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EDUCATION:

Ph.D. in Economics, University of South Carolina, anticipated: May 2019

Dissertation Title: “Essays in the Economics of Education”

Committee: Daniel Jones (co-advisor), Orgul Ozturk (co-advisor), McKinley Blackburn, and John Gordanier

M.A. in Economics, University of South Carolina, 2013

B.A. in Political Science, University of South Carolina, 2012

RESEARCH FIELDS: Economics of Education, Labor Economics, and Public Economics

RESEARCH:

WORKING PAPERS:

1. “Who Does Aid Help? Examining Heterogeneity in the Effect of Student Aid on Achievement” - (Job Market Paper)
2. “The Spillover Benefits of Expanding Access to Preschool” - (Revise & resubmit, *Economics of Education Review*)
3. “Free Lunch for All and Student Performance” with Crystal Zhan, Orgul Ozturk, and John Gordanier - (Draft available upon request)
4. “A Love-Hate Relationship: Same-Sex Marriage Legalization Announcements and LGBT Hate Crimes” with Zehra Valencia and Robert Pettis - (Draft available upon request)

WORKS IN PROGRESS:

1. “The Impact of Racial Bias in Voting on Electoral Outcomes for Minority Candidates” with Daniel Jones and Brian Beach

COURSES TAUGHT AS INSTRUCTOR (including average student evaluation scores):

Introduction to Economics - Fall 2016 - (3.5/5); Fall 2017 - (4.2/5); Spring 2018 - (4.4/5)

Principles of Macroeconomics - Spring 2017 - (4.1/5)

CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS:

AEA Sessions at the ASSA Annual Meeting	(<i>upcoming</i>) 2019
APPAM Fall Research Conference	2018
University of Pittsburgh, Center for Urban Education	2018
West Virginia University, Department of Economics	2018
AEA Summer Mentoring Pipeline Conference	2018
South Carolina Applied Micro Day	2018
Society of Labor Economists	2018
APPAM DC Regional Student Conference	2018
Association for Education Finance and Policy Annual Conference	2018
The Ph.D. Project Finance and Economics Doctoral Students Association Conference	2017
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston	2017
AEA Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education	2017

FELLOWSHIPS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND OTHER AWARDS:

Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award (Business School Award), 2018
Best Third-Year Economics Ph.D. Student Paper (Department Scholarship), 2017
AEA Summer Fellowship with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, 2017
Promising Researcher Award (Business School Award) - nominee, 2017

SERVICE AND OTHER ACTIVITIES:

AEA Mentoring Program - Mentor
The Ph.D. Project - Planning Committee Member for the 2019 Finance and Economics Doctoral Students Association Conference

ABSTRACTS OF SELECTED WORKING PAPERS:

1. “Who Does Aid Help? Examining Heterogeneity in the Effect of Student Aid on Achievement”
Abstract. Does financial aid impact achievement differently for low- and high-income students? I exploit the eligibility requirements of a state merit-aid program that awards additional aid to STEM majors. A triple-difference design, using administrative data from a large institution and exploiting differences over time, by merit-aid recipient status, and by major type (STEM or non-STEM), shows that student aid increases the GPAs and graduation prospects of low-income students but has little impact on high-income students. Additional analysis suggests that reduction in student part-time work may be a potential mechanism for this differential effect. These results suggest that merit aid programs could be targeted more effectively than most currently are.

2. “The Spillover Benefits of Expanding Access to Preschool”
Abstract. I ask do spillover benefits exist from preschool. I exploit district and time variation in access to a state preschool program (CDEP) that targets disadvantaged four-year-olds (those eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or Medicaid). Utilizing a difference-in-differences design, I estimate the differential effects of CDEP exposure (residing in a CDEP district after launch at age four) on test scores. I find that CDEP benefits its targeted population and increases the math and reading scores of exposed, CDEP-ineligible students by about 0.13 and 0.14 standard deviations, respectively. These spillover effects may stem from improvements in the school learning environment.

3. “Free Lunch for All and Student Performance”

Abstract. In this paper we analyze the effect of Community Eligibility Provisions, a universal free-lunch program, on students academic performance and attendance. A school can participate in this program if at least 40 percent of its students are on programs such as SNAP and TANF. Even if a school is not eligible, it can still participate if it is part of a group of schools or a school district which comprises of schools which on average satisfy the above criteria. Using a difference in differences setup, we show that this program leads to about 0.04 of a standard deviation increase in Math test scores for elementary school students. Effect on reading scores are lower. We find no significant effect for middle school test scores. Effects are stronger for poorer students and in rural areas. We find no significant effects in urban areas for test scores. However, when we look at attendance as an outcome, we observe a significant decline in absences, but only in urban areas.

4. “A Love-Hate Relationship: Same-Sex Marriage Legalization Announcements and LGBT Hate Crimes”

Abstract. We examine whether same-sex marriage legalization announcements impact the occurrence of LGBT hate crimes. We exploit variation in the timing of same-sex marriage legalization announcements across states, using a difference-in-differences design. We find that the likelihood of a LGBT hate crime occurring is reduced by 5.2 percentage points, on average, following a legalization announcement. This result is driven by reductions in violent LGBT hate crimes. Additional analysis suggests changes in the behavior of perpetrators of LGBT hate crimes may explain the reductions in such crimes. The results demonstrate that salient LGBT-specific policy announcements are effective at reducing LGBT hate crimes.

NON-ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, Columbia, SC
Program Coordinator

Mar. 2013 - Aug. 2014

- Employed statistical analysis to estimate the revenue derived from local sales tax impositions.
- Examined identification strategies to estimate the price-elasticity of demand for gasoline.
- Utilized time-series econometrics to forecast state revenue flows.

SKILLS AND OTHER INFORMATION:

Computer Programs: L^AT_EX, R, Stata

REFERENCES:

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