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Emily Glassberg Sands

VP of Data Science at Coursera
Menlo Park

Summary

A labor economist by training, I love using data to understand individual decision-making and societal trends, and to build products that solve critical inefficiencies in the market.

I lead the end-to-end data team at Coursera — machine learning, decision science, and data engineering. Coursera attracts tens of millions of individuals from around the world who want to learn and be rewarded for that learning in the labor market, education partners who want a flexible and scalable platform through which to teach the world, and employers who need to transform their talent to keep up with the accelerating change. Our data scientists and data engineers fuel data-driven decisions and build data-powered products. And we're growing! Reach out at emily@coursera.org to learn more.

Experience

Coursera
6 years 6 months

VP of Data Science
March 2020 - Present (6 months)
I lead the data team at Coursera, a diverse group of ~35 data scientists and data engineers united in building a better teaching and learning platform through data-driven decisions and data-powered products.

My team is organized into three groups:
- The Data Engineering group builds the foundations for efficient execution (e.g., core data lake, data tooling), plus analytical insight products for our university partners and enterprise customers -- from the back-end pipelines to the front-end visualizations
- The Decision Science group drives product and business strategy through measurement, experimentation, and causal inference

- The Machine Learning group builds algorithmically-powered learner, educator, & employer-facing products (e.g., for content discovery, personalized learning, scaleable teaching, skill measurement, talent benchmarking)

The world needs vastly expanded access to high-quality learning and credentials. With our scale, data, and talent, Coursera is well-positioned to make that vision a reality. And we're growing! Reach out at emily@coursera.org to chat about joining us in our mission to transform lives through learning.

Senior Director of Data Science
October 2018 - February 2020 (1 year 5 months)

Director of Data Science
May 2017 - September 2018 (1 year 5 months)
Mountain View, CA

Data Science Manager
September 2014 - April 2017 (2 years 8 months)

Data Scientist
March 2014 - August 2014 (6 months)

Harvard University
4 years 6 months

PhD in Economics
September 2009 - February 2014 (4 years 6 months)

Fields: Labor Economics, Public Economics

Thesis: Essays in Applied Microeconomics. Topics included
- Using machine learning to analyze network effects in consumer decision making
- Field experiments in an online labor market quantifying why and how job referrals matter
Each published in a Top-5 Economics journal.

Honors and awards:
- Harvard Presidential Scholar, 2009 - 2014
- Presidential Fellow Dissertation Completion Award, 2013 - 2014
- Lab for Economic Policy and Applications Research Grant, 2012 - 2013
- Bok Center for Teaching and Learning Distinction in Teaching, 2011 - 2013

- Simon Kuznets Research Grant, 2011
- Rita Ricardo-Campbell Fellow in Economics, 2010 - 2011

A.M. in 2012

Teaching Fellow, Department of Economics
January 2011 - May 2013 (2 years 5 months)

- Five semesters as teaching fellow for undergraduate and graduate courses in public, education, and labor economics at Harvard, including two semesters guiding seminars in original research. Developed section material and exam content, and curricula on the empirical research process. Courses led by Professors Larry Katz, Claudia Goldin, Marty Feldstein, Jeff Liebman, and Larry Summers.
- Five-time recipient of the Bok Center for Teaching and Learning Distinction in Teaching.

Princeton University
AB in Economics
September 2005 - June 2009 (3 years 10 months)

- The Phi Beta Kappa Student Prize ('to the student of highest academic standing at graduation'), 2009
- The Halbert White '72 Prize ('to the most outstanding Economics major', shared with H. Staude), 2009
- The Wolf Balleisen Memorial Prize ('for the best senior thesis in Economics'), 2009
- summa cum laude, 2009
- Early-Selection Phi Beta Kappa, 2008
- Shapiro Prizes for Academic Excellence, 2006 and 2007

Thesis: An Integrated Economic Analysis of Discrimination in American Theater

The Boston Consulting Group
Summer Associate
June 2008 - August 2008 (3 months)
San Francisco

Investigated the market for Biotech-Pharma partnerships: quantified stated and revealed preferences in partner selection; modeled pipeline advancement; identified variation in deal structure and terms across product and partner types; performed network analysis of partnering activities.

Education

Harvard University

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Department of Economics · (2009 - 2014)

Princeton University

Bachelor's (A.B.), Department of Economics · (2005 - 2009)