

NICHOLAS LACOSTE

Email: nlacoste1@tulane.edu

Personal Website: <https://nickmlacoste.github.io/>

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/nicholas-lacoste-9bba19114

EDUCATION

Tulane University Ph.D. Economics Advisors: Profs. William Dodds, Katy Bergstrom, Augustine Denteh	2021 – (expected) 2026
Louisiana State University M.S. Data Analytics	2018 – 2019
Louisiana State University B.S. Economics Concentration: Empirical Economic Analysis <i>Summa cum Laude</i> · E.J. Ourso College of Business co-Valedictorian	2014 – 2018

RESEARCH FIELDS

Public Economics and Taxation
Non-parametric/Machine Learning Econometric Theory and Applications
Development Economics

WORKING PAPERS

“The Potential for Improved Implementation of Microfinance through AI-Driven Targeting”
“Let 1,000 Flowers Bloom (or Wilt): Heterogeneity in National Market-Level Charter School Effects”
(with Feng Chen and Douglas N. Harris)
“Estimating the Welfare Impact of Frictions and Misperceptions Using Observable Elasticities” (with Katy Bergstrom, William Dodds, and Juan Rios)
“Optimizing Policy Targeting with Machine Learning: Evidence from Pakistani Audits” (with Zerah Farooq)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“On an Optimal Standard Deduction and its’ Uses”

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Tulane University
Teaching Assistant

· Development Economics (Ph.D.)	Spring 2025
· Development Economics	Fall 2024
· Economics of Big Data	Fall 2023, Spring 2024
· Introductory Microeconomics	Fall 2023, Spring 2024
· Introductory Macroeconomics	Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2022, Spring 2023
· Intermediate Microeconomic Theory	Fall 2022

Tulane University
Guest Lecturer

- Empirical Methods for Political Economy – “*Machine Learning for Economists*” Fall 2024
- Development Economics – “*Microfinance*” Spring 2025

RESEARCH POSITIONS

Tulane University

Research Assistant

- Professor William Dodds August 2023 – Present

Louisiana State University

Research Assistant

- Economics and Policy Research Group August 2018 – May 2019

EMPLOYMENT

Cognizant Technology Solutions

Senior Associate Data Scientist

June 2019 – July 2021

- Performed contract-based data science work specializing in forecasting approaches, RFP design, and business process optimization via the Cognizant proprietary Learning Evolutionary Algorithm Framework (LEAF) for evolutionary neural network algorithms designed for high-dimensional optimization problems.

CSRS, Inc.

Intern to the Executive Office

May 2016 – August 2017

Baton Rouge, LA

- Provided financial modeling, RFP monitoring and research, and assisted incorporate research projects including fundraising, public bond issuances, infrastructure development projects, and commercial real estate development.

CONTRACTUAL RESEARCH

Microsoft Corporation

Demand Management Planning and Forecasting

February 2020 – July 2021

Redmond, WA

- Provided end-to-end Machine Learning solutions regarding business planning and forecasting. Included creation of ML workflows in Azure, writing forecasting algorithms in Python, and designing interactive dashboards in Power BI.
- Automated previously manual reporting via Python scripting, Power BI, Azure, and Excel.

General Electric Appliances

Product Pricing Intelligence and Optimization

September 2019 – February 2020

Louisville, KY

- Analyzed sales and pricing data to create an algorithm designed for product pricing optimization and price-elasticity monitoring.
- Built flexible sales-forecasting models via a Python back-end and assisted in creating an application for the corporate stakeholders which applies the price optimization algorithm.

Hanesbrands, Inc.

Client Targeting Algorithms

January 2019 – May 2019

Remote

- Developed a Lifetime Value (LV) metric for business-to-business customers and utilized auto-regressive models to forecast potential sales growth per-business customer.
- Used R and SQL to create a pipeline program, automating the sales forecasting process and customer targeting recommendations for the client.

Louisiana State University Athletics Department

Maximization of Season Ticket Holder Retention

August 2018 – December 2018

Baton Rouge, LA

- Created a “scoring” mechanism for customer risk of football season ticket nonrenewal via classical Probit modeling, then assigned this score to every customer in the stadium.
- Utilized Python and SAS to create a back-end for batch data processing and modeling ad-hoc, complete with an interactive stadium dashboard for client use, built in Tableau.

HONORS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND GRANTS

Tulane University School of Liberal Arts Fellowship	2021 – Present
Louisiana State University Medal as co-Valedictorian	2018
Econometrics Student of the Year: Louisiana State University	2018
Tiger Excellence Scholars Award	2014 – 2018

PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES

2025

- Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science (CAIDS) “Lunch and Learn” Seminar

2024

- Tulane University Lunch Seminar Series (Fall and Spring)
- Western Economic Association International (WEAI) Annual Meetings
- Southern Economic Association (SEA) Annual Meetings
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) Annual Meetings

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AND OUTREACH

Tulane Economics Ph.D. Program Recruitment Coordinator	2023
Chief Editor: <i>Tulane Economics Working Paper Series</i>	2023 – Present
Fundraising Chair: Global Business Brigades LSU Chapter	2017

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Scripting Languages	R, Python, Stata, MATLAB, SAS
Query Languages & Databases	SQL/POSTGRES, Microsoft Azure, AWS, GitHub
Visualization Software	Microsoft Power BI, Tableau, Google Analytics
Other Relevant	L ^A T _E X, Unix/Linux OS, Ameritrade Thinkorswim

Last updated: January 24, 2025