

Maria B. Zhu

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Employment

2020– Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Syracuse University
2019–2020 Instructor, Department of Economics, Syracuse University

Research Affiliation

2023– Research Affiliate, Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA)
2019– Senior Research Associate, Center for Policy Research, Syracuse University

Education

Ph.D. Economics, Duke University, 2019
M.A. Economics, Duke University, 2015
B.A. Mathematics and Economics, *magna cum laude*, Pomona College, 2013

Research Fields

Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Applied Microeconomics

Publications

- “Teacher Perceptions, Test Scores, and Racial Disparities in the Classroom: Evidence from the US,” *Forthcoming at Journal of Human Resources*
- “Beyond the “Old Boys’ Network”: Social Networks and Job Finding at Community Colleges,” *Journal of Human Resources*, 60(4):1405-1434 (2025)
- “Coworker Networks and the Role of Occupations in Job Finding,” with Attila Gyetvai, *Labour Economics*, 94, Article 102699 (2025)
- “New Evidence on the Underrepresentation of Asian Americans in Leadership Positions,” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 227, Article 106679 (2024)
- “Differences in Teachers’ Assessments of Students by English Learner Status,” *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 111:523-527 (2024)
- “Model Minorities in the Classroom? Positive Evaluation Bias towards Asian Students and its Consequences,” with Ying Shi, *Journal of Public Economics*, 220, Article 104838 (2023)

- “Equal Time for Equal Crime? Racial Bias in School Discipline,” with Ying Shi, *Economics of Education Review*, 88, Article 102256 (2022)
- “Limited Contracts, Limited Quality? Effects of Adjunct Instructors on Teaching Outcomes in Higher Education,” *Economics of Education Review*, 85, Article 102177 (2021)
- “The Global COVID-19 Student Survey: First Wave Results,” with David A. Jaeger, Jaime Arellano-Bover, Krzysztof Karbownik, Marta Martínez-Matute, John Nunley, R. Alan Seals, et. al, *Covid Economics, Vetted and Real-Time Papers*, 79:152-217 (2021)
- “Affirmative Action in Undergraduate Education,” with Peter Arcidiacono and Michael Lovenheim, *Annual Review of Economics*, 7:487-518 (2015)

Working Papers

- “Student Disruptions and Teacher Turnover” (with Kyuhan Choi and Ying Shi), *Revise and Resubmit at Journal of Human Resources*
- “Asian College Students’ Well-Being During a Period of Rising Anti-Asian Sentiment” (with Kyuhan Choi and Ying Shi), *Revise and Resubmit at Health Economics*
- “More Girls, Fewer Blues: Peer Gender Ratios and Adolescent Mental Health” (with Monica Deza)
- “The Effects of a Foreign Accent on Hiring Discrimination” (with Elisa Taveras, Ozlem Tonguc, and Nicola Miller)
- “Gender Differences in the Returns to a Double Major: A Case of Signaling?” (with Andrew Smith and Alfonso Flores-Lagunes)
- “Peer Suspension Effects on Student Misbehavior” (with Margaux Luflade and Ashley Schwanebeck)
- “Class Rank and Student Disability Classification” (with Marie Hull and Hema Shah)

Works in Progress

- “The Effects of Height on Adolescents’ Body Image Perceptions and Behaviors” (with Monica Deza and Neiva Fortes)
- “Seasonal Illness and Parental Labor Market Outcomes”

Presentations

- 2025 Clark University, San Diego State University, Society of Labor Economists Conference, University of Duisburg-Essen, NBER Summer Institute Children and Families, Federal Statistical Research Data Center Annual Research Conference
- 2024 ASSA Annual Meeting, Syracuse University Center for Policy Research, Montana State University, Hamilton College, International Conference on Empirical Economics at Pennsylvania State University Altoona
- 2023 ASSA Annual Meeting, Hamilton College, SUNY Buffalo, Pomona College, Federal Trade Commission, Workshop on Human Capital Formation over the Life Cycle (University of Rochester), Binghamton University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting
- 2022 Association for Education Finance and Policy Conference, NBER Working Group on Race and Stratification, Daniel Patrick Moynihan Syracuse-Cornell Summer Workshop in Education and Social Policy, Institute for Research on Poverty Summer Research Workshop, Banff Empirical Microeconomics Conference, 9th Annual Northeastern Economics of Education Workshop, Agglomeration & Social Networks Research Lab, Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting
- 2021 Miami University, Pennsylvania State University, Society of Labor Economists Conference, IZA Economics of Education Workshop, Georgia State University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Southern Economic Association Annual Meetings
- 2020 New York University, Association for Education Finance and Policy Conference, Northeast Labor Symposium for Early Career Economists (*cancelled due to COVID-19*), Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management Research Conference, Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting
- 2019 Syracuse University, Vanderbilt University, University of Nebraska, U.S. Census Bureau, Institute for Defense Analysis, Johns Hopkins University, Triangle Applied Microeconomics Conference, Society of Labor Economists Conference (*poster session*), Daniel Patrick Moynihan Syracuse-Cornell Summer Workshop in Education and Social Policy, Cornell University, University of Rochester
- 2018 Society of Labor Economists Conference, Western Economic Association International Conference, Young Economists Symposium, Pomona College, Southern Economic Association Annual Meeting, Wofford College
- 2017 Association for Education Finance and Policy Conference, Society of Labor Economists Conference (*poster session*), Western Economic Association International Conference, Southern Economic Association Annual Meetings, Duke Bass Connections Invited Lecture

Teaching Experience

Economics of Education (*undergraduate, Syracuse University*), Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020, Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Spring 2026

Labor Economics (*graduate, Syracuse University*), Spring 2021, Spring 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025

Undergraduate Thesis Seminar I (*undergraduate, Syracuse University*), Fall 2022, Fall 2023, Fall 2024, Fall 2025

Undergraduate Thesis Seminar II (*undergraduate, Syracuse University*), Spring 2023, Spring 2024

Economic Principles (*undergraduate, Duke University*), Summer 2016

PhD Student Advising

Chair/co-chair

Shuyuan Li (2023)

Secondary advisor

Samuel Saltmarsh (2025)

Harneet Kaur (2025)

Andrew Smith (2024)

Kyuhan Choi (2024)

Maeve Maloney (2023)

Zhanhan Yu (2023)

Rui Xu (2023)

Giuseppe Germinario (2022)

Rachel Jarrold-Grapes (2022)

Stephanie Coffey (2022)

Dissertation committee member

Radine Rafols (2023)

Joaquin Urrego (2021)

Yi Yang (2021)

Dahae Choo (2021)

Huong Axelrod (2021)

Jonathan Pressler (2020)

Awards and Honors

Faculty Creative Activities and Research Grant, Syracuse University, 2024

Center for Policy Research Small Grant, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 2023, 2024

Appleby-Mosher Faculty Research Grant, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, 2020, 2022, 2024, 2026

Dr. Ralph E. Montonna Endowed Professorship for the Teaching and Education of Undergraduates, 2023-2024

Thompson-Burkhead Award, Syracuse University, 2022

Certificate in College Teaching, Duke University, 2019

Best Poster Award, Society of Labor Economists Conference, 2017

Education and Human Development Scholars Fellowship, Duke Social Science Research Institute, 2015-2017

National Science Foundation, Graduate Research Fellowship, 2013

James B. Duke Fellowship, Duke University, 2013–2017

University Scholars Program, Graduate Scholar, Duke University, 2013–2019

Phi Beta Kappa, Pomona College, 2013

Morris B. Pendleton Prize in Economics, Pomona College, 2013

Leland M. Backstrand Memorial Award in Economics, Pomona College, 2012

Arvid Pierre Zetterberg Award (for exemplary character, scholarship, and athleticism), Pomona College, 2011

Professional Service

Referee for: *American Economic Review*, *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *Review of Economics and Statistics*, *Journal of Human Resources*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *American Economic Review: Insights*, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, *Economics of Education Review*, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *Journal of Population Economics*, *Labour Economics*, *Southern Economic Journal*, *Social Science Research*, *Economics Letters*, *Sociological Perspectives*, *Education Finance and Policy*, *Education Economics*, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, *Review of Economics of the Household*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics*

Languages

English (native), Mandarin Chinese (fluent speaking)

Personal

Place of Birth/Citizenship: USA

Last updated: May, 2026