Chaz Simmons

Phone: 480-703-5188, Email: chaz.simmons@colorado.edu, Website: www.sites.google.com/view/chaz-simmons

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Colorado Boulder (Expected Spring 2025)M.A. Economics, University of Colorado Boulder (2022)B.S. Economics, Arizona State University (2020)B.A. Political Science, Arizona State University (2020)

Research Interests

Primary Fields: Environmental Economics, Industrial Organization Secondary Fields: Energy Economics, Consumer Behavior Interests: Valuation of goods and services, public goods, transportation, recreation demand

Dissertation Chapters

Survey Says: Who Needs It? Travel Cost Valuation Methods with Administrative Data (Job Market Paper)

<u>Abstract:</u> Travel cost modeling is a valuable tool for valuing environmental goods, helping policymakers make informed decisions regarding funding allocation and resource management. Traditionally, the travel cost literature has relied on survey data to value camping trips and leisure activities, raising concerns about external validity and limiting the analysis of larger-scale policy questions. Despite this, little attention has been given to the potential of administrative data in conducting travel cost modeling. This paper estimates the willingness to pay for campgrounds across the State of Arizona using a novel administrative travel cost dataset comprising over 1.1 million observations from more than 187,000 camping reservations. I leverage camper willingness to pay to conduct an analysis of the budgets for the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service. My findings align with existing survey literature, demonstrating that administrative data can yield comparable results to traditional survey data. Furthermore, my dataset enables a level of analysis that is often cost-prohibitive with survey methods, offering new insights into visitor behavior and resource allocation.

Paying the Price: Substitution Patterns in Wilderness Access Fees

<u>Abstract:</u> Access fees are an increasingly utilized tool to curb crowding and environmental degradation in wilderness areas. However, concerns persist that access fees in one area could result in substitution toward free areas, thereby producing a trade-off where one area is protected at the expense of others. In this paper, I employ a difference in differences method with a novel dataset of daily hiker traffic collected by infrared cameras to measure the extent to which consumers substitute hiking a mountain with a \\$50 access fee for similar mountains without a fee. Interestingly, while hiking traffic plummeted on the peak with the access fee, I find no evidence of significant substitution effects following the access fee implementation, despite the presence of characteristically similar peaks. My results indicate that there may be more dimensions of environmental good differentiation than previously considered in the literature. Furthermore, access fees may not always generate negative spillover impacts among characteristically similar environmental goods.

Evaluating Willingness to Pay Estimation Methods: Evidence from Chandler, Arizona

<u>Abstract:</u> Traditionally, discrete choice experiments have been viewed as an accurate method of willingness to pay estimation. However, recent literature finds that discrete choice experiments may significantly overestimate willingness to pay. In this paper, I administer three versions of a survey to compare the willingness to pay estimates from discrete choice experiments and direct statements. My survey design allows me to test whether discrete choice experiments yield different estimates of willingness to pay than direct questioning.

Work in Progress

- · "Extending Travel Cost Valuation Beyond Public Goods: Applications in Economic Development"
- · "Analyzing Hypothetical Infrastructure Projects Using Travel Cost Modeling"

Teaching Experience

Graduate Instructor of Record | University of Colorado | August 2023 – December 2023 | Principles of Microeconomics

- Taught and managed a class of 200 students about microeconomic policy ranging from household taxes to market structure analysis during the Fall 2023 academic semester.
- · Recipient of the Reuben A. Zubrow Fellowship Award for the Teaching of Economics.
- · Constructed and managed a course website.

Teaching Assistant | University of Colorado | August 2020 – August 2023 & January 2024 – Present

- · Principles of Microeconomics: Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2024
- · Principles of Macroeconomics: Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Spring 2023
- Introduction to Statistics with Computer Applications: Spring 2022
- · Recipient of the Stanford Calderwood Student Teacher Award.

RA Experience

Energy Market Research Assistant | University of Colorado | August 2021 – Present

- · Acquiring and managing big data via R and Python for Professor Daniel Kaffine's research projects.
- \cdot Constructed energy emissions maps using GIS software.
- · Liaison to large ISO companies where verbal or written communication were required to obtain data.

Macroeconomic Research Assistant | University of Colorado | May 2021 – August 2021

- · Researched dynamic programming models under Professor Alessandro Peri.
- · Wrote a review of the dynamic programming literature for Professor Peri.

Other Graduate Experience

Intern | City of Chandler, Arizona | May 2024 – August 2024

- · Constructed multiple versions of a citywide resident survey using Qualtrics software.
- Coordinated with the Parks and Recreation division, including Director John Sefton, aquatic facility managers, and Parks and Recreation Board members to administer the survey.
- · Authored a survey guide aimed at city recreation leaders to facilitate citizen outreach efforts.
- · Educated and instructed city officials on a method for analyzing and synthesizing written feedback data.
- · Presently utilizing survey results to author a dissertation chapter.

Awards and Fellowships

Stanford Calderwood Student Teaching Award | 2024

Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder

Reuben A. Zubrow Graduate Fellowship for the Teaching of Economics | 2023

Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder

<u>Skills</u>

- · Collection, organization, and analysis of data from both survey and administrative data sources.
- · Planning and conducting original statistical and economic research.
- Communicating and presenting technical results in a clear and concise manner to broad audiences, including academic officials, elected officials, and municipal government officials.
- · Data analysis with various statistical and graphical software (STATA, GIS, Python, and R).
- · LaTeX and Microsoft Office Suite.
- · Quickly learning new analytical and investigative techniques to conduct research.

References

Professor Daniel Kaffine, Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder, 303.492.6652, daniel.kaffine@colorado.edu

Professor Taylor Jaworski, Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder, 303.492.2650, taylor.jaworski@colorado.edu

Professor Scott Savage, Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder, 303.735.1165, scott.savage@colorado.edu

City Manager Joshua Wright, City of Chandler, Arizona, 480.782.2211, Joshua.Wright@chandleraz.gov

Director John Sefton, Community Services Department, City of Chandler, Arizona, 480.782.2707, John.Sefton@chandleraz.gov