

JAMES YUI LEE

Contact Information	Appleby Center 232 Department of Economics Pepperdine University 24255 Pacific Coast Highway Malibu, CA 90263	Email: james.y.lee@pepperdine.edu Phone: 310-506-4671 Website: www.jamesylee.org
Appointments	Pepperdine University Assistant Professor, Fall 2026	
Education	University of California, Los Angeles Ph.D. in Economics, 2026 CIRTL Associate Level Certificate, 2025 M.A. in Economics, 2023 Virginia Commonwealth University Non-degree Seeking Student, 2019-2021 University of Chicago B.S. in Mathematics, B.A. in Economics, B.A. in Statistics, Dean's List, 2019	
Fields	Public Economics Econometrics Economics of Education	
References	Professor Adriana Lleras-Muney (Chair) alleras@econ.ucla.edu Professor Robert Fairlie rfairlie@ucla.edu Professor John Asker (Teaching) johnasker@econ.ucla.edu	Professor Kathleen McGarry mcgarry@econ.ucla.edu Assistant Professor Yotam Shem-Tov shemtov@econ.ucla.edu
Fellowships & Awards	UCLA Collegium of University Teaching Fellows UCLA Teaching Assistant Award – Microeconomic Theory UCLA Teaching Assistant Award – Probability and Statistics for Economists	2025-2026 Winter 2025 Spring 2024
Teaching	Course Instructor, University of California, Los Angeles: Econ 41, Probability and Statistics for Economists Econ 103, Introduction to Econometrics Teaching Assistant, University of California, Los Angeles: Econ 41, Probability and Statistics for Economists Econ 101, Microeconomic Theory Econ 133, Intergenerational Poverty in America Economics Department Teaching Assistant Consultant Course Assistant, University of Chicago: Math 15100-15200-15300, Calculus I-II-III	Summer 2024, Summer 2025 Summer 2024, Spring 2025, Summer 2025 Spring 2024 Winter 2024, Winter 2025 Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025 2025-2026 Fall 2017-Spring 2019
Other Employment	Research Associate, Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond	2019-2021

Research	Graduate Student Researcher, California Policy Lab with Professor Till Von Wachter	2023
	Graduate Student Researcher, with Professors Felipe Goncalves and Emily Weisburst	2022
	Becker Friedman Institute Economics Fellow, Los Angeles Mayor's Office	2018
	Research Assistant, National Opinion Research Center	2017
Job Market Paper	“Do Transfer Students Harm Direct Admits? A Peer Effects Case Study” In recent years, policymakers across the United States have established more programs to help community college students transfer to four-year programs to earn bachelor's degrees. Evidence from recent papers (Bianchi, 2020, Genakos and Kyrkopoulou, 2023, Machado et al., 2025) suggests that the implementation of similar programs to expand educational access to non-traditional students may have detrimental effects on traditional students. By using administrative and post-graduation survey data from UCLA, I am the first to investigate the peer effects of community college transfer students on direct admits. To identify these effects, I compare students with similar academic preparation and course preferences who are exposed to different shares of transfer students in their courses due to randomness in the scheduling of courses. In the short run I find a small but statistically significant positive effect of transfer exposure on the grades of direct admits that is visible in upper and lower division courses and for all fields of study. These effects appear to be driven by a “curve effect”: because transfer students academically perform worse on average, they increase the ranking of direct admits. Controlling for the major choice of direct admits (which is minimally impacted by transfer exposure), I find that direct admits who are more exposed to transfer students in their college career graduate faster. I do not find statistically significant effects on labor market outcomes, though the estimates are noisy.	
Papers in Progress	“How do Transfer Students and Direct Admits Compare? Academically and Post-Graduation”	
	“Did COVID-19 Academically Scar College Students?”	
	“Coming From Quarter Versus Semester Systems – How Transfer Students Fared” (with Tihi Gatihi and Carlos Rodriguez) (Analysis in progress)	
	“Predicting Community College Student Success and Decision-Making” (Analysis in progress)	
Publications	“The Effect of Lockdown Measures on Unemployment” (with Marios Karabarbounis, Reiko Laski, and Nicholas Trachter), <i>Richmond Federal Reserve Bank Research Publications</i> , 2020	
Academic Service	UCLA Graduate Economics Association President; Social Chair; Graduate Student Mentor	2022-2025
Seminars	2025: Occidental College, Pepperdine University	
Languages	English (native), Mandarin (conversational), Cantonese (conversational)	
Software Skills	R, Python, Stata, Matlab	
Other Honors	Degree Candidate Processional Marshal for the UCLA Doctoral Hooding Ceremony	
Miscellaneous	University Presbyterian Church – Agape College Student Fellowship Leader Citizenship – United States	2023-Present