

# Kristin Vrona

Curriculum Vitae

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Department of Economics  
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Northern Illinois University  
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## NIU Job Market Coordinator

Dr. Anna Klis  
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## NIU Job Market Administrator

Ms. Debbie Woolbright  
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## EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Department of Economics, Northern Illinois University  
Expected graduation May 2024  
Dissertation Title: “An Analysis of Mental Health and Absenteeism”
- M.A. Department of Economics, Northern Illinois University, 2018
- B.S. Economics, *summa cum laude*, Northern Illinois University, 2016

**Fields:** Health & labor economics, econometrics, public sector economics

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE & REFERENCES

Dr. Virginia Wilcox (chair)	Dr. Maria Ponomareva	Dr. Anna Klis
Department of Economics	Department of Economics	Department of Economics
Northern Illinois University	Northern Illinois University	Northern Illinois University
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## Dissertation, “An Analysis of Mental Health and Absenteeism”

My dissertation develops a comprehensive theoretical model of health production and time allocation under the pretext of employment, so that an individual must consider contractual constraints as well when choosing optimal resource allocations. I use the theoretical framework as a basis to form empirical hypotheses regarding fringe benefits as moderators to the impact of mental health on labor supply in the form of absenteeism. I also address the issue of endogenous sample selection when focusing on the effect of mental illness on absenteeism among the employed. Empirical

analyses utilize data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) for years 2010 to 2014. Estimates of the effect of mental illness on absenteeism are consistently positive and significant, with men exhibiting higher degrees of additional absence in response to mental illness. Fringe benefits that promote a substitution of time spent on labor for time spent on health are consistent with the literature, and there is still persistent evidence that health insurance impacts absence rates through both the substitution of labor time for time spent utilizing healthcare services and through the channel of mitigating the impact that mental illness has on absenteeism.

## EMPLOYMENT

2022-present	Research Assistant, Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability, and Energy, Northern Illinois University
2017-2022	Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, Northern Illinois University
2016-2017	Cost Control Analyst, Department of Business Analysis & Planning, MOL America Inc. (Lombard, IL)

## RESEARCH PAPERS

### Manuscripts in Preparation

“Moderate to Severe Diagnosed Mental Disorders and Absenteeism” (Job Market Paper)

This paper analyzes the effect of mental illness on absenteeism for employed adults utilizing data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS) for years 2010 to 2014. Empirically, I estimate the effect of diagnosed mental illness on absenteeism while conditioning on heterogeneous degrees of symptom severity and utilize a rich set control variables to account for many other sources of heterogeneity at the individual, family, regional, and macro-economic level. I also analyze how various job factors may either enhance or relieve some of the impact of mental illness on annual days absent from work. Results suggest that fringe benefits that encourage a substitution of labor time for time spent on health results in greater absenteeism; however, there is also evidence that this type of benefit acts as a mitigator to the magnitude of the impact of mental illness on absenteeism, supporting the hypothesis that benefit packages that promote worker wellness improve productive outcomes of employees. Additionally, results suggest that at moderate-to-severe levels of emotional distress, individuals with diagnosed mental illness exhibit better productive outcomes, which is a finding that supports the importance of early treatment and intervention in improving outcomes for those facing mental illness.

### Research in Progress

“Assessing Treatment Utilization Among Workers Indicating Mental Distress”

## AWARDS & HONORS

2018	Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Northern Illinois University
2017	MOL Spot Award, MOL America, Inc.

2016 Honors in Economics, Northern Illinois University  
 2014-2016 Dean's List, Northern Illinois University  
 2012-2013 Academic Excellence List, Northern Illinois University

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Graduate, Northern Illinois University

Public Sector Economics I, Anna Klis F20  
 Microeconomic Analysis I, Anna Klis SP20, F18

### Undergraduate, Northern Illinois University

Principles of Macroeconomics, Kristin Vrona SU22, SU21, SP21  
 Intermediate Macroeconomics, Evan Anderson SP22  
 Basic Econometrics and Econometric Applications,  
 Maria Ponomareva F21  
 Principles of Macroeconomics, Tammy Batson F19, SP19, F17

## DEPARTMENTAL & UNIVERSITY SERVICE

2021 Presenter, "Mental Health and Absenteeism: the Role of Fringe Benefits as Moderators",  
 NIU Economics Department Graduate Colloquium, March 24  
 2019 Transfer Student Advisor for the Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open  
 House Days, October 18 & November 11  
 2019 Organizer and Representative for the Department of Economics, NIU Major and Minors  
 Fair, September 18  
 2018 Presenter, "Moderate to Severe Diagnosed Mental Disorders and Absenteeism", NIU Eco-  
 nomics Department Graduate Colloquium, November 23  
 2018 Transfer Student Advisor for the Department of Economics, NIU Transfer Student Open  
 House Days, October 8 & November 12  
 2017 NIU Department of Economics ECONference, April 26

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & DEVELOPMENT

Open Project Selection Plan (OPSP), Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory (IRFI), and Pollution  
 Generating Impervious Surfaces (PGIS), Illinois Department of Natural Resources, 2023  
 Grant Reviewer, Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Program, Illinois Department of  
 Natural Resources, 2022-2023  
 Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago 12th Annual Risk Conference - Attendee, 2019

## RELATED PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

R, R Studio

SAS  
L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X  
Microsoft Office (especially Excel and VBA)