work. Training in these areas would sharpen how I model knowledge diffusion, interpret heterogeneous spillover effects, and connect worker mobility to broader innovation systems.

Equally valuable is the program's integration with the NBER Summer Institute Innovation Policy meeting. Participating in this environment would allow me to engage with frontier empirical and policy research, situate my work within ongoing debates, and refine both the framing and external relevance of my job market paper.

Looking forward, I plan to extend my research by studying how firms' post-layoff hiring of displaced inventors shapes entrepreneurial pathways, including spinout formation and startup innovation. I am also interested in how labor reallocation affects the direction of technological change and how institutional and policy environments facilitate productive knowledge diffusion across firms and regions.

My goal is to contribute to a research agenda that integrates labor market shocks into the core study of innovation production and policy. The Innovation Research Boot Camp would play a pivotal role in this trajectory by providing the theoretical, empirical, and institutional grounding necessary to advance my work and to position it more centrally within the economics of innovation.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO

SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES AND ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
P.O. BOX 2039
MERCED, CA 95344
(209) 228-7742
FAX (209) 228-4007

February 5, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to write this letter of strong recommendation for Soo Yeon Kim, a 5th-year Ph.D. candidate in Economics for the NBER Research boot camp. I serve as Soo's faculty advisor and have worked closely with her throughout her graduate studies, particularly on her current dissertation research regarding innovation spillovers across firms.

Soo is an exceptionally promising young economist. Her (future) job market paper exploits millions of LinkedIn job profiles matched to U.S. patent data to explore how exposure to highly innovative team members affects a worker's own innovative trajectory. By isolating these peer effects, her work sheds new light on the mechanics of knowledge diffusion within firms and the micro-foundations of aggregate productivity.

What truly distinguishes Soo is her resourcefulness and work ethic. She has spent many hours collecting and matching several novel datasets with these LinkedIn profiles—a massive undertaking that demonstrates her dedication to rigorous empirical work. This unique data infrastructure has not only enabled her current analysis but has laid the groundwork for a range of interesting and impactful papers in the future. As an example, Soo and I have a project with Christian Fons-Rosen that will explore the causal impact of startup environments on innovation.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Sincerely,



Greg Wright
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Economics & Business Management
University of California, Merced