

Kristin Vrona

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Economics
Northern Illinois University
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NIU Job Market Coordinator

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NIU Job Market Administrator

Ms. Debbie Woolbright
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Phone: 815-753-1031

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Economics, Northern Illinois University	Expected 2025
	Degree specializations: econometrics, labor economics	
	Dissertation Title: “An Analysis of Mental Health and Labor Productivity”	
M.A.	Economics, Northern Illinois University	2018
B.S.	Economics, <i>summa cum laude</i> , Northern Illinois University (NIU)	2016

Fields: Health economics, labor economics, applied econometrics, public economics

EMPLOYMENT

Research Assistant 2022 - 2024

Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, & Energy (ESE), NIU, DeKalb, IL
Sponsor: Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

- Consulted IDNR on improving the scoring process determining funding allocations

Teaching Assistant 2017 - 2022

Department of Economics, NIU, DeKalb, IL

- Instructor of record (3 semesters); Recitation leader (2 semesters); Assistant Undergraduate Advisor (4 semesters)

Cost Savings & Operations Analyst 2016 - 2017

M.O.L. America, Inc., Lombard, IL

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

“Labor Supply Dynamics Among Employed Workers with Mental Illness” (Job Market Paper)

This study examines how mental and physical health conditions predict absenteeism among employed adults, focusing on the role of prior mental illness diagnosis, current distress, and chronic physical health conditions. Key findings reveal sex-specific patterns: men show heightened absenteeism sensitivity to physical health declines, while women’s absence rates remain steady. Notably, both sexes with initial mental health diagnoses display reduced absences under high distress and physical health challenges, suggesting diagnosis may encourage proactive health management. These insights underscore the importance of mental health support in workplace policies.

“Mental Health and Absenteeism: the Role of Fringe Benefits as Moderators”

This paper analyzes the impact of mental illness on absenteeism among employed adults, using MEPS data from 2010 to 2014. The study estimates the effects of diagnosed mental illness on absenteeism, accounting for symptom severity and individual, family, regional, and macroeconomic factors. It also examines how job factors, including fringe benefits, influence absenteeism. Findings suggest that while fringe benefits may increase absenteeism initially, they help mitigate the long-term impact of mental illness on absence, supporting the value of wellness-oriented benefits in enhancing productivity.

“Causal Effect of Mental Health on Employment Duration”

Using duration analysis and a latent health demand model, this study examines the impact of mental health on labor market outcomes, specifically employment duration and the length of layoffs leading to long-term unemployment.

REFERENCES

Dissertation Committee

Virginia Wilcox
Assistant Chair, Department of
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Northern Illinois University
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Maria Ponomareva Department of
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AWARDS, HONORS, & FELLOWSHIPS

Academic

- 2022 Dissertation Completion Fellowship, Northern Illinois University. *Runner-up, awarded tuition-waiver for 2022-2023 academic year.*
- 2018 Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Northern Illinois University Graduate School (April).
- 2017 Kellstadt Graduate Scholarship, DePaul University Kellstadt Graduate School of Business. *Declined in favor of Assistantship offer from Department of Economics, Northern IL University.*
- 2012-2016 Departmental Honors, Department of Economic; Dean's List, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences; Academic Excellence List, Northern Illinois University

Professional

- 2023 IL congressional session (February 28) & gubernatorial press conference (March 1). *ESE team honored for management of \$59 million in grant funds across IL parks projects.*
- 2017 M.O.L. Spot Award, M.O.L. America, Inc. (June). *Monetary award for streamlining data processes and developing standard operating procedures for cross-departmental implementation.*

CAMPUS & DEPARTMENTAL TALKS

- 2022 “Labor Productivity and Health”, ECON 700: Labor Economics I, NIU Department of Economics, November 27
- 2021 “Moderate to Severe Diagnosed Mental Disorders and Absenteeism”, NIU Department of Economics Graduate Colloquium Seminar, March 24
- 2018 “Mental Health & Labor Supply”, NIU Department of Economics Graduate Colloquium Seminar, November 23

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Principles of Macroeconomics, undergraduate Su22, Su21, Sp21 | NIU
- Instructor of Record leading classes of 38 - 52 students
- Intermediate Macroeconomics, undergraduate Sp22 | NIU
- Econometric Analysis, undergraduate Fa21 | NIU
- Public Sector Economics I, graduate Fa20 | NIU
- Microeconomic Analysis I, graduate Sp20, Fa18 | NIU
- Led weekly recitation sessions for 8 to 12 graduate students
- Economics of Government & Business, undergraduate Sp19 | NIU

ADVANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- 2024 Retirement Confidence Survey: Results and Insight Webinar, Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), June 25
- 2024 EBRI & American Benefits Council: 2024 Spring Policy Forum, May 16
- 2024 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative: Human Subjects Research Training, February 22
- 2023 IDNR & Federal Department of Natural Resources Collaborative Sessions, February 27-28
- 2022 The Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession (CSWEP) Mentorship Seminar
- 2020 CSWEP Successfully Navigating Your Economics PhD, November 20
- 2019 Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago 12th Annual Risk Conference
- 2019 NIU Department of Economics ECONference, April
- 2017 NIU Department of Economics ECONference, April 26

Certifications

CITI Program Human Subjects Research Training Certification (February 2024 - February 2029)

DEPARTMENTAL & UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2019 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, October 18 & November 11
- 2019 *Department Representative*, Department of Economics, NIU Major and Minors Fair, September 18
- 2018 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, October 8 & November 12
- 2018 *Academic Advisor*, Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open House Days, March 30

2018 *Department Representative*, Department of Economics, NIU Spring Internship and Job Fair, February 20

SERVICE TO PROFESSION

2022-2023 **Primary Grant Reviewer**, IDNR Open Space Land Aquisition and Development Program

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages

R	Proficient
SAS	Advanced
VBA	Advanced
Python	Intermediate
Matlab	Basic
GitHub	Fundamental

BI & Query Software

SQL
Oracle Discoverer BI
Oracle Discoverer ODS

Contract Management & Auditing

STARNET

Grant Management Software

AmpliFund