

CHRISTINE MULHERN

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Contact Information

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Personal Information: US Citizen

Undergraduate Studies:

B.A. in Economics and Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences
Northwestern University, cum laude, 2013

Graduate Studies:

Harvard Kennedy School, 2015 to present
Ph.D. Candidate in Public Policy
Expected Completion Date: May 2020

References:

Professor Christopher Avery
Harvard Kennedy School
617-495-4063
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Professor Amanda Pallais
Harvard University
617-495-2151
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Professor Joshua Goodman
Brandeis University
781-736-2283
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Teaching and Research Fields:

Labor Economics, Public Economics, Economics of Education

Teaching Experience:

Fall 2017 &	Markets and Market Failure, Harvard University
Fall 2018	Teaching Fellow for Christopher Avery <i>Certificate of Distinction in Student Teaching</i>
Spring 2018 &	Analyzing Education Policy, Harvard University
Spring 2019	Teaching Fellow for Joshua Goodman <i>Certificate of Distinction in Teaching</i>

Research Experience and Other Employment:

2013-2015	Ithaka S+R, Educational Transformation Team <i>Research Analyst for William G. Bowen</i>
2011-2012	Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research <i>Research Assistant to David Figlio and Jim Rosenbaum</i>

Professional Activities

Invited Talks:

University of Chicago Urban Labs, June 2019
Hobson's Summer Institute, July 2019
Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, October 2019

Conference Presentations:

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, November 2019
Association for Education Finance and Policy, March 2019
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, November 2018
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Student Conference, April 2018
Association for Education Finance and Policy, March 2018
Association for Education Finance and Policy, March 2017

Referee Service:

Quarterly Journal of Economics; Economics of Education Review

University Service:

Organizer, Applied Microeconomics Seminar, Harvard Kennedy School (2018)
Vice President, Harvard Kennedy School PhD Student Association (2018)
Faculty Outreach Chair, Harvard Kennedy School PhD Student Association (2017)

Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:

2019-2020	Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Harvard University
2016-2019	Partnering in Education Research Fellowship, Institute for Education Sciences
2018	Certificate of Distinction in Student Teaching, Harvard Kennedy School
2018	Certificate of Distinction in Teaching, Harvard College

Publications:

Chingos, Matthew, Rebecca Griffiths, & Christine Mulhern. (2017) "[Can Low-Cost Online Summer Math Programs Improve Student Preparation for College-Level Math? Evidence from Randomized Control Trials at Three Universities.](#)" *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 10(4): 794-816.

Chingos, Matthew, Rebecca Griffiths, Christine Mulhern, & Richard Spies. (2016). "[Interactive Online Learning on Campus: Comparing Students Outcomes in Hybrid and Traditional Courses in the University System of Maryland.](#)" *Journal of Higher Education*, 88(2): 210-233.

Research Papers:

"Beyond Teachers: Estimating Individual Guidance Counselors' Effects on Educational Attainment"
Job Market Paper

Guidance counselors are a common school resource for students navigating complicated and consequential education choices. I provide the first causal estimates of individual counselors' effects on high schoolers using quasi-random counselor assignment policies in Massachusetts. I find significant variation in counselor effectiveness at increasing high school graduation, college attendance, selectivity and persistence. Counselors' effects on educational attainment are similar in magnitude to teachers' effects but their impacts are through information and assistance, rather than short-term skills. Low-achieving and low-income students are most affected by counselors, perhaps because they are most likely to lack information and assistance when making postsecondary plans. Counselors also vary in the types of students they most effectively assist. Low-achieving students benefit from counselors who effectively guide other low-achievers through high school and towards college while high achievers benefit from counselors who increase college selectivity. Improving access to effective counseling may be a promising way to close socioeconomic gaps in education.

[“Changing College Choices with Personalized Admissions Information at Scale”](#)

Revise and Resubmit at the Journal of Labor Economics

Choosing where to apply to college is a complex problem with long-term consequences, but many students lack the guidance necessary to make optimal choices. I show that a technology which provides low-cost personalized college admissions information to over forty percent of high schoolers significantly alters college choices. Students shift applications and attendance to colleges for which they can observe information on schoolmates' admissions experiences. Responses are largest when such information suggests a high admissions probability. Disadvantaged students respond the most, and information on in-state colleges increases their four-year college attendance. Data features and framing, however, deter students from selective colleges.

“Oh Brother, Where Start Thou? Sibling Spillovers in College Enrollment,”

with Joshua Goodman, Michael Hurwitz, and Jonathan Smith

We study within-family spillovers in college enrollment to show that college-going behavior is transmissible between peers. Because siblings' test scores are weakly correlated, we can identify college-specific admissions thresholds that directly affect older but not younger siblings' college options. Older siblings' admissibility substantially increases their four-year college enrollment rate and quality of college attended. Their improved college choices in turn raise younger siblings' college enrollment rate and quality of college chosen, particularly for families with low predicted probabilities of college enrollment. The observed spillovers are not well-explained by price, income, proximity or legacy effects, but are most consistent with older siblings transmitting important information about the college experience and its potential returns.

Research in Progress:

“Rural and Urban Gaps in Achievement and Educational Attainment”

“Scalable Technology for Personalized Student Support: The Impact of Nova Scotia’s Homework Hub on Students’ Academic Outcomes”

Additional Publications:

Mulhern, Christine, Richard R. Spies, Matthew P. Staiger, & D. Derek Wu. (2015). “The Effects of Rising Student Costs in Higher Education: Evidence from Public Institutions in Virginia.” *Ithaka S+R*.

Griffiths, Rebecca J., Matthew M. Chingos, Christine Mulhern & Richard R. Spies. (2014). “Interactive Online Learning on Campus: Testing MOOCs and Other Platforms in Hybrid Formats in the University System of Maryland.” *Ithaka S+R*.

Marcum, Deanna, Christine Mulhern & Clara Samayoa. (2014). “Technology-Enhanced Education at Public Flagship Universities: Opportunities and Challenges.” *Ithaka S+R*.

Griffiths, Rebecca J., Jessie Brown & Christine Mulhern. (2015). “CIC Consortium for Online Humanities Instruction: Evaluation Report for First Course Iteration.” *Ithaka S+R*.

Griffiths, Rebecca J., Matthew Chingos, & Christine Mulhern. (2015). “Can Online Learning Improve College Math Readiness: Randomized Trials Using Pearson’s MyFoundationsLab in Summer Bridge Programs.” *Ithaka S+R*.

Guthrie, Kevin M., Christine Mulhern & Martin A. Kurzweil. (2015). “In Pursuit of Excellence and Inclusion: Managing Change at Arizona State University.” *Ithaka S+R*.