

LESTER R. LUSHER

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Public Economics, Economics of Education, Labor Economics, Metascience, Behavioral Economics

EDUCATION - UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

Ph.D. Economics, 2017; M.A. Economics, 2012; B.A. Economics, B.A. Statistics, Psychology Minor, 2011

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Associate Prof., University of Pittsburgh, Department of Economics, 2023-
Co-editor, *Economic Inquiry*, 2023-
J-PAL Invited Researcher, 2026-
IZA Research Affiliate, 2019-2025; Research Fellow 2025-
Research Affiliate, California Education Lab, 2017-

Previous appointments

Visiting Professor, Keio University, July 2023-December 2023
Visiting Professor, Keio University, Summer 2022
Associate Prof., University of Hawaii at Manoa, Department of Economics, 2022-2023
Assistant Prof., University of Hawaii at Manoa, Department of Economics & Public Policy Center, 2017-2022

RESEARCH

Publications

- 19) Lusher, L., Ruberg, T., Unveiling the Unseen Illness: Public Health Warnings and Heat Stroke. *Journal of Human Resources*, Accepted
- 18) Brodeur, A. et al., Reproducibility and Robustness of Economics and Political Science Research. *Nature*, 2026
- 17) Jung, S., Lusher, L., Dating Apps and Marriage Rates. *Economics Letters*, 2026
- 16) Cardinali, R., Lusher, L., Taylor, R., Villas-Boas, S., Does Automation Reduce Stigma? The Effect of Self-checkout Register Adoption on Purchasing Decisions. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 2025
- 15) Inafuku, R., Halliday, T., Lusher, L., de Paula, A., Vog: Using Volcanic Eruptions to Estimate the Impact of Particulates on Student Test Scores. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 2025
- 14) Aksoy, B., Lusher, L., Carrell, S., From Distraction to Dedication: Commitment Against Phone Use in the Classroom. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 2025
-Media: *Marginal Revolution*, *Forbes*
- 13) Bencsik, P., Lusher, L., Taylor, R., Slow Traffic, Fast Food: The Effects of Time Lost on Food Choice. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 2025
-Media (Top 5% of all research output & top 1% of JUE publications - Altmetric): *IZA World of Labor*, *Newsweek*, *Medical Xpress*, *New York Post*, *Yahoo!*, *National Academies of Sciences*, *Engineering*, *Medicine*, *American Council on Science and Health*, *Consumer Affairs*, *Health and Me*, *Study Finds*, *Fast Company*
- 12) Carrell, S., Figlio, D., Lusher, L., Clubs and Networks in Economics Reviewing. *Journal of Political Economy*, 2024
- 11) Brodeur, A., Carrell, S., Figlio, D., Lusher, L., Unpacking P-hacking and Publication Bias. *American Economic Review*, 2023
- 10) Lusher, L., Yang, W., Carrell, S., Congestion on the Information Superhighway: Inefficiencies in Economics Working Papers. *Journal of Public Economics*, 2023
- 9) Ballis, B., Lusher, L., Martorell, P., The Effects of Exam Frames on Student Effort and Performance. *Eco-*

nomics of Education Review, 2022

- 8) Lusher, L., Schnorr, G., Taylor, R., Unemployment Insurance as a Working Indiscipline Device? Evidence from Scanner Data. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2022
-Media: *IZA Commentary*
- 7) Kurlaender, M., Lusher, L., Case, M., Is Early Start a Better Start? Evaluating California State University's Early Start Remediation Efforts. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 2020
- 6) Lusher, L., Yassenov, V., Luong, P., Does Schedule Irregularity Affect Productivity? Evidence from Random Assignment into College Classes. *Labour Economics*, 2019
- 5) Campbell, D., Lusher, L., The Impact of Real Exchange Rate Shocks on Manufacturing Workers: An Autopsy from the MORG. *Journal of International Money and Finance*, 2019
- Media: *VoxEU*, *Economist's View*
- 4) Lusher, L., Campbell, D., Carrell, S., TAs Like Me: Racial Interactions between Graduate Teaching Assistants and Undergraduates. *Journal of Public Economics*, 2018 (NBER working paper 21568)
-Media: *Freakonomics Radio*, *Slate*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *Washington Examiner*, *The National Review*
- 3) Lusher, L., He, C., Fick, S., Are Professional Basketball Players Reference-Dependent? *Applied Economics*, 2018
- 2) Lusher, L., Yassenov, V., Gender Performance Gaps: Quasi-experimental Evidence on the Role of Gender Differences in Sleep Cycles. *Economic Inquiry*, 2018
-Media: *The Washington Post*, *The Independent*, *Education Week*, *The National Post*, *IZA Newsroom*
- 1) Lusher, L., Yassenov, V., Double-shift Schooling and Student Success: Quasi-experimental Evidence from Europe. *Economics Letters*, 2016

Working Papers

- "The Robustness Reproducibility of the American Economic Review"
(with Abel Brodeur, Douglas Campbell, Anna Dreber, Magnus Johannesson, Joseph Kopecky, & Nikita Tsoy)
-Revise and resubmit: *American Economic Review*
- "Praying for Prosperity: Religious Activity and the Lottery" (with Scott Carrell)
- "Temptation & Limited Attention: The Effect of Self-checkout on Impulse Purchases"
(with Rebecca Cardinali, Rebecca Taylor, & Sofia Villas-Boas)
- "P-hacking for Popularity? Media Attention and Statistical Significance in Economics Working Papers"
(with Brianna Funderburk & Sunmi Jung)

Research In Progress

- "Early Career Networking: Evidence from IZA Workshops" (with Ingo Isphording & Jiawei Lyu)
- "The Language of Peer Review: Gender and Referee Reports in Economics"
(with William Cunningham & Tim Salmon)
- "Mindfulness and Student Outcomes: A Megastudy"
(with Heather Royer, Chad Stecher, & Behavior Change for Good Initiative (BCFG) research team)
- "Perfecting Performance: A Gendered Perspective" (with Lise Vesterlund & Brandon Williams)
- "Can Winning (an Award) Lead to Losing (in Life)?" (with Nicholas Halliwell)
- "When Samples Shape Significance" (with Sonia Ale, Shafique Islam, Huda Osman, & Jacob Stenstrom)

"File Cabinet" Working Papers

- "Major Disappointment: A Large-scale Experiment on (Non-)Pecuniary Information and Major Choice"
(with Scott Carrell & Derek Rury)
- "College Better: Parimutuel Betting Markets as a Commitment Device and Monetary Incentive"
- "Peer Review Exhibits the Gambler's Fallacy" (with Scott Carrell & David Figlio)
- "Minimum Wage and Higher Education: Evidence from California" (with Scott Carrell & Alice Li)

EXTERNAL HONORS & AWARDS

2025-2026 J-PAL North America HCDI Full Research Project ~\$150,000

2019-2022 J-PAL North America Education Technology and Opportunity Full Research Project ~\$149,396

2017-2020 J-PAL North America Full Research Project Grant ~\$94,210
2016-2017 National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant ~\$10,041
2015 Russell Sage Foundation Small Grants in Behavioral Economics ~\$5,370
2015 IEP Workshop - Best Student/Early Career Presentation Award
2014 University of Chicago & Templeton - Science of Philanthropy Initiative PhD Grant Award ~\$4,200
2014 EBSA "Into the Bullpen" Business Idea Competition: First place for CollegeBetter.com

INTERNAL HONORS & AWARDS

University of Pittsburgh

2025 Mentor of the Year (Economics Department)
2024 Most Valuable Professor: Men's Baseball, Women's Lacrosse

University of Hawaii at Manoa

2018-2019 College of Social Sciences Research Travel Award ~\$1,533
2018-2019 College of Social Sciences Research Support Award ~\$11,501
2017-2018 Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research Travel Award ~\$2,000

University of California, Davis

2016 Office of Research Innovator of the Year Finalist
2016 Institute for Social Sciences Dissertation Improvement Grant
2015 Institute for Social Sciences Dissertation Improvement Grant
2015 Graduate Student Association Fall Travel Award
2015 Institute for Social Sciences Summer Research Support Award
2015 Office of Graduate Studies Travel Award
2015 Interdisciplinary Graduate & Professional Student Symposium Grad Slam Finalist
2014 IGA and Department of Economics Travel & Research Award
2014 Graduate Student Association Spring Travel Award
2013 Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award

REFEREE EXPERIENCE

National Science Foundation, American Economic Review (x4), Journal of Political Economy (x2), Quarterly Journal of Economics, Journal of Economic Literature (x2), PNAS, American Economic Journal: Economic Policy, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics (x3), Management Science, Journal of the European Economic Association (x6), Journal of Human Resources (x11), Journal of Labor Economics (x2), Journal of Public Economics, Economic Journal (x5), Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization (x4), Journal of Policy Analysis and Management (x2), Economics Letters (x2), Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics (x2), Labour Economics, Economics of Education Review (x4), Education Finance and Policy, Canadian Journal of Economics (x2), Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Education Economics (x3), International Review of Economics Education, Journal of Education, Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, Swiss National Science Foundation, Economics of Transition, Journal of Comparative Economics, B.E. Journal of Theoretical Economics, Journal of Behavioral and Experimental Economics, American Psychologist

PRESENTATIONS

2026: UT Austin, Southern Methodist University, Loyola University Chicago
2025: ASREC 2025 Conference (George Mason University), UC Davis Alumni Conference, Montana State University, Case Western Reserve University
2024: ESA North American meeting (Columbus, OH)
2023: UC Irvine, San Diego State University, Tokyo University, Keio University, Osaka University
2022: University of Queensland, University of Pittsburgh, Keio University, UCSD Rady School of Management, Cal Poly SLO, UC Merced
2021: Southern Economic Association 91st Meeting, University of Hawaii at Manoa Shidler College of Business, UC Santa Cruz, University of Auckland, 6th International Conference on Applied Economics (Kobe University)
2020: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Hawaii Economic Association, EALE SOLE AASLE World Conference
2019: University of Hawaii at Manoa, UC Davis Alumni Conference, WEAI 15th International Conference, 4th IZA Junior/Senior Symposium (UT Austin), Texas A&M University, International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education

2018: UC Irvine, WEAI 14th International Conference, WEAI International Early Career Workshop
2017: AEF 42nd Annual Conference, Sacramento State University, Clemson University, George Washington University, San Jose State University, Middlebury College, West Point Military Academy, New York University Abu Dhabi, Hamilton College, University of Hawaii, University of Sydney Workshop on Behavioural Economics
2016: APPAM Fall Research Conference, University of Chicago - Advances with Field Experiments Conference, UC Santa Cruz, UC Santa Barbara Labor Lunch, All California Labor Economics Conference (Poster), UC Davis Applied Microeconomics Brownbag (x2), Claremont McKenna - Southern California Conference in Applied Microeconomics (SoCCAM), WEAI Graduate Student Dissertation Workshop, University of Calgary 3rd Annual Microeconomics Workshop (Banff), Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop (UC Berkeley), AEF 41st Annual Conference
2015: University of Leicester - Economics PhD Conference, University of Chicago - 2015 SPI Annual Conference, IFREE's 21st Visiting Graduate Student Workshop in Experimental Economics, UC Davis Interdisciplinary Graduate & Professional Student Symposium, UC Davis Applied Microeconomics Brownbag (x3)
2014: University of Chicago - 2014 SPI Annual Conference (Poster), MERIT Workshop on Experiments with Governments (University of Chicago), UC Davis Theory Brownbag

TEACHING

Instructor (University of Pittsburgh): Introductory Microeconomics, Graduate Labor Economics
Instructor (UH Manoa): Intro Microeconomics, Advanced Econometrics, Graduate Public Economics
Instructor (UC Davis): Economics of Education, Game Theory, (Graduate) Teaching of Economics
Teaching Assistant (UC Davis): Graduate Game Theory, Introductory Econometrics, Labor Economics, Game Theory, Introductory Macroeconomics, Energy Economics, International Macroeconomics

OTHER POSITIONS & ACTIVITIES

WEAI Graduate Student Workshop Mentor (2025)
Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship Committee (2023-2024)
UC Davis Economics Collective Mentorship Program Mentor (2022-2024)
Association for Mentoring & Inclusion in Economics (AMIE) Mentor (2022-2023)
Hawaii Economic Association Board of Directors (January 2019-December 2020)
UC Davis Undergraduate Research Center, Graduate Mentor (Fall 2013 - Spring 2016)
UC Davis Economics Department, Graduate Mentor (Fall 2012 - Spring 2016)
UC Davis Economics Department, Graduate Student Representative (Fall 2012 - Spring 2014)

STUDENT ADVISEES

University of Pittsburgh: Humoyun Abdumavlon, Jana Abou Hjaily, Daniel Banko-Ferran, Prashant Bhandari, Brianna Funderburk, Sunmi Jung, Jiawei Lyu, Sonia Ale, Shafique Islam, Huda Osman, Josue Djossou, Mardoche Ayitchehou, Zhaoya Wu, Steve Zhiwen Wang, Uma Sisira Akella, Jacob Stenstrom
Outside Pittsburgh: Rangrang Zhang (University of Hawaii), Krit Phankitnirundorn (University of Hawaii), Ethan Po (UC Davis), Nick Halliwell (UC Davis), Wenni Yang (Fudan University), Shihan Qian (Carnegie Mellon), Adina Barg (Northwestern), Tim Ruberg (University of Hohenheim), Yundi Xiao (UC Davis and UT Austin), William Cunningham (Southern Methodist)

SELECTED MEDIA

“The Home Team Advantage: Why students who are the same race as their TAs get better grades”
9/22/2015, *Slate*
“Study finds that students earn better grades from teaching assistants of same race or ethnicity”
9/21/2015, *Inside Higher Ed*
“The powerful thing that happens when the school day starts in the afternoon”
8/5/2016, *The Washington Post*
“A late start to the day could be key to improving boys’ lagging classroom performance, study suggests”
8/5/2016, *The National Post*
“Girls do better than boys at school because they’re morning people, study suggests”

8/9/2016, *The Independent*

“Would later school start times help close the gender performance gap?”, 8/11/2016, *Education Week*

“Different sleep cycles can explain part of the gender performance gap in education”

9/7/2016, *IZA Newsroom*

“Your Brian on Taxes”, 4/18/2018, *Hawai'i Public Radio*

“Can Money Motivate Students? Hawai'i Econ Professor Hopes to Find Out”

1/10/2019, *Hawai'i Public Radio*

“What's Wrong with Coveting?”, 11/20/2022, *Freakonomics Radio*

“Slow traffic, fast food: The effects of time lost on food store choice”, 6/14/2023, *IZA World of Labor*

“Slow Traffic, Fast Food: Study Links Road Delays with Unhealthy Eating”, 2/4/2025, *Newsweek*

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