



## THIS ISSUE

*Important Dates**Faculty Spotlight**EC Alumni Spotlight**Resume-Building Workshop April 15th**3:00-4:00 PM -With Employer Mercer**Campus & CSN Events*

## IMPORTANT DATES

- ENROLLMENT BY APPOINTMENT BEGINS APRIL 11TH
- PLEASE PLAN YOUR SCHEDULE AHEAD OF TIME AND UTILIZE THE SHOPPING CART FUNCTION
- TO VIEW YOUR ENROLLMENT TIME LOGIN TO STUDENT.MSU.EDU > CLASSES > ENROLLMENT DATES
- FINAL EXAMS MAY 2ND-6TH
- RSVP IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMENCEMENT

ADVISING  
APPOINTMENTS

If you have questions about enrollment, please schedule an Advising Appointment [student.msu.edu](http://student.msu.edu)

## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: PAUL MENCHIK

I am a Professor in the Department and my field is Public Economics, the study of the interactions of government-policies and the private sector of the economy. This fall I am excited about teaching two undergraduate courses in public EC 335 and EC 435 and in past semesters have taught courses in MSU's Masters of Public Policy program and a course on the economics of poverty and income distribution.

In EC 335 we study both the economics of taxation and public expenditures, looking at both the current system and proposals for reform. Changes in our tax system have been proposed by politicians across the political spectrum and I relish the opportunity to help the class analyze some of these proposals. The expenditure side of the class first examines the rationale for an activist government, e.g. the presence of public goods, like efforts to mitigate global pandemics or national defense, as well as coping with the externality problem, like the effect of one person's vaccination on another person's health. These well-established rationales seem quite salient today. We also look at economic inequality and examine which public programs work in reducing poverty and which do not.

In addition, we examine the consequences of social insurance programs-e.g. Social Security and Medicare, and the consequences of reform proposals. For students unable to enroll in EC 335 this fall, the course is offered in MSU's Learning Abroad program in London, UK during the summer. I have done this many times and the students enjoy the experience!

EC 435, intended for our majors, focuses on the expenditure side alone, requires intermediate microeconomics, has a writing requirement (a short paper) and more deeply analyzes the effects of expenditure policy on individual and collective behavior. In addition, we look at how finance by government borrowing, as an alternative to taxation, influences our economy.

While a Professor at MSU, I took two leaves of absence in Washington DC, one at the White House Office of Management and Budget, and the other at the Tax Analysis Division of the Congressional Budget Office, to work on tax and Social Security Reform issues, and bring back this "real world" experience to my courses.

There seems to be a renewal in interest on economic inequality and my research has focused on both its long-term determinants and short-term measurement (in Michigan and in other states). I have demonstrated that wealthy parents have wealthy children, in part due to financial inheritance. In terms of consequences of inequality, those with less income and wealth have shorter lifespans than those with more. In fact, the well-known differences between longevity of blacks and whites are greatly reduced when adjusting for economic differences. In other work I looked at Social Security effects on lifetime wealth accumulation and the determinants of volunteer work.

## EC ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: LAUREN BRETZ

I'm a Lead Manager of Data Science at Starbucks Coffee Company, where my team is responsible for designing and building data products and self-service tools to democratize insights throughout the company.

How does your Economics Education help you succeed in your job?

- There are a few core skills I learned through my economics studies that have helped me succeed in my role: how to write code, how to structure datasets for analysis, and how to set up and test hypotheses in a formulaic way. I also think the structure of economic thinking applies to managing stakeholder relationships at a corporation: how can we maximize the utility of our analyses for stakeholders while minimizing the amount of time we spend performing analytics? Finding the efficient frontier of effort. :)

What is the most rewarding or enjoyable part of your job?

- It's fascinating to see how many decisions and processes underly the seemingly straightforward operation of selling coffee, and it's especially exciting when the results of my analyses are directly reflected in the products Starbucks sells and the way we do business. For example, I built an interactive tool for Product stakeholders to analyze trends in customers' sweetness modification of various beverages over time, and it led to the decision to remove default pumps of syrup in iced tea across all our U.S. stores!

What is a challenging part of your job and how do you handle it?

- There is a hard tradeoff between doing ad hoc, custom analyses to perfectly answer business questions vs. investing in the infrastructure and tools that can automate most (but not all) analysis. There is pressure from stakeholders to always go the custom route, so part of my job is convincing them that we can deliver more value for the business in the long run if we're able to spend time automating insights, even if they aren't perfectly tailored to each individual use case. I tend to handle this by first building up trust with stakeholders and involving them in the decision-making process, then compromising on analytics complexity so we have time to build out automation, then finally showing them through real examples that our tools allow them self-serve much more quickly than going through us for all their data questions.

What recommendations do you have for current EC students on the job or internship search?

- Apply everywhere and leverage connections! I applied to dozens of companies for my first internship and was so disappointed when I only heard back from one, but it ended up being the place where I launched my career after college. Now that I'm on the hiring side of the equation, I've realized how valuable it is to have someone internal vouching for you. Find MSU grads on LinkedIn and politely ask them about their experiences and advice; half the time, they will offer to refer you to their companies. I refer MSU students/grads to Starbucks roles all the time!

What would you encourage all EC students to do before finishing their program?

- Learn how to code! It can be intimidating because there's a vast world of knowledge about coding out there, but you don't need to be a software engineer: learning the basics needed for analytics, preferably in Python or R, will differentiate you in a big way from other economics students in the job market.

Is there anything you would do differently if you had the chance?

- Yes, I wish I had gotten more involved in student organizations earlier in my college experience. I didn't become involved until my last year or two, and even in that short time, I made so many professional and personal connections that I still maintain and have benefitted from to this day.

## EC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (EPDP)

### RESUME-BUILDING WORKSHOP

### FACILITATED BY EMPLOYER MERCER

- April 15th 3:00-4:00 PM
- Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://msu.zoom.us/j/92592170073>  
Meeting ID: 925 9217 0073  
Passcode: resume
- One tap mobile  
+13126266799,,92592170073#  
US (Chicago)

## CAREER SERVICES NETWORK

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Innovate State: Innovation & Inclusivity April 6th 6:00-7:00 PM
- CSN Writing Resumes and Cover Letters April 7th 6:00-7:00 PM
- LinkedIn Photo Booth & Resume Bootcamp April 8th Noon-3:00 PM
- MSU Careers in Service Panel April 8th Noon-1:00 PM
- Life on OPT: The Job Search & Reporting Employment April 12th 9:00-10:00 AM
- Pursuing Careers in Government, Law, International Affairs & Policy April 13th 8:00-9:00 PM
- Innovate State -From College to Corporate April 20th 6:00-7:00 PM
- Pursuing Careers in Business April 20th 8:00-9:00 PM

## COUNSELING & PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

### (CAPS) [HTTPS://CAPS.MSU.EDU/](https://caps.msu.edu/)

- [CAPS Connect \(brief consultation\)](#)
- [Crisis Services](#)

## OFFICE OF CULTURAL & ACADEMIC

### TRANSITIONS (OCAT)

- [Spring 2022 Events](#)
- [OCAT Fridays 1:00-4:00 PM](#)