

**Benjamin Van Kammen**  
February, 2026

**OFFICE ADDRESS**

Krannert Building, Room 531  
403 Mitch Daniels Blvd.  
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**FIELDS**

Primary: Labor Economics and Applied Microeconomics.  
Secondary: Industrial Organization.  
Teaching: Econometrics, Microeconomic Theory (intermediate and principles).

**EDUCATION**

Ph.D., Economics, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2013.  
Dissertation: "Essays in Labor Economics"  
Major Professors: Scott J. Adams and Scott Drewianka.  
B.A., Economics and History (Magna Cum Laude), UW-Milwaukee, 2007.

**COMPLETED PAPERS**

"Dissimilar Occupations and Marital Stability" (with Scott J. Adams). 2014. *IZA Journal of Labor Economics*. <http://www.izajole.com/content/3/1/9>.  
"The Labor Market Effects of Sick Days Mandates."  
"County Characteristics and the Development of Professional Athletes" (with Jon Black).

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

"The Effect of Occupational Licensure Laws on Occupational Choice."  
"Barriers to Occupational Mobility."  
"Compensating Differentials for Paid Sick Days."  
"Occupational Wage Correlation and Occupation Proximity."

**PRESENTATIONS**

- "County Characteristics and the Development of Professional Athletes."
- Purdue Economics Department Workshop, 2019.
  - Midwest Economics Association (MEA) meetings, 2020 (accepted, conference cancelled).
  - Western Economics Association meetings, 2022.
- "Employment Effects of Paid Sick Leave Mandates."
- Midwest Economics Association (MEA) meetings, 2012.
  - UW-Milwaukee Economics Seminar Series, 2011.

“Compensating Wage Differentials for Paid Sick Leave.”

- UW-Milwaukee Micro/Labor Workshop, 2011.

“Occupational Proximity and Marital Stability.”

- MEA meetings, 2013.

“Occupational Wage Correlation and Occupation Proximity.”

- Purdue Economics Department Workshop, 2014.

“The Effect of Occupational Licensure Laws on Occupational Choice”

- WEAI Meetings, 2016.
- MEA Meetings, 2015.
- Purdue Economics Department Workshop, 2015.

## **TEACHING**

### **Courses Taught (independently, as sole instructor):**

Principles of Economics (mass lecture): Fall 2015-2025, Spring 2013-2025, Summer 2018-2025

Principles of Microeconomics

Economic Statistics

Intermediate Microeconomics: Summer 2014-2025, Spring 2018-2020, 2023-2024

Econometrics: Fall 2013-2024, Spring 2014-2018

Economics of Employment and Labor Relations (undergraduate / graduate)

Labor Economics (undergraduate / graduate): Spring 2012-2014, 2025-2026, 2014 Fall 2013-2014, 2025

Freedom, Capitalism, and Institutions, Washinton D.C. Immersion: Spring 2026

Economics of Sports: Fall/Spring/Summer 2016-2018, 2020-2022

Statistics for Economists (graduate): Fall 2019-2025, Spring 2021-2026

Mathematics for Economists (graduate): Spring 2020-2026, Fall 2020-2025

## **PROFESSIONAL AND UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

Interim Associate Director, Purdue University Research Center in Economics 2025-Present

Krannert Teaching Excellence Task Force, 2021

Faculty Advisor, National Society of Collegiate Scholars Purdue Chapter, 2014-2025.

Faculty Advisor, Sports Management Club Purdue Chapter, 2016-2025.

Author, Economics Department’s *TA Handbook: A Practical Reference for Graduate Teaching Assistants*.

Panelist, “Graduate TA Training Seminar,” UWM Department of Economics, 2012.

Chair and Discussant, MEA Meetings, 2012-2013, 2015, 2020.

## **HONORS THESIS SUPERVISOR**

Alex Abraham, Fall 2016.

**INDEPENDENT STUDY SUPERVISOR**

Hanna Sistek (MA, Political Science), Fall 2019.

**HONORS AND AWARDS**

Excellence in Master's Teaching, Economics Department, 2025.

Richard Perlman Paper Prize in Labor Economics, 2012.

**COMPUTER SKILLS**

STATA, MAPLE, SPSS, MS Excel, EViews, Python, Blackboard Learn, Brightspace.

**ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND SERVICE**

American Economic Association 2010-Present

Midwest Economic Association 2011-Present

Society of Labor Economists 2012-Present

**REFERENCES**

Dean Kelly Blanchard  
khh@purdue.edu

Erica Lott, PhD, Director of Teaching and Learning  
ealott@purdue.edu

Professor Timothy N. Bond  
tnbond@purdue.edu

Professor Scott Adams  
sjadams@uwm.edu

Professor Scott Drewianka  
sdrewian@uwm.edu

## Description of Selected Papers

### “Sick Leave Mandates and Employment”:

This paper uses ordinances in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., to measure the effects of paid sick days mandates on employment and wages. Analyzing the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, I observe an employment increase in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., relative to a matched control group of places without an ordinance. This evidence suggests that sick days mandates correct a market failure of under-provision of benefits, as described in Summers (1989). The evidence is corroborated by observing the predicted negative effect on wages, a larger magnitude effect for industries that have sparser voluntary sick time provision, and that the effects on employment occur primarily in the periods immediately after the implementation of the mandates.

### “Dissimilar Occupations and Marital Stability”:

We measure the relationship between how similar spouses’ occupations are and the probability of marital dissolution. Marginally-well-matched couples divorce when adverse information about match quality is revealed during the marriage. Since dissolution is costly, small shocks do not compel well-matched spouses to divorce—suggesting the probability of divorce as a measure of (lack of) match quality. In three waves of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID), we observe marital dissolutions and spouses’ occupations. The question, then, is: “are close occupation couples more likely or less likely to be marginally-well-matched (*ceteris paribus*)?” To answer this question, we employ an occupational distance (between spouses’ occupations) measure based on the O\*Net Content Model. The results support two varieties of theories of marriage—“diversification and division of labor” and “household public goods”. Specifically couples whose occupations require dissimilar knowledge are less likely to divorce and couples whose occupations require performing similar activities are less likely to divorce.

### “Barriers to Occupational Mobility”:

I identify predictors of occupational mobility in individual (Survey of Income and Program Participation, or “SIPP”) data. Specifically I seek attributes of the destination occupation that inhibit or facilitate mobility, policies that do likewise, and characteristics of individuals, such as specificity of their training, that make them more mobile. I use the extended metaphor of geographical distance to compare the importance of several common sources of barriers to occupational mobility: idiosyncratic qualifications that are difficult to obtain, individuals’ abilities to be retrained, and the non-existence of retraining opportunities.

“Occupational Wage Correlation and Occupation Proximity”:

I explore dimensions of occupational similarity that predict correlation between two occupations' intertemporal wage movements. Similarity is defined by similar ranks (among all occupations) on the O\*Net occupational attributes, and wage correlations are measured using annual observations between 1972 and 2012 from the CPS. I identify dimensions in the O\*Net on which similarity predicts greater wage correlation.

“County Characteristics and the Development of Professional Athletes”

We study the effect of socio-economic conditions on the development of professional athletes. Using data on the hometowns of NBA, MLB, and NFL athletes collected from sports-reference.com and county data from the Opportunity Insights project, we find that one's home county income distribution impacts the probability of becoming a professional athlete. Specifically, we find that the development of athletes is increasing in income segregation and income inequality, and decreasing in school expenditures per capita. Our results suggest that children in communities with little upward mobility are more likely to invest in risky human capital with volatile returns, such as athletics.