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Current Position: Senior Lecturer, School of Economics and Finance – Victoria University of Wellington

Research Interests: Labor Economics, Health, Education and Cultural Economics, Applied Econometrics

Education: University of Oregon, Eugene
Ph.D., Economics, 2013.

Oregon State University, Corvallis
B.A. Economics; Minor Japanese, 2008.

Teaching:

Courses:

Victoria University of Wellington (2013-present)
QUAN 102: Introduction to Business Statistics
ECON 130: Introductory Economics
ECON 333: Labour Economics
ECON 433: Honours Labour Economics

University of Oregon (2008-2013)
EC 320: Introduction to Econometrics (Spring 2012, Spring 2013)
EC 390: Problems and Issues in Developing Economies (Summer 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2010, Fall 2011, Fall 2012)

Teaching Assistance

English Language Institute of Oregon State University (Fall 2004-Spring 2008)

Publications: “Returns to teaching repetition - the effect of short-term teaching experience on Student Outcomes,” (with Jan Feld and Trevor O'Grady), Forthcoming: *Education Finance and Policy* 2020.

Teachers often deliver the same lesson multiple times in one day. In contrast to year-to-year teaching experience, it is unclear how this teaching repetition affects student outcomes. We examine the effects of teaching repetition in a setting where students are randomly assigned to a university instructor's first, second, third or fourth lesson on the same day. We find no meaningful effects of repetition on grades, course dropout, or study effort and only suggestive evidence of positive effects on teaching evaluations. These results suggest that teaching repetition is a powerful

tool to reduce teachers' preparation time without negative effects on students.

“Household vulnerability on the frontline of climate change: the Pacific atoll nation of Tuvalu,” (with Tausi Taupo and Ilan Noy), *Environmental Economics and Policy Studies*, Volume 20, Issue 4, 2018, Pages 705-739.

This paper investigates the vulnerability of households to climatic disasters in the low-lying atoll nation of Tuvalu. Small Island Developing States, particularly the atoll nations, are the most vulnerable to climatic change, and in particular to sea-level rise and its associated risks. Using the most recent household surveys available, we construct poverty and hardship profiles for households on the different islands of Tuvalu, and combine these with geographic and topographic information to assess the exposure differentials among different groups using spatial econometric models. Besides the observation that poor households are more vulnerable to negative shocks because they lack the resources to respond, we also find that they are also more likely to reside in areas highly exposed to disasters (closer to the coasts and at lower elevation) and have less ability to migrate (between and within the islands).

“The Effect of Payday Lending on Liquor Sales,” (with Christopher Gibbs), *Journal of Banking and Finance*, Volume 85, 2017, Pages 132-145.

We exploit a change in lending laws to estimate the causal effect of restricting access to payday loans on liquor sales. Leveraging lender- and liquor store-level data, we find that the changes reduce sales, with the largest decreases at stores located nearest to payday lenders. By focusing on states with state-run liquor monopolies, we account for endogenous supply-side variables that are typically unobserved. Further analysis of consumer-level data indicates that the lending restrictions reduce alcohol expenditures without affecting total household spending. This is consistent with a distinct relationship between payday lending access and alcohol purchases, and suggests that present biased motivations underlie some loan use. The finding is significant because it shows that payday loan access is associated with unproductive borrowing, and directly links payday loan access to public health issues.

“Rain and museum attendance: Are daily data fine enough?” *Journal of Cultural Economics*, Volume 42, Issue 2, May 2018, Pages 213-241.

I investigate the intraday effects of rain on the demand for indoor leisure. To do so, I use sub-daily museum attendance and weather data to reveal a dynamic response to precipitation that would be obscured using day-level data. I find that the magnitudes and signs of the effects of rainfall vary significantly throughout the day. In some hours, the predicted increase in visitors is nearly three times larger than would be expected from estimates using daily measures. Many individuals appear to actively adjust their plans throughout the day in response to rain, while others' attendance depends upon prior weather forecasts of rain. Further analysis reveals that visit duration also increases during rainy periods, and visitors are more likely to attend pay-to-enter special exhibits. International visitors make up a greater share of total visitors during periods of observed precipitation. More broadly, this paper establishes the viability and value of working with widely available sub-daily rainfall data to uncover these dynamics.

“Can School Sports Reduce Racial Gaps in Truancy and Achievement?” (with Glen Waddell and Wesley Bignell), *Economic Inquiry*, Volume 55, Issue 4, October 2017, Pages 1966-1985.

While existing research supports that participation in high-school athletics is associated with better education and labor-market outcomes, the mechanisms through which these benefits accrue are not well established. Using individual microdata collected daily, and team-specific schedules, we retrieve estimates of the causal effect of high-school athletic participation on absenteeism, suggesting that participation decreases absences, driven primarily by reductions in unexcused absences in boys. There are also strong game-day effects in truancy, in both boys and girls, with truancy declines on game days more than offset by subsequent absenteeism. Important heterogeneity by race, gender, and family structure may serve to substantially reduce racial gaps in truancy and achievement.

“Evidence on the Efficacy of School-Based Incentives for Healthy Living,” (with William Harbaugh, Jason Lindo, and Giancarlo Musto, and Glen Waddell), *Economics of Education Review*, Volume 31, Issue 6, December 2012, Pages 1028-1036.

We analyze the effects of a school-based program that offers children an opportunity to win prizes if they walk or bike to school during prize periods. We use daily child-level data and individual fixed effects models to measure the effect of the prizes, with variation in the timing of prize periods across different schools allowing us to estimate models with calendar-date fixed effects to control for day-specific attributes, such as weather and proximity to holidays. On average, we find that being in a prize period increases the riding behavior of participating children by sixteen percent, a large impact given that the prize value is just six cents per student. We also find that winning a prize lottery has a positive impact on ridership over subsequent weeks; consider heterogeneity across prize type, gender, age, and calendar month; and explore differential effects on the intensive versus extensive margins.

Working Papers and Work in Progress:

Do Struggling Students Benefit From Continued Student Loan Access? Evidence From University and Beyond - (with L. Chu)

Do International Tourists Reduce Locals’ Enjoyment of Public Places?

Exam Schedules, Grades, and Major Choice - (with G. Waddell)

Opportunity from disaster? The effects of the Christchurch Earthquake on high schoolers’ post-graduation outcomes - (with O. Wills)

The impact of injury on high-school students’ academic outcomes - (with A. Chiu, L. Chu and O. Wills)

Presentations & Discussant Opportunities:

- **National Bureau of Economics Research’s Education Program Meetings (2014 Washington D.C.).**
- **Labour Economics Workshop (2014 Melbourne).**
- **NZ Econometric Study Group (2014 Hamilton).**
- **Otago University Medical School Seminar (2015 Wellington).**
- **Univ. of Waikato Seminar (2016 Hamilton).**

- Otago University Seminar (2016 Dunedin).
- 3rd Annual Centre for Social Data Analytics Workshop (2018 Auckland).
- MOTU Seminar (2018 Wellington).
- Otago University Seminar (2019 Dunedin).
- UNSW Microeconomics Seminar (2020).

Grants: **Marsden Fund Fast-Start Grant.** “Credit constraints and human capital: The effects of student loans on educational attainment, labour market success, and health outcomes” Amount: \$300000, starting 2018 and finishing 2020. Role: Associate Investigator.

Referee at: Journal of Labor Economics, Labour Economics, Journal of Applied Econometrics, Economics of Education Review, Journal of Cultural Economics, Oxford Economic Papers, Treasury’s Working Papers Series, New Zealand Economics Papers, Urban Affairs, Labour and Industry: a Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work, Australian Journal of Labour Economics.