

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

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
Research Analyst for William G. Bowen

2011-2012 Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research
Research Assistant to David Figlio and Jim Rosenbaum

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 that 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 college persistence. Counselor effectiveness is multi-dimensional, with many counselors specializing in the types of outcomes or students they impact. Counselors have the largest impacts on low-achieving and low-income students, and students benefit from being matched to a counselor who looks like them or specializes in students like them. Counselor effects on educational attainment are similar in magnitude to teachers' effects. 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.

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 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*.