TULANE

School *of* Liberal Arts

Department *of* Economics

2026-2027 Job Market Candidates

	Name and Contact Information	Fields of Study	Job Market Paper	References
	Mehrdad Baratian Email: mbaratian@tulane.edu Website CV (page 3)	Public Economics Health Economics Labor Economics Innovation	"The Children of Welfare Reform: Early Childhood Under TANF and Adult Outcomes"	Kevin Callison (Chair) Katy Bergstrom Jonathan Holmes
	Michael Cobar Email: mcobar@tulane.edu Website CV (page 5)	Health Behaviors Health Economics Applied Microeconomics	"Healthy Skepticism? Medical Mistrust and Health Behaviors"	Kevin Callison (Chair) Mary K. Olson Jonathan Holmes Felipe Gómez Trejos
	Yu Liu Email: yliu79@tulane.edu Website CV (page 8)	Health Economics Economics of Aging Economics of Education Applied Econometrics	"Higher Education and Long-Term Health: Evidence from China's College Entrance Exam Suspension"	Kevin Callison (Chair) Patrick Button Douglas N. Harris Mary K. Olson

Mehrdad Baratian

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics
Tulane University, New Orleans

m-baratian.github.io
mbaratian@tulane.edu
LinkedIn
GitHub

Education

•**Tulane University** — New Orleans, LA.
Ph.D., **Economics** — *Expected 2027*
Committee: Kevin Callison (Chair), Katy Bergstrom, Jonathan Holmes
M.S., **Economics**

•**Tehran Polytechnic** — Master of Science in **Business Administration** — Tehran
Graduated Top 3 in Class

•**University of Isfahan** — Bachelor of Science in **Mechanical Engineering** — Isfahan
Achieved a Top 1% Ranking in the National University Entrance Exam

Fields

Public Economics, Health Economics, Labor Economics, Innovation

Working Papers

•**The Children of Welfare Reform: Early Childhood Under TANF and Adult Outcomes** *Job Market Paper*

– **Abstract:** In models of child development, a child's later outcomes depend partly on family income and parental time. Welfare rules that require work trade one for the other, so theory does not say whether children gain or lose. I study the 1990s welfare reforms that imposed such rules, following young children into adulthood in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. I compare children born in the same year across states whose rules differed in strictness, by their families' likelihood of receiving welfare. Among children the rules likely reached, those with more exposure to stricter rules before age five had better general and mental health as adults. But their adult employment did not change, and the estimates for their hours and earnings are imprecise. On net, my findings suggest that these children gained as adults from the trade-off between family income and parental time that the rules imposed.

•**Shocks, Reallocation, and the Direction of Innovation: The Case of COVID-19** *Working Paper*

•**SNAP Generosity and Mental Health** *Working Paper*

Teaching Experience

•**Research & Teaching Assistant, Tulane University** *2021-present*

– Courses: Econometrics II (Ph.D. Level); Machine Learning and Econometrics; Intermediate Microeconomics; Health Economics; Introduction to Macroeconomics; Introduction to Microeconomics.

•**Teaching Assistant — Strategic Management, Tehran Polytechnic** *Spring 2018*

– Course: Strategic Management.

Awards

- APPAM Excellence, Equity and Inclusion Student Fellowship *2026–2027*
- Cato University Summer Term II (Full Scholarship), Cato Institute *August 2026*
- J.E. Land Fund for School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Travel *July 2026*
- Graduate Student Summer Research Award, Tulane University *June 2024, May 2025*
- Graduate Studies Student Association Travel Award, Tulane University *May 2024*
- Joachim-Herz Foundation Award *June 2024*
- Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science Research Grant Award *June 2024, April 2025*

Conferences and Presentations

- Southern Economic Association (SEA) | Houston, TX. *November 2026*
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) | Boston, MA. *November 2026*
- American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) | Minneapolis, MN. *June 2026*
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) | Seattle, WA. *Fall 2025*
- Southern Economic Association (SEA) | Tampa, FL. *Fall 2025*
- Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) | Washington, D.C. *Fall 2024*
- Essen Economics of Mental Health, CINCH - Health Economics Research Center | Universität Duisburg-Essen. Held at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN. *August 2024*
- American Society of Health Economists (ASHEcon) | San Diego, CA. *June 2024*

Peer Review Service

- **Discussant**
  - Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) | Seattle, WA. *November 2025*
  - Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM) | Boston, MA. *November 2026*

Work Experience

Graduate Assistant Data Intern, AEO, Tulane University: *August 2026-present*
- Work with the Office of Academic Excellence and Opportunity on data collection, distribution, and assessment projects.

Statistical Research Consultant, CAIDS, Tulane University: *August 2026-present*
- Consult with Tulane faculty, staff, and student researchers at the Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science on statistical methodology, research design, and analysis, with support in Python, R, and Stata.

Vice President, Graduate Student Association, Tulane University: *2022-2024*
- Led cross-council initiatives; managed budgets; served as university liaison.

Product Marketing Manager and Market Researcher, Negin Bazr Co.: *2018-2021*
- Managed product marketing and conducted market research for the company.

Technical Skills

- **Causal Inference:** Difference-in-Differences, including Continuous-Treatment (Dose–Response) Designs; Event Studies; Interrupted Time Series; Panel Fixed-Effects Regression
- **Machine Learning / NLP:** BERT Text Classification (BioBERT); Sentence Embeddings (SBERT) and TF–IDF; Clustering; XGBoost for Data Imputation
- **Programming:** Python; Stata
- **Computing:** Amazon Web Services (AWS); Tulane University High-Performance Computing (Cypress)
- **Languages:** English; Farsi

References

Kevin Callison
Associate Professor
(Dissertation Chair)
Department of Health Policy and Management
Tulane University
Email: kcallison@tulane.edu
Phone: (614) 989-1764

Katy Bergstrom
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Tulane University
Email: kbergstrom@tulane.edu

Jonathan Holmes
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
University of Ottawa
Email: jonathan.holmes@uottawa.ca

Michael Cobar

Tulane University
Department of Economics
New Orleans, LA

mcobar@tulane.edu
Cell: (504)-939-1350
michaelecobar.github.io/

EDUCATION

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

Ph.D., Economics — Expected May 2027

Committee: Kevin Callison (Chair), Jonathan Holmes, Mary K. Olson, Felipe Gómez Trejos

M.S., Economics — 2023

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

B.S., Economics, *summa cum laude* — 2018

RESEARCH FIELDS

Health Economics, Behavioral Economics, Applied Microeconomics

WORKING PAPERS

"Healthy Skepticism? Medical Mistrust and Health Behaviors" **(Job Market Paper)**

*Abstract***:** Trust in the medical system has eroded substantially in recent years, yet its role as a determinant of health and health care use remains understudied. In this paper, I estimate the effect of medical mistrust on health behaviors and sources of health information using NielsenIQ Consumer Panel data. First, I use a causal forest strategy to predict heterogeneous changes in medical mistrust, drawing on plausibly exogenous variation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, I show that individuals with larger predicted increases in mistrust reduced their use of physicians for both medical treatment and health information and increased their reliance on natural or alternative treatments and online health information. These findings represent the first causal evidence that medical mistrust shapes patient decision-making across a broad, demographically diverse sample, with effects that persist even after accounting for education, income, and race. This shift away from clinical decision makers and toward online information and non-traditional treatments increases patients' exposure to misinformation and to care that lacks professional oversight. Because mistrust operates independently of conventional socioeconomic factors, policies aimed at improving health care access such as reducing costs or expanding insurance coverage, may fail to address the trust problem driving these shifts.

"Clearer Lungs, Clearer Minds? Analyzing the Effects of Tobacco 21 Laws on Youth Smoking Behavior and Mental Health"

"Yearning to Breathe Free? Cigarette Taxes, Smoking Bans, and the Well-Being of Smokers." (with Kevin Callison, Silda Nikaj, and Rujun Zhao)

WORK IN PROGRESS

"When Storms Strike: Air Pollution and Health Effects of Electricity Sector Disruptions" (with Felipe Gómez Trejos and Xiaochen Sun)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Certification

Graduate Pedagogy Certificate, Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching 2025

Instructor of Record

ECON 1010: Intro to Microeconomics Fall 2025

Teaching Assistant 2022-2026

ECON 1010: Intro to Microeconomics; ECON 1020: Intro to Macroeconomics; ECON 3010: Intermediate Microeconomics; PECN 3010: Positive Political Economy; ECON 4410/6410: Mathematical Economics; ECON 4550: Using Big Data to Solve Economic Problems

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Junior Analyst- Convergence Strategy Group 2025

- Compiled secondary data to use in proprietary modeling, performed descriptive data analysis, and created reports communicating findings to gaming and leisure consulting clients

Research Analyst- Lewis, Terrell & Associates 2020-2021

- Gathered data for economic modeling and generated data-centered internal reports for economic impact reports on the landfalls of hurricanes Laura and Delta in Louisiana

Production Analyst- DOXA Land Services 2019-2020

- Analyzed oil and gas production cards, well files, and field orders to create and update cumulative production reports used in project dossiers for clients

PRESENTATIONS

Tulane Economics Lunch Seminar 2026

Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting; Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Annual Fall Research Conference 2024

Tulane Economics Lunch Seminar 2023

FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS

Tulane University

Data, AI, and Community Research Grant, Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science 2025
Graduate Student Summer Research Award, School of Liberal Arts 2025
Graduate Student Summer Write-up Award, School of Liberal Arts 2024
J.E. Land Grant, School of Liberal Arts 2024
Graduate Student Fellowship, School of Liberal Arts 2021-2026

Louisiana State University

Outstanding Economics and ITF Majors Award in Econometrics 2018
University Medal 2018

REFERENCES

Kevin Callison (Chair)
Associate Professor
Department of Health Policy and Management and Department of Economics
Program Director, MPH in Health Policy and Management
Tulane University
kcallison@tulane.edu

Donata Henry (Teaching)
Senior Professor of Practice and Associate Chair
Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
Faculty Fellow, Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching
Tulane University
donata@tulane.edu

Jonathan Holmes
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
University of Ottawa
jonathan.holmes@uottawa.ca

Felipe Gómez Trejos
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
Tulane University
fgomeztrejos@tulane.edu

YU LIU

Department of Economics · Tulane University · New Orleans, LA

yliu79@tulane.edu · 504-509-0736 · kellyyliu.github.io

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, Tulane University **Expected 2027**

Dissertation: "Essays on Health and Aging"

Committee: Kevin Callison (Chair), Patrick Button, Douglas Harris, and Mary Olson

M.S. in Economics, Central University of Finance and Economics

B.S. in Management, Huazhong Agricultural University

RESEARCH FIELDS

- **Primary Fields:** Health Economics, Economics of Aging
- **Secondary Fields:** Economics of Education, Applied Microeconomics

RESEARCH

Publications

- Segal, I., Bui, T., **Liu, Y.**, & Callison, K. (2026). Facility Acquisition and Care Quality in the U.S. Dialysis Industry *Journal for Healthcare Quality*, 48(2), 123-130. DOI: 10.1097/JHQ.0000000000000502

Working Papers

- "Higher Education and Long-Term Health: Evidence from China's College Entrance Exam Suspension."

  [Job Market Paper]

  Abstract: Higher education is widely viewed as improving health, yet its effects on diagnosed chronic morbidity may differ from its effects on broader dimensions of health. This paper examines these effects using cohorts whose college access was disrupted by China's suspension of college entrance examinations between 1966 and 1969. The abrupt and unanticipated suspension provides unusually clean variation for identifying the causal effects of higher education on later-life health and, unlike the expansion studied in most quasi-experimental research, offers a rare contraction in educational opportunity. Using a fuzzy regression discontinuity design, I find that college completion increases diagnosed chronic morbidity, while physical, mental, and cognitive health show little systematic deterioration. College completion also increases health investments along two distinct margins: healthier behaviors and greater preventive care and healthcare contact. In addition, it increases employment-based health insurance and wealth. Together, these results are consistent with education affecting both health production and disease detection, highlighting why diagnosed morbidity and broader health measures need not move together in response to education.

- "Retirement, Grandchild Care, and Inpatient Recovery: Evidence from China's Gender- and Occupation-Specific Retirement Ages" with *Lele Zhao, Lu Yao, and Guisong Wang. [Revise and Resubmit]*

- "The Effect of State Mental Health Parity Laws on Physician Behavior." *[Link]*

- "The Hidden Costs of Police Brutality: Police-Involved Killings and Public Finance" with *Feng Chen, Stephanie F. Cheng and Wei Long. [Draft Upon Request]*

- "Gender Identity, Race, Ethnicity, and Health Insurance Discrimination in Access to Mental Health Care: Evidence from an Audit Correspondence Field Experiment." with *Patrick Button, Barbara Lundebjerg, Luca Fumarco, and Benjamin Harrell. [Draft Upon Request]*

Research in Progress

- "The Effect of Health Insurance on the Health of Near-elderly in the U.S." with *Kevin Callison and Robert Kaestner.*
- "The Impact of Telemedicine on Physicians' Offline Behavior and Patient Health Outcomes: Evidence from China." with *Lele Zhao and Lu Yao.*
- "Medicare Spending, Mobility and Health Outcomes." with *Kevin Callison.*

PRESENTATIONS AND SEMINARS

ASSA (2027), SEA (2026)	Scheduled
ASHEcon	2026
GLO JOPE, SEA, ASSA, Tulane Economics Lunch Seminar	2025
APPAM Fall Research Conference, Tulane Economics Lunch Seminar	2024
Northwestern Main Causal Inference Workshop	2022

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Independent Instructor: ECON 3983 STATA Lab (4.63 / 5)

Teaching Assistant
Graduate: ECON 7530 (Adv Inc and Emp Theory I), ECON 4550/6550 (Big Data Econ.), ECON 4500/6500 (Health Econ.), ECON 4330/6330 (International Trading Relations), ECON 4230/6230 (Econometrics)
Undergraduate: ECON 3230 (Econometrics), ECON 1010/1020 (Intro to Micro/Macroeconomics)

HONORS AND AWARDS

J.E. Land Fund Award	2026
Murphy Institute Center for Public Policy Research (CPPR) Fellowship	2026
School of Liberal Arts Dean's Dissertation Completion Fellowship (decline)	2026
Graduate Studies Student Association (GSSA) Travel Award	2024/2025
Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science (CAIDS) Summer Graduate Grant	2024
School of Liberal Arts Graduate Student Summer Research and Write-up Fellowship	2024

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Audit Group, Ernst & Young Hua Ming LLP, China	2020-2021

OTHER INFORMATION

Languages	Mandarin (Native), English (Fluent)
Skills	Stata, R, Python, LaTeX
Restricted Data Access	CTS Physician Data, CMS-HRS Restricted Data

Departmental Contact Information

Graduate Placement Director:	Director of Graduate Studies:	Economics Operations Manager:
Elliott Isaac	Stefano Barbieri	Erin Callhover
Associate Professor	Professor	Email: ecallhover@tulane.edu
Email: eisaac@tulane.edu	Email: sbarbier@tulane.edu	
Phone: 504-862-8346		