

# Kristin Vrona

## Curriculum Vitae

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## EDUCATION

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Ph.D.	Economics, Northern Illinois University	Expected winter 2025
	<b>Degree Specializations:</b> Econometrics, Labor Economics	
	<b>Secondary Fields:</b> Health Economics, Public Health, Game Theory	
	Dissertation Title: <i>An Analysis of Mental Health and Workplace Productivity</i>	
M.A.	Economics, Northern Illinois University	2018
B.S.	Economics, <i>summa cum laude</i> , Northern Illinois University	2016

## EMPLOYMENT

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**Graduate Research Fellow** 2022 - 2024  
Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, & Energy (IESE) DeKalb, IL

- **Project sponsor:** Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR); project value: \$1.35M
- Evaluated grant proposals, awarding \$59M
- Consulted IDNR on improving the scoring process delegating funding to parks projects to ensure equitable allocations across communities

**Teaching Fellow** 2017 - 2022  
Department of Economics, Northern Illinois University DeKalb, IL

- Acted as sole instructor of undergraduate macroeconomics for 3 semesters with class sizes of 24 - 42 students
- Led weekly recitation sessions for 8 - 12 graduate students on microeconomic theory
- Provided one-on-one tutoring; graded assignments, providing productive feedback; proctored and graded exams
- Acted as Undergraduate Academic Advisor for years 2017 - 2019

**Cost Savings & Operations Analyst** 2016 - 2017  
M.O.L. America, Inc. Lombard, IL

- Improved capital flow projections and cost forecasting accuracy 5-8%
- Presented updated projections to upper-management teams monthly
- Received *M.O.L. Spot Award* for automating database queries, resolving vendor billing disputes

## AWARDS, HONORS, & FELLOWSHIPS

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### Academic

2022	Dissertation Fellowship, Northern Illinois University. <i>Runner-up, awarded tuition-waiver for 2022-2023 academic year.</i>
2018	Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Northern Illinois University Graduate School (April)
2017	Kellstadt Graduate Scholarship, DePaul University Kellstadt Graduate School of Business. <i>Declined in favor of Assistantship offer from Department of Economics, Northern IL University.</i>

2012-2016 Departmental Honors, Department of Economics; Dean's List, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences; Academic Excellence List, Northern Illinois University

## Professional

- 2023 IL congressional session (February 28) & gubernatorial press conference (March 1). *ESE team honored for management of \$59 million in grant funds across IL parks projects.*
- 2017 M.O.L. Spot Award, M.O.L. America, Inc. (June). *Monetary award for streamlining data processes and developing standard operating procedures for cross-departmental implementation.*

## ADVANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

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- 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey: Results and Insight Webinar, Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), June 25
- 2024 EBRI & American Benefits Council: 2024 Spring Policy Forum, May 16
- 2024 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative: Human Subjects Research Training, February 22
- 2023 IDNR & Federal Department of Natural Resources Collaborative Sessions, February 27-28
- 2022 The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) Mentorship Seminar
- 2020 CSWEP Successfully Navigating Your Economics PhD, November 20
- 2019 Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago 12th Annual Risk Conference
- 2019 NIU Department of Economics ECONference, April
- 2017 NIU Department of Economics ECONference, April 26

## Certifications

CITI Program Human Subjects Research Training Certification (February 2024 - February 2029)

## CAMPUS & DEPARTMENTAL TALKS

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- 2022 "Labor Productivity and Health", ECON 700: Labor Economics I, NIU Department of Economics, November 27
- 2021 "Moderate to Severe Diagnosed Mental Disorders and Absenteeism", NIU Department of Economics Graduate Colloquium Seminar, March 24
- 2018 "Mental Health & Labor Supply", NIU Department of Economics Graduate Colloquium Seminar, November 23

## DEPARTMENTAL & UNIVERSITY SERVICE

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- 2019 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, October 18 & November 11
- 2019 *Department Representative*, Department of Economics, NIU Major and Minors Fair, September 18
- 2018 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, October 8 & November 12
- 2018 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, March 30
- 2018 *Department Representative*, Department of Economics, NIU Spring Internship and Job Fair, February 20

## SERVICE TO PROFESSION

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2022-2023 **Primary Grant Reviewer**, IDNR Open Space Land Aquisition and Development Program

## TECHNICAL SKILLS

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### Programming Languages

R	Proficient
SAS	Advanced
VBA	Advanced
Python	Intermediate
Matlab	Basic
GitHub	Fundamental

### BI & Query Software

SQL

Oracle Discoverer BI

Oracle Discoverer ODS

### Contract Management & Auditing

STARNET

### Grant Management Software

AmpliFund

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### Northern Illinois University (NIU)

Principles of Macroeconomics, undergraduate, <i>Instructor of Record</i>	SU22, SU21, SP21
Intermediate Macroeconomics, undergraduate	SP22
Econometric Analysis, undergraduate	F21
Public Sector Economics, graduate	F20
Microeconomic Analysis, graduate	SP20, F18

## RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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### “Labor Supply Dynamics Among Employed Workers with Mental Illness” (Job Market Paper)

This study examines how diagnosed mental illness impacts absenteeism among employed adults in the US and the dynamic between a prior mental illness diagnosis and general psychological distress, physical health status, and chronic physical health conditions in determining absenteeism. The study uses data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) years 2010 - 2013. Key findings reveal sex-specific patterns: regardless of mental health status men indicate sensitivity to physical health declines, with poorer health while women’s absence rates remain steady. Notably, both sexes with initial mental health diagnoses display reduced absences under high distress and physical health challenges, suggesting diagnosis may encourage proactive health management. These insights underscore the importance of mental health support in workplace policies.

### “Mental Health and Absenteeism: the Role of Fringe Benefits as Moderators”

This paper analyzes the impact of mental illness on absenteeism among employed adults, using MEPS data from 2010 to 2014. The study estimates the effects of diagnosed mental illness on absenteeism, accounting for symptom severity and individual, family, regional, and macroeconomic factors. It also examines how job factors, including fringe benefits, influence absenteeism. Findings suggest that while fringe benefits may increase absenteeism initially, they help mitigate the long-term impact of mental illness on absence, supporting the value of wellness-oriented benefits in enhancing productivity.

### “Causal Effect of Mental Health on Active Labor Market Participant Entry and Exit”

This study investigates the causal relationship between mental health and labor market tran-

sitions, focusing on entry and exit dynamics. Utilizing longitudinal data from the 2010–2013 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, it constructs a latent mental health index to model baseline mental health and status preceding employment transitions. The analysis examines patterns among unemployed individuals entering the workforce, employed individuals exiting employment, and variations in mental health across differing unemployment spell durations. The findings aim to provide insights into the interplay between mental health and labor market activity, informing policies that address workforce stability and mental health equity.

## REFERENCES

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### Dissertation Committee

Virginia Wilcox  
Assistant Chair, Department  
of Economics  
Northern Illinois University  
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### Other References

Thomas Skuzinski  
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