

Vibhuti Mehta

Department of Economics | Arizona State University
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EDUCATION

Arizona State University Ph.D. in Economics	2021-2027
University of Wisconsin–Madison M.S. in Economics	2019-2021
Birla Institute of Technology & Science (BITS), Pilani B.Sc. in Economics	2012-2016

RESEARCH FIELDS

Labor Economics, Health Economics, Education Economics

EMPLOYMENT

Credit Suisse Business Analytics Limited, India Economic Research Analyst	2016-2019
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WORKING PAPERS

“Licensing Barriers to Interstate Mobility: Evidence from Travel Nurses” (*Job Market Paper*)

This paper examines the impact of licensing barriers to interstate mobility on nursing labor markets and health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using county-level CDC data, I exploit spatial variation from the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) and temporal variation from federal emergency waivers to identify the causal effects of licensing barriers on COVID-19 mortality. Through a Boundary Discontinuity Design, I establish that NonNLC States reported 7% higher deaths per capita in 2020, despite emergency measures already in place. To establish the mechanism, I use granular data on US travel nurses and their individual licenses. I estimate a structural model of nurse applications that separates the direct disutility of licensing barriers from hospitals’ wage responses. The results reveal that a lack of licensure reduces application probability by 70%, despite the presence of a compensating wage premium and emergency measures. Counterfactual estimates reveal that NonNLC states suffered the highest loss in applications due to licensing barriers. Together, the findings highlight that interstate licensing barriers constrained the rapid reallocation of critical healthcare labor during the pandemic and that uniform licensing policies like the NLC can enhance labor market responsiveness and improve public health resilience in times of crisis.

“Accountability and Access: The Impact of School Quality Grades on Student Transfers and Voucher Uptake” (*with Esteban Aucejo and Alex Toy*)

This project examines how school letter grades shape students’ school choice decisions and voucher uptake in Arizona. Using student-level data from the Arizona Department of Education, we examine how publicly available measures of school quality influence whether students transfer to other schools and how these decisions changed after Arizona expanded its Empowerment Scholarship Account program into a universal voucher system. This policy shift made public funds broadly available for education-related expenses, creating a unique setting to study how families respond to both school quality information and expanded school choice policy. Using a regression discontinuity design around school grade cutoffs, we identify the causal impact of higher quality ratings on student transfers and voucher take-up. The project also uses granular demographic, test score, and school accountability data to separate baseline student sorting patterns from the direct effects of voucher expansion. Early evidence suggests that school ratings play a meaningful role in shaping family decisions, with students showing a greater willingness to leave lower-rated schools.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University	
Research Assistant for Esteban Aucejo	2024-Present
Research Assistant for Paula Calvo	Summer 2023
Research Assistant for Ellen P. Green	Summer 2024
University of Wisconsin-Madison	
Research Assistant for Rikhil R. Bhavnani	2020

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Western Economic Association International (WEAI), Graduate Student Workshop	2026
American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon)	2025-2026
Western Economic Association International (WEAI)	2024
Arizona State University - General Economics Workshop	2024-2026

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University, Instructor	
Applied Regression and Data Analytics	Spring 2026
Arizona State University, Teaching Assistant (selected)	
Gender and Family Economics	Spring 2025, 2023
Applied Regression and Data Analytics	Fall 2024, 2023
International Trade Theory	Spring 2024

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Languages: English, Hindi (Native)
Programming: Stata, R, Python, MATLAB, Qualtrics, L^AT_EX

REFERENCES

Esteban Aucejo (Chair) Professor Department of Economics Arizona State University Esteban.Aucejo@asu.edu	Alvin Murphy Associate Professor Department of Economics Arizona State University alvin.murphy@asu.edu	Samuel Young Assistant Professor Department of Economics Arizona State University sammygyoung@gmail.com
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