

CHRISTINE MULHERN

Cmulhern.com
Mulhern@g.harvard.edu

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Contact Information

Taubman Bldg 431
79 JFK St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
224-639-3845

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	Professor Amanda Pallais
Harvard Kennedy School	Harvard University
617-495-4063	617-495-2151
Christopher_Avery@hks.harvard.edu	APallais@fas.harvard.edu

Professor Joshua Goodman
Brandeis University
781-736-2283
JoshuaGoodman@Brandeis.edu

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
Spring 2018 &	Analyzing Education Policy, Harvard University
Spring 2019	Teaching Fellow for Joshua Goodman

Research Experience and Other Employment:

2013-2015	Ithaca 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 Teaching, Harvard University

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: Value-Added Estimates of Counselors' Large Impacts on Educational Attainment"

Job Market Paper

School counselors help students navigate complicated education choices which have long-term effects on their labor market outcomes. I show how the high school guidance counselor to which a student is quasi-randomly assigned influences a student's human capital accumulation and educational attainment. Being assigned to a better counselor increases school attendance, AP course enrollment, high school graduation, college enrollment, college selectivity, and bachelor's degree completion. Counselor effectiveness is multi-dimensional, both in terms of the outcomes and students impacted. Counselors have the largest impacts on low-achieving and low-income students, and students benefit from being matched to a counselor of the same race. A one standard deviation better counselor improves college outcomes by more than some teachers. Thus, expanding access to the type of guidance provided by effective counselors may be an efficient way to increase educational attainment and close socioeconomic gaps in education. Principal ratings and credentials, however, are not efficient ways to identify effective counselors.

[“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.

The extensive research literatures on educational peer effects and on factors affecting college choice have remained largely separate. We connect them by estimating the impact of older siblings' college choices on the college choices of their younger siblings. Data from the College Board allow us to identify the college choices of all SAT-takers from 2004-14 and those of any younger siblings in the data. We use the data to uncover dozens of colleges that hide from applicants the use of SAT thresholds in the admissions process. A regression discontinuity design shows such thresholds generate exogenous variation in older siblings' college access and enrollment. We then show that older siblings' increased college access raises younger siblings' college enrollment rates, particularly for families with low ex ante probabilities of four-year college enrollment. Such within-family spillover effects suggest that college-going behavior is transmissible between peers.

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 Research:

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*.