EC 480 provides an overview of labor economics, one of the primary fields in economics. Overall, the course focuses on why people earn what they earn. While issues that are directly related to the labor market come up in our studies—issues of productivity, market power, discrimination, and unions—labor economics also includes the study many other topics that affect earnings more indirectly. For example, labor economics also includes the study of education and demographic issues (e.g., marriage and childbearing).

In my own research, I have focused on issues related to inequality, labor supply, health, and poverty. Currently, I am working on issues related to overtime laws in the United States.

One interesting fact from my research is that building a grocery store may not solve a “food desert” problem.

What did I learn in COVID? I think the main thing I learned was how resilient and persistent and dedicated most folks are, including students, faculty, advisors and staff.

Also, I greatly enjoy the idle chat that takes place in a work environment. Without such office chat, I enjoy my job much less.

As Department Chair, one of my main duties is to help trouble shoot issues that may arise in the Department. If you run into issues that cannot be resolved after talking to faculty and advisors, please know that I am another resource available to you.

WISHING YOU A GREAT START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR!
EC ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: KATIE BECK

- What is your job title and what do you do?
  - I am a Senior Transportation Planner at the Michigan Department of Transportation.
  - I develop and apply travel demand forecasting models for metropolitan planning organizations in Michigan. These models estimate traffic based on current socioeconomic conditions and project future traffic using forecasted data.
- How does your Economics Education help you succeed in your job?
  - My economics education helps me succeed daily in my job. The econometric and statistical tools learned in the economics curriculum are critical when processing survey data to understand local travel characteristics. The models we build use many economic modeling concepts such as equilibrium (which is used in assigning traffic) and the gravity model (which is used in travel demand models to distribute trips across an area based on the proximity and number of jobs, housing, etc.)
- What is the most rewarding or enjoyable part of your job?
  - The most rewarding part of my job is the variety of opportunities day to day. I am often involved in different projects across the state. This gives me an opportunity to brainstorm creative solutions to problems and keeps the job interesting.
- What is a challenging part of your job and how do you handle it?
  - A challenging part of my job is managing customer expectations. Some customers expect to have very little involvement while others are much more hands on. The best way to handle this is through early communication to establish expectations and come up with a work plan.
- What recommendations to you have for current EC students on the job or internship search?
  - 1) Take advantage of the helpful resources MSU offers (e.g. resume and cover letter development).
  - 2) Apply everywhere you are interested, don’t get discouraged if you are filling out a lot of applications and not hearing back.
  - 3) In an interview, remember you are there to interview the company as well. Ask questions about the culture or anything else you might want from your future career.
  - 4) Be honest but confident. Don’t lie but be sure to mention any skills you do have (e.g. programming, GIS, etc.), even if you aren’t an expert.
- What would you encourage all EC students to do before finishing their program?
  - Take advantage of MSU’s study abroad and internship away opportunities.
  - Get an internship in a field you are interested in. I did a public policy internship as part of the Study Away program in Washington D.C. This made me realize I wanted a more technical position which led to me applying to a student assistant position at MDOT when I returned to MSU.
- Is there anything you would do differently if you had the chance?
  - I wish I had more university research experience. I believe this would be beneficial in my career goals and in maintaining connections with the Economics department.
JOIN WAMIE!

Women and Minorities in Economics (WAMIE) is a professional student organization that will prepare you for graduate school, law school, internships, and full-time opportunities. From start-ups to some of the largest Fortune 500 companies, local to federal governments, non-profit organizations to law firms, and universities to research companies, our members and alumni work all over the world.

Being a part of WAMIE will give you access to this large and growing network of passionate students and professionals, as well as the opportunity to make connections and gain experience that will grant you an advantage upon graduation.

- WAMIE Sept. Events
- Oct. & Nov. Events

ACADEMIC SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

OFFICE OF CULTURAL & ACADEMIC TRANSITIONS (OCAT)
- Fall 2022 Events
- Spartan Remix September 8th Munn Field 5:00-8:00 PM

COUNSELING & PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES (CAPS) HTTPS://CAPS.MSU.EDU/
- CAPS Connect (brief consultation)
- Crisis Services

Just a few events to look forward to if you join:

- Meeting the economist Lise Vesterlund, author of “The No Club: Putting a Stop to Women’s Dead-End Work”
- Resume workshop
- Linked In workshop
- Graduate school workshop
- Professional headshots
- Panel events with potential employers, alumni, and other successful econ graduates
- Internship and scholarship information
- Social events
- And much more!

From friendships to professional development, we’re here for you. Stop by our booth at Sparticleicipation on August 30 to meet our E-Board before our first meeting on September 7.

If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to us at wamie.msu@gmail.com.

Follow us on Instagram @wamiemsu and Twitter @WAMIEMSU1.
Check out our website!
Join our mailing list!

Other Opportunities for Involvement in EC

Other Opportunities for Involvement On-Campus