

# Lois Miller

Website: [loismiller.info](http://loismiller.info) ♦ Email: [lois.miller@moore.sc.edu](mailto:lois.miller@moore.sc.edu)

Darla Moore School of Business, Office 452B, 1014 Greene St, Columbia, SC 29208

Updated August 2026 ([most recent version here](#))

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

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### University of South Carolina, Department of Economics

Assistant Professor

Fall 2024 – Present

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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### Institute for Labor Economics (IZA@LISER)

Research Affiliate

March 2026 – Present

## EDUCATION

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### University of Wisconsin-Madison

Ph.D., Economics

2024

*Committee: Jeff Smith (chair), Chris Taber, Matt Wiswall, Nick Hillman*

M.S., Economics

2019

### DePauw University

B.A., Mathematics, Minors in Economics and Computer Science

2017

*Summa cum laude*

## RESEARCH PAPERS

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### Published and Accepted Papers

- [Who Scars the Easiest? College Quality and the Effects of Graduating into a Recession](#) (with Garrett Anstreicher) *Forthcoming, ILR Review*
- [Distance to Degrees: How College Proximity Shapes Student's Enrollment Choices and Attainment Across Race and Socioeconomic Status](#) (with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, and Camila Morales) *Forthcoming, Economics of Education Review*
- [Making College Affordable? The Impacts of Tuition Freezes and Caps](#) (with Minseon Park), *Economics of Education Review* 89 (2022): 102265.
- [Workforce Entry Including Career and Technical Education and Training](#) (with Burt Barnow and Jeffrey Smith) in "What Has Happened to the American Working Class Since the Great Recession?", *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 695, no. 1 (2021): 260–274.

### Working Papers

- [Switching Schools: Effects of College Transfers](#)
- [The Labor Market Value of Community College Bachelor's Degrees: Initial Evidence from a Resume Audit Study in Early Childhood Education](#) (with Riley Acton (✉) Camila Morales (✉) Julia Turner (✉) Kalena Cortes, *random author order*)
- [Small Distances that Matter: Effects of Local Community College Openings on Enrollment and Degree Completion](#)
- [Community College Bachelor's Degrees: How CCB Graduates' Earnings Compare to AAs and BAs](#) (with Riley Acton (✉) Camila Morales (✉) Kalena Cortes (✉) Julia Turner, *random author order*)

### Selected Works in Progress

- Estimating the Value of a New Postsecondary Credential: An Audit Study of Community College Bachelor's Degrees (with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, and Julia Turner)
- Gendered Returns to Community College Access (with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Emileigh Harrison and Camila Morales)
- Quantifying Non-Sampling Variation: College Quality and the Garden of Forking Paths (with Heather Little and Jeffrey Smith)

- Distance to College as a Barrier to Application: Documenting Evidence and Exploring Solutions (with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Emily Cook, and Camila Morales)
- Aligning Pathways: Measuring and Improving Course Selections for Transfer Students (with Zhengren Zhu)
- University Pathways to STEM Bachelor's Degrees and Graduate Education for Community College Transfer Students (with Tatiana Velasco)

## GRANTS RECEIVED

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Ascendium Education Philanthropy (2026): “Assessing Returns to Community College Bachelor's Degrees” (Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$739,700.

Strada Education Foundation (2026): “Phase 2: Understanding Enrollment In and Returns to Community College Bachelor's Degrees.” Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$199,686

Strada Education Foundation (2025): “Understanding Enrollment In and Returns to Community College Bachelor's Degrees.” (Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$49,680

J-PAL North America Racial Equity Grant (2025): “Estimating the Value of a New Postsecondary Credential: An Audit Study of Community College Bachelor’s Degrees.” (Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$44,575.55 + Research Management Support of \$28,804.99

Texas A&M University Bush School Seed Grant (2025): “Estimating the Value of a New Postsecondary Credential: An Audit Study of Community College Bachelor’s Degrees.” (Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$11,530.

Texas Higher Education Foundation (2025): “PSEO Research Grant” (Co-PI with Riley Acton, Kalena Cortes, Camila Morales, & Julia Turner). \$15,000.

University of South Carolina Riegel and Emory Human Resource Center Grant (2024): “Switching Schools: Effects of College Transfers” and “Small Distances that Matter: Effects of Local Community College Openings on Enrollment and Degree Completion.” \$5,000

## SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

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| Dean's Fellowship, Darla Moore School of Business, University of South Carolina            | 2026–present |
| Summer Scholars Fellowship, Postsecondary Education & Economics Research (PEER) Center     | 2026         |
| Ascendium Postsecondary Scholar Award                                                      | 2026         |
| Jean Flanigan Outstanding Dissertation Award, Association for Education Finance and Policy | 2025         |
| Honorable Mention, Association for Public Policy and Management Best Dissertation Award    | 2024         |
| National Academy of Education/Spencer Dissertation Fellowship                              | 2023         |
| Dorothy Rice Dissertation Fellowship, UW-Madison Dept. of Economics                        | 2022         |
| Mary Claire Ashenbrenner Phipps Dissertator Fellowship, UW-Madison Dept. of Economics      | 2021         |
| Dissertation Research Award, UW-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty                  | 2021         |
| Honors with Distinction Award for Honor Scholar Thesis, DePauw University                  | 2017         |
| Phi Beta Kappa Society, Indiana Alpha Chapter                                              | 2016         |

## SEMINAR AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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**2027:** *(scheduled)* Allied Social Science Association (ASSA) Annual Meeting

**2026:** *(including scheduled)* ASSA; Clemson University; Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP) Conference; Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM); University of Texas at Austin

**2025:** AEFP; City University of New York (CUNY) Higher Education Seminar Series (virtual); Triangle Economics of Education Workshop; Sixth World Labor Conference/Society of Labor Economists (SOLE); Institute for Research on Poverty Summer Research Workshop; Econometric Society World Congress; Oregon State University; University of California – Davis; California Policy Lab; South Carolina EPiC Cradle to Career Conference; Ohio State University; Texas A&M MicroEconomic Empirical Research workshop; Minneapolis Federal Reserve Opportunity & Inclusive Growth Institute Early Career Researchers’ Workshop

**2024:** U.S. Military Academy at West Point; Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) Retail Credit Risk Analysis Division (virtual); University of South Carolina; OCC Compliance Risk Analysis Division (virtual);

University of Rochester; ISO New England; Federal Trade Commission; Virginia Commonwealth University; Census Bureau (virtual); RAND Corporation; U.S. Department of Education/Brookings Institute Economics of Education Seminar; AEFPP; National Science Foundation Evaluation and Assessment Capability Seminar (virtual); National Academies of Science Engineering and Medicine Roundtable on Systemic Change in Undergraduate STEM Education (virtual); Notre Dame/Midwest Econ of Education Conference; APPAM; Southern Economic Association (SEA) Conference; National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Economics of Education Fall Meeting

**2023:** AEFPP; Midwest Economics Association (MEA) Conference; Census Bureau (virtual); Society of Labor Economists (SOLE) Annual Meeting; Federal Statistical Research Data Center Annual Research Conference (virtual); Abt Associates (virtual); University of Florida College of Education; APPAM; University of North Carolina – Greensboro; University of Texas – San Antonio; State University of New York at Buffalo Graduate School of Education

**2022:** AEFPP; American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference; APPAM; Interdisciplinary Training Program in Education Sciences Seminar

**2020:** AEFPP; APPAM; E-con of Education Conference

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### Instructor (University of South Carolina)

ECON 530, Economics of Education

ECON 436, Introductory Econometrics

### Teaching Assistant (UW-Madison)

ECON 410, Introductory Econometrics, Prof. Kohei Yata

ECON 102, Introduction to Macroeconomics, Prof. Stella Chan

ECON 102, Introduction to Macroeconomics, Prof. Elizabeth Kelly

## SERVICE

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Referee: *AERA Open*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Canadian Journal of Economics*, *Economic Inquiry*, *Economics of Education Review*, *Economic Journal*, *Education Economics*, *Education Finance and Policy*, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Educational Policy*, *ILR Review*, *Journal of Human Resources*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Quantitative Economics*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Population Economics*, *Social Science Research*, *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics*

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Seminar Co-Director, University of South Carolina                                         | Fall 2024–Spring 2026 |
| PhD Development Committee Member, University of South Carolina                            | Fall 2025–Present     |
| South Carolina Economic Policy Center (EPiC) Steering Committee Member                    | Fall 2026–Present     |
| Abstract Reviewer, APPAM Education Program Area                                           | 2024, 2026            |
| Grant Reviewer, NSF Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences                             | 2026                  |
| Co-founder & leadership team, Wisconsinites for Inclusion & Diversity in Economics (WIDE) | 2019–2022             |

## OTHER PUBLICATIONS/WRITING

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- [What are Community College Bachelor's Degrees and How Much Do Their Graduates Earn?](#) *Brookings Chalkboard*, March 2026.
- [Community College Students Don't Always Benefit from Transferring to a 4-Year College](#) *Brookings Chalkboard*, September 2025.
- [Unintended Costs: The Hidden Consequences of Tuition Freezes and Caps](#) (with Minseon Park). Postsecondary Education and Economics Research (PEER) Center Policy Brief, April 2025.
- [Individual Retirement Arrangements](#) (with Anita Mukherjee), *Encyclopedia of Gerontology and Population Aging* (section: Social Security and Pension Systems), Springer, March 2019
- [Reaching Further: the Role of Distance in College Undermatching](#) (2017) DePauw University Honor Scholar Theses. 72.