

Tristen B. Best

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EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Chapel Hill, NC May 2025
Master of Public Policy, Environmental and Energy Policy **GPA: 4.0**

- **Designation:** Carolina Research Scholar
- **Awards/Honors:** National Finalist of 2023 FDIC Challenge | UNC Journal of Economics | Adventures in Economics Grant
- **Relevant Coursework:** Panel Data Methods, Project Management Strategy, Program Impact Evaluation, Data Visualization, Human Design Thinking, Economic Analysis for Policy, Methods for Research, Econometrics, Professional Development

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Chapel Hill, NC May 2024
Bachelor of Science, Economics and Public Policy (Double Major), Minor in Data Science **GPA: 3.71**

WORK EXPERIENCE

UNC Institute for the Environment, Energy Policy Analyst – Chapel Hill, NC December 2024 – May 2025

- Designed a 6-month research plan using Q methodology, incorporating insights from 40+ academic and policy sources and drafting 50 unique survey statements to assess community resilience and distributed energy priorities in North Carolina
- Implemented a 30-minute pilot survey with 9 cross-sector participants, cleaning data in Excel and R and applying varimax rotation to identify two perspectives that informed the client's framework for full survey administration
- Produced a 26-page, IRB-approved client report translating Q methodology results into a planning framework adopted by the UNC Energy Transition Initiative for community energy planning and presented pilot results to department committee

U.S. International Trade Commission, International Economist Trainee – Washington, DC June 2024 – August 2024

- Collaborated across 3 divisions to support 17 senior trade analysts, cleaning and harmonizing large energy datasets used to assess GHG intensities of U.S.-produced steel and aluminum
- Led technical analysis for a 5-year adequacy review, researching export markets and tariff treatments in the U.S.–China trade relationship to inform Commission findings and shape federal trade policy
- Produced Trade Atlas visualizations and written summaries, analyzing 6 HTS codes to translate tariff and export trends into briefing materials for senior economists and Commission antidumping hearings

Coastal Carolina Riverwatch, Environmental Policy Analyst – Chapel Hill, NC August 2023 – December 2023

- Conducted ArcGIS analysis of 7 land-use categories to assess wetland degradation and water-quality risks in Eastern NC
- Collaborated with a 5-member policy team to draft a 100-page capstone with recommendations for municipal policymakers
- Presented findings at the UNC Public Policy Experiential Education Showcase to an audience of ~150 peers and practitioners

Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Risk Management Analyst Intern – Raleigh, NC May 2023 – August 2023

- Authored risk reports on interest rate sensitivity, modeling 200–400 basis point shocks for FDIC capital market specialists
- Analyzed capital and asset quality compliance across 6 regulatory components using quarterly Call Reports and UBPR data
- Contributed to 3 executive-level board exit meetings and traveled to 4 on-site examinations at complex financial institutions

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE & ACTIVITIES

Poli Plot Labs, Founder – Chapel Hill, NC May 2025 – Present

- Founded a student-led policy think tank to translate complex datasets into clear, engaging visual stories, with an initial focus on energy resilience, climate policy, and community priorities surrounding public health
- Built and launched a website on GitHub Pages using HTML, CSS and JavaScript to host policy briefs, data visualizations, and interactive dashboards, bridging academic research with accessible, public-facing insights for broad audiences

UNC Data Literacy Lab, Head Graduate Teaching Assistant – Chapel Hill, NC August 2024 – May 2025

- Supported instruction in data literacy labs for ~360 first-year undergraduates across multiple majors each semester, holding 16 weeks of lab sessions and providing feedback on 160+ weekly exercises to strengthen foundational quantitative skills
- Supervised ~25 original applied projects each semester using Excel, Tableau, and RStudio, guiding students to produce policy-relevant analyses and visualizations that demonstrated measurable improvements in data literacy concepts

FDIC Academic Challenge, Economic Research Analyst – Washington, DC August 2022 – May 2023

- Conducted advanced panel data analysis in Stata on 20 years of quarterly Call Report data from 12,000+ U.S. banks, modeling deposit composition trends and identifying liquidity risks that informed policy discussions during high interest rates
- Presented a nationally selected depositor behavior research paper to FDIC leadership in Arlington, VA, leading a Q&A session that connected empirical findings to supervisory policy discussions and industry risk management practices

SKILLS

- **Technical Skills:** R, Stata, Tableau, Excel, GitHub, ArcGIS Pro, Qualtrics, Adobe Illustrator, WordPress
- **Core Competencies:** Cross-Sector Collaboration, Data Modeling, Quantitative Research, Impact Assessment