

Colin D. Sullivan

Daniels School of Business • Purdue University
403 Mitch Daniels Blvd • West Lafayette, IN 47907
312-316-3086 • cdsulliv@gmail.com

Academic Employment

University of Pittsburgh

Assistant Professor of Economics

Pittsburgh, PA

August 2024 – Present

Purdue University Krannert School of Management

Assistant Professor of Economics

West Lafayette, IN

August 2021 – August 2024

Stanford University Department of Economics

Postdoctoral Fellow

Stanford, CA

August 2019 – August 2021

Education

The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

PhD, Applied Economics

Philadelphia, PA

May 2019

Thesis Committee: Judd B. Kessler (Chair), Clayton R. Featherstone, Corinne Low

Harvard University

AM, Statistics

Cambridge, MA

May 2014

University of Chicago

AB, Economics & Political Science

Chicago, IL

June 2009

Research Interests

Matching markets and market design; organ transplantation; labor economics; experiments

Publications & Working Papers

Kessler, Judd B., Corinne Low, and Colin D. Sullivan. 2019. **“Incentivized Resume Rating: Eliciting Employer Preferences without Deception.”** *American Economic Review*, 109 (11): 3713-44.

Abstract: We introduce a new experimental paradigm to evaluate employer preferences, called Incentivized Resume Rating (IRR). Employers evaluate resumes they know to be hypothetical in order to be matched with real job seekers, preserving incentives while avoiding the deception necessary in audit studies. We deploy IRR with employers recruiting college seniors from a prestigious school, randomizing human capital characteristics and demographics of hypothetical candidates. We measure both employer preferences for candidates and employer beliefs about the likelihood candidates will accept job offers, avoiding a typical confound in audit studies. We discuss the costs, benefits, and future applications of this new methodology.

Eliciting Preferences over Life and Death: Experimental Evidence from Organ Transplantation

Abstract: Optimal allocation of scarce, life-saving medical treatment depends on society’s preferences over survival distributions, governed by notions of equality and efficiency. In a novel experiment, I elicit preferences over survival distributions in incentivized, life-or-death decisions. Subjects allocate an organ transplant among real cats with kidney failure. In each choice, subjects allocate a single organ based on the expected survival of each patient. The survival rates imply a price ratio, allowing me to infer the shape of indifference curves over survival bundles. I find that the vast majority (80%) of subjects respond to increases in total expected survival time, while a small minority display Leontief preferences, providing the transplant to the shortest-lived patient at all price ratios. Hypothetical decisions may not be reliable in this context: a large share (46%) of subjects allocate a hypothetical transplant differently than a real transplant, though estimates of aggregate preferences are the same across incentivized and unincentivized conditions. Finally, I show that aversion to wealth inequality is a good predictor of aversion to survival inequality.

Paternalistic Discrimination (with Nina Buchmann and Carl Meyer)

Abstract: We combine two field experiments in Bangladesh with a structural labor model to identify paternalistic discrimination, the differential treatment of two groups to protect one group, even against its will, from harmful or unpleasant situations. We observe hiring and application decisions for a night-shift job that provides worker transport at the end of the shift. In the first experiment, we use information about the transport to vary employers' perceptions of job costs to female workers while holding taste-based and statistical discrimination constant: Not informing employers about the transport decreases demand for female labor by 21%. Employers respond more to transport information than cash payments to female workers that enable workers to purchase transport themselves. In the second experiment, not informing applicants about the transport reduces female labor supply by 15%. In structural simulations, paternalistic discrimination has a larger effect on gender employment and wage gaps than taste-based and statistical discrimination.

Learning to Manipulate: Experimental Evidence on Out-of-Equilibrium Truth-Telling (with Clayton R. Featherstone and Eric Mayefsky)

Abstract: When matching mechanisms yield unstable assignments, unraveling can lead participants to abandon them. This is thought to explain why, empirically, the stable Deferred Acceptance (DA) mechanism persists where unstable alternatives, such as priority mechanisms, do not. Theory, however, tells us that both DA and priority mechanisms can yield unstable matches in incomplete information equilibrium. Nonetheless, if match participants on the proposed-to side deviate from equilibrium by truth-telling, then DA yields stable outcomes. In an experiment, we find such behavior under DA (but not under a priority mechanism). This suggests that out-of-equilibrium truth-telling might help to explain the success of DA. We model the learning process under both mechanisms, and find that initial beliefs about gameplay drive differences in learning. These findings suggest the benefits of a persistent clearinghouse under DA could be undone by informing players of the game's strategic elements.

Teaching

Undergraduate Experimental Economics
Purdue University

West Lafayette, IN
Fall 2021, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Graduate Experimental Economics
Purdue University

West Lafayette, IN
Spring 2022, Fall 2022, Fall 2023

Economic Principles for Social Policy (MSSP 668 Module I)
University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice

Philadelphia, PA
Fall 2016

Professional Activities

Institutional Service

Purdue Economics Association
Faculty Advisor

2022 – Present

Krannert Doctoral Students Association Research Symposium
Judge

October 2021

Introduction to Diversity in Doctoral Education and Scholarship
Doctoral Student Panel

April 2017 & April 2018

Penn Graduate and Professional Students Assembly
Wharton Doctoral Representative

2016 – 2017

Refereeing

American Economic Review; Quarterly Journal of Economics; Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization; Management Science; Journal of Health Economics; Economic Journal; Manufacturing and Service Operations Management; Information Systems Research; Quantitative Economics; Journal of Public Economics; Quantitative Economics; JPE Micro

Grants & Fellowships

Paternalistic Discrimination: *G²LM|LIC*, National Science Foundation, Stanford King Center on Global Development, International Growth Centre, CEGA PEP Funding, Weiss Fund for Research in Development Economics, Structural Transformation and Economic Growth, George P. Shultz Research Fellowship

Other Experience

Center for Education Policy Research, Harvard University
Research Analyst

Cambridge, MA
September 2012 – June 2014

Central Intelligence Agency
Economic Analyst — Middle East and North Africa

McLean, VA
July 2011 – August 2012

Harvard Kennedy School
Research Assistant to Professors John Friedman and Joshua Goodman

Cambridge, MA
July 2010 – July 2011

Institute for Defense Analyses — Cost Analysis and Research Division
Research Assistant

Alexandria, VA
June 2009 – June 2010