

Preston Watts

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01/03/2021

Hiring Manager
Regional Economic Models, Inc.

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am interested in the Economic Associate position at Regional Economic Models, Inc. My education and experience have given me the intuition and technical skills required to be a valuable team member who can learn quickly. Also, my letter states that I reside in Baton Rouge, but I intend to relocate.

In my graduate studies and as a research associate at the Economics and Policy Research Group (EPRG), I acquired knowledge and skills I would use every day at Regional Economic Models, Inc.

- **Research and Analysis:** During my time at EPRG, I gained experience manipulating and analyzing large data sets (over a million observations). With this data, I built revenue forecasts and as well as evaluated them using hypothesis testing. In my master's in economics, I have refined these skills and gained a greater appreciation of the assumptions that underly any analysis.
- **Reporting and Presentation:** The concise and clear presentation of findings is just as important as all the underlying analysis supporting them. You must convey your results convincingly to the people who can make decisions with the information you provide. At EPRG, I gained experience compellingly explaining results through reports and slide decks on various topics ranging from forecasting revenue streams from oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico to a literature review on the importance of early childhood education.
- **Collaboration:** This is the most valuable skill I have acquired, and I learned it through my time at EPRG and in my studies. At EPRG, I worked on a team answering complex questions that required us to brainstorm and to set strategies for how best to tackle projects. Also, my elective in graduate school included a case study component I found invaluable in teaching me to work with people of different backgrounds, as my group of five spanned four nationalities. Even more importantly, I encountered frictions in my team's productivity, which gave me experience in improving the cohesion among a diverse group of people.

Thank you for taking the time to review my application, and I would welcome the opportunity to learn more about Regional Economic Models, Inc. and the Economic Associate position.

Respectfully,

Preston Watts

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EDUCATION

Finishing Thesis but Ready to Work:

London School of Economics & Political Science, UK
MSc in Economics, with Industrial Organization elective

July 2021

Completed:

Louisiana State University College of Business, LA
Economics B.S., Empirical Economic Analysis Concentration

May 2018

- Member: Economics & ITF Club and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society
- Awards: 2017 Outstanding Student in Microeconomics, 2017 Outstanding Student in Econometrics
- Tiger Athletic Foundation Scholarship
- Joseph Carmena Sr. Memorial Scholarship

EXPERIENCE

Economics & Policy Research Group, Baton Rouge, LA
Research Associate

July 2018 - May 2019

- Wrote, organized, and annotated Stata code to clean and analyze large data sets that included panel data (millions of observations) on all historical production by individual mineral leases in the Gulf of Mexico
- Forecast all or part of each source of Louisiana revenues—bidding, rental payments, and royalties—from offshore oil and gas activity in the Gulf of Mexico
- Collaborated with colleagues to discuss strategy and obstacles on various projects ranging from how to forecast energy sector employment in the Gulf Coast states to organizing survey outings
- Wrote and designed surveys on Qualtrics to maximize response accuracy and response rate to measure the economic impact of school quality on Ascension Parish, Louisiana
- Conducted literature review relating to projects and communicated findings to superiors on a variety of topics, including an entirely independent review of early education literature
- Conveyed sophisticated results of analyses to nontechnical clients by constructing creative visualizations showing the impact on state revenues if congress had passed tax legislation earlier
- Mapped leasing activity in the Gulf of Mexico using ArcMap GIS software to visualize and understand ramifications of oil and gas extraction off the gulf coast and to convey the information to clients
- Analyzed macroeconomic trends and aided in generating the Louisiana unemployment forecast based upon multiple considerations, including hypothetical downward pressures such as its diminished dependence on energy or the growing gig economy

Student Worker

Jan 2018 - May 2018

- Compiled data from different statistical sites such as the BLS, Fred Economic Data, or the Louisiana Workforce Commission to be used in various projects
- Created charts and graphs for the Louisiana Health Insurance Survey compiled for the Louisiana Department of Health, which gave the department an update on rates of coverage after the Louisiana Medicaid Expansion
- Inspected data outliers for errors and organized the errors by most probable reasons, including misclick, misunderstanding the question, using incorrect units, etc.
- Analyzed oil production data in Excel and presented results to project head, informing him of the major causal driver of tax revenue growth from leasing activity in the Gulf of Mexico

Zachry Construction Corporation, Houston, TX
Civil Engineering Intern

May 2016 - July 2016

- Analyzed engineering plans to methodically break down structures to be built into components to acquire exact dimensions and subsequently attain material quantities
- Utilized Excel to record material quantities and estimate the associated costs of concrete, rebar, wood, etc.
- Employed Google Earth to lay phases of a construction project, which was used by the head of estimating and would be used in project preparation in the case of a successful bid
- Collaborated with designers to ensure proper accounting for wind pressure when constructing braces for supporting concrete columns during their construction

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Proficient: Statistics, Econometrics, Stata, MS Office Suite (especially Excel)
- Medium proficiency: SQL, R, ArcMap, Eviews, Machine Learning, Data Mining

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Interests: Playing board games and frequenting breweries and pubs. Exploring new destinations and experiencing new things. Love being on water and am an aspiring boat owner.
- Volunteering: Flood relief work after the 2016 floods in southern Louisiana and after Hurricane Harvey in 2017. Volunteer counselor at Camp Ch-Yo-Ca in the summers of 2012-2014.