Summmary

Katarzyna Swiech
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PhD candidate, Strategy & Innovation
Scheller College of Business
Georgia Institute of Technology
800 W Peachtree St NW, Atlanta, GA 30308
Year of entry into the PhD program: 2023
Expected year of completion: 2028
Area of interest: entrepreneurship, innovation and strategy

Recommendation letter writer:
Dr. Alexander Oettl
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Professor, Strategy & Innovation
Dean's Distinguished Term Professor
Scheller College of Business
Georgia Institute of Technology and NBER
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http://scheller.gatech.edu/oettl
Letter of recommendation sent via email to Brett Maranjian (maranjian@nber.org).

Essay

I am a third-year PhD candidate in Strategy and Innovation at Georgia Institute of Technology, where I am advised by Dr. Alexander Oettl. I am applying to the NBER Entrepreneurship Research Boot Camp because I consider it an opportunity to fill the gaps in my knowledge of entrepreneurship research and complement my formal PhD training. In addition to the content, the boot camp's format is particularly appealing to me. I believe that in-person lectures and face-to-face interactions offer the best learning environment through real-time discussions and follow-up questions. Furthermore, coming from a small PhD program, I view the boot camp as a unique setting to connect with other PhD students and early-career researchers working on similar topics.

My research examines how subtle, often invisible barriers shape innovation and collaboration, and how small changes in the availability of resources critical to innovative processes affect the quality, quantity, and direction of new knowledge. I am particularly interested in coordination frictions and constraints that are not always salient to firms or policymakers, but can have important implications for how collaborations are structured and how knowledge is diffused.

My first project investigates whether temporal distance constitutes a distinct organizational barrier to innovation, separate from physical distance. Inventions increasingly are the products of global collaborative work, yet distance still impedes learning and collaboration. While these insights are drawn from studying physical distance, in the era of "working from anywhere", still less is known about temporal separation. I use patent data and compare pairs of U.S. that share a time zone to those separated by exactly one hour and measure innovative outcomes within city-pairs. I combine a statewide two-way fixed effects model with a geographic regression discontinuity design at time-zone boundaries, complemented by a difference-in-differences design based on Indiana's 2006 time-zone realignment. Across these strategies, I find consistent evidence that even a one-hour time difference reduces knowledge flows (patent citations), while effects on collaboration are more context-dependent.

In my ongoing project, I examine how externally imposed regulatory barriers reshape innovative and entrepreneurial activity. I focus on export controls in the U.S. space sector, exploiting variation in rules governing the export of commercial satellite technologies. This setting provides an empirical context in which access to markets and downstream users is curtailed by national security-motivated policy. I plan to study how these restrictions affect the direction and diversity of innovation among affected U.S. entities, entrepreneurial entry into the sector and spillovers to downstream and upstream sectors. Export restrictions may reduce innovative effort by weakening expected returns to R&D, or they may redirect rather than diminish innovation, for instance, by pushing firms toward riskier projects or, conversely, inducing complacency. This project conceptualizes export controls as structural constraints that reallocate innovative effort across applications, firms, and stages of the value chain.

Katarzyna (Kasia) Swiech

kswiech3@gatech.edu

Education

Georgia Institute of Technology, Scheller College of Business 2023 - present
Ph.D. in Management, Area: Strategy and Innovation

The University of Edinburgh 2017 - 2021
MA Business with Decision Analytics

The University of Texas at Austin 2019 - 2020
BBA Business Exchange

Research

Working Papers

1. "The Tale of Two Zones - The Impact of Time Zone Separation on Collaboration and Knowledge Flows"
    - Presented at Duke Strategy PhD Conference, 2025

Research experience

Graduate Research Assistant - GT Scheller College of Business 2023 - present

Research Assistant 2021 - 2023

- Work with Professor Greg Fisher (Kelley Business School, Indiana University); research project on entrepreneurial entry
- Work with Professor Ilya Strebulaev (Stanford GSB); data collection for a project on the backgrounds of unicorn startups' founders
- Work with Dr. Fumi Kitagawa (Edinburgh Business School); literature review, survey preparation, and data collection in a project about entrepreneurial propensity among business Ph.D. candidates

Awards and Fellowships

Google Cloud Research Credits Program 2025
GT Center for International Business Education and Research - Research Summer Award 2024
Graduate Research Assistantship Stipend 2023 - present

Other Activities

Economics of Ideas, Science and Innovation Online PhD Course – Institute for Progress 2026
SMS Doctoral Workshop 2025
Northwestern Workshop on Research Design for Causal Inference 2024

Professional Service

Reviewer: AOM Annual Meeting 2025; SMS 45th Annual Conference; AOM Annual Meeting 2026

Relevant coursework

Georgia Institute of Technology
Econometrics I & II, Microeconomic Theory I, Math for Economists, Organization Theory, Theory Construction, Strategic Entrepreneurship Management (MBA level), Public Policy Research Seminar, Strategic Management Research, Machine Learning for Economics, Economics of AI & ML, Research in Entrepreneurship, Economic Data Analysis (Applied Econometrics), Empirical Research Methods, Responsible Research Conduct, Observational Studies in Information Systems
UT Austin MBA level: Predictive Analytics and Data Mining, Business Analytics and Decision Modeling, Statistics

Other Work experience

SEO & Growth freelance consultant | *remote* 2020 - 2021; 2023

Analyst - SMOK Ventures | *Warsaw, Poland* 2023

SEO & Growth Analyst J1 Intern- Simpler Trading | Austin, TX 2021 - 2022

Intern - Limitless | *Warsaw, Poland* 2019

Skills

Languages Polish (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), German (basic)

2/9/2026

Dear Selection Committee:

I am pleased to recommend **Katarzyna (Kasia) Swiech**, a third-year student at Georgia Tech, for both the Innovation and Entrepreneurship NBER Research Boot Camp. As Kasia's dissertation chair, I have watched her develop into a rigorous and creative scholar. She has now passed her comprehensive exams and is fully immersed in her dissertation research, making the timing of these boot camps ideal for her development as a scholar.

Kasia's work examines frictions that shape collaboration and the organization of distributed teams. One of her first (solo-authored) papers, "A Tale of Two Zones," uses regression discontinuity and a natural experiment to show that even a one-hour time-zone difference significantly reduces knowledge flows between regions. The findings have direct implications for the geography of innovation, how entrepreneurial ventures structure geographically distributed work, and the frictions that shape knowledge diffusion.

As you may know, our PhD program in strategy and innovation at Georgia Tech is relatively small. The opportunity for Kasia to engage with other students and faculty at the boot camp will be particularly valuable as she develops her research agenda in innovation and entrepreneurship. She is smart, hard-working, and enthusiastic, and I am confident she will be both an active participant and a valuable contributor.

Cheers,
Alex

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