

My Professional and Service Activities (How I Have Spent My Time in Service)

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Abstract

In this “service statement”, I describe my professional and service activities, or how I have spent my time in service, over the past thirteen years as an assistant and associate professor of economics. The contents are divided into four brief sub-sections as follows: Roles for the Profession and Field, Roles for the Federal and Provincial Government, Roles for the University, Faculty, and Department, and Roles for the Media and Public, with Figures and References to cited work appearing at the end.

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1. Roles for the Profession and Field

I directly participate in the dissemination of research in my field of labor economics by having served (and continuing to serve) as editor for two series of New Economics Papers (NEP) for the past seven years. According to their website:

“NEP is an announcement service which filters information on new additions to Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) into edited reports. The goal is to provide subscribers with up-to-date information about the research literature. Our success in achieving this goal has been substantial. Today, there are 80,249 subscriptions from 34,966 unique addresses distributed throughout the world. The reports are generated by subject-specific editors. They are available by email, RSS feeds, and via Twitter. They may be used by others.”

The two NEP reports that I edit and disseminate on a weekly basis are for the subjects of Labor Markets - Supply, Demand, and Wages (LMA, editor since 2013) and Labour Economics (LAB, editor since 2015). Given the overlap in subjects, I allocate papers between the LAB and LMA series according to the subject matter of each paper, as classified by their Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) codes. Since 2015, when I took up the editorship of both series, the total membership across these subject areas has grown by 62 percent over five years, from a membership of 1,645 individuals to a total of 2,665 individuals (1,914 by email and 751 by twitter), as of May 2020.

I have organized sessions in my field of labor economics for the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), the Canadian Economics Association (CEA), the Institute for Public Economics (IPE) at the University of Alberta, and the Southern Economic Association (SEA). While the organization of sessions for APPAM, the IPE, and the SEAs were recent one-time occasions, the organization of sessions in the subject of local labor markets for the CEAs has been a reoccurring, annual role, which began in 2015.

These CEA sessions were originally co-organized with Michel Serafinelli, formerly associated with the University of Toronto and now with the University of Essex. In the construction of these sessions, we strongly encourage graduate students and young professors to present and, very occasionally, present ourselves. This organizational role was to continue with the 2020 CEAs in Toronto but, given that this conference was unfortunately postponed due to covid-19, these sessions will have to wait until the 2021 CEAs in Vancouver to resume.

I have additionally chaired sessions and/or discussed papers in my field for the Canadian Economic Association, the Institute of Public Economics at the University of Alberta, the

Institute for Research in Public Policy, the International Association of Income and Wealth, the Society of Labor Economists sessions of the Midwest Economic Association, the Society of Labor Economists, and the Western Economic Association.

I have made at least 61 presentations of my research at conferences or seminars, with two more scheduled this spring and summer of 2020, although they are likely to take place as video conferences due to covid-19. I have also refereed submitted work at least 51 times for a minimum of 37 different journals and at least 2 granting agencies. I say at least or minimum here, because I may not have documented every occasion of refereeing.

Lastly, I maintain active affiliations with five academic organizations, namely the American Economics Association, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, the Canadian Economic Association, the Labor and Employment Relations Association (of which I am a lifetime member), and the Society of Labor Economists.

2. Roles for the Federal and Provincial Government

While working for the flagship university of my province, the University of Alberta, which resides in the provincial capital of Edmonton, I have also played other public roles for both the federal and provincial governments of Canada. For the federal Government of Canada, I have previously appeared as an expert witness for the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance of the Senate of Canada on April 12th, 2017. For this particular event, my expertise in the economics of aging was of importance.

For the provincial Government of Alberta, I had previously met and spoken with the Deputy Minister of Labour, Jeff Parr, back when the New Democratic Party (NDP) was the majority party in 2016. Since the United Conservative Party (UCP) became the majority party in 2019, I have met and spoken with the current Minister of Labour and Immigration, Jason Copping, on several occasions. I have also met the current Deputy Minister of Labour and Immigration, Shawn McLeod. The subject matter for all of these conversations involved setting labor market policy for the province.

In August of 2019, I was appointed Chair of the Minimum Wage Expert Panel for the Government of Alberta. Since September of 2019, we have met six times as a panel, with the final meeting occurring in February of 2020. This panel produced a report which summarized the impacts of the previous and current \$15 minimum wage policy in the province, as well as the elimination of the liquor server differential in Alberta, both occurring from 2015 to 2018 under the NDP. That report [3], soon to be released in 2020 by the Government of Alberta,

also contains a summary of the original research findings from my work [1] with co-author and fellow University of Alberta professor, Sebastian Fossati.

3. Roles for the University, Faculty, and Department

University

At the university level, I have recently taken up more visible roles as a labor economics researcher in energy-related topics. This includes an affiliation under Energy Systems, one of the University of Alberta's five Signature Areas of research and teaching, "where the university is or will be recognized as a global leader." This affiliation is closely tied to my other university role as a Principal Investigator for Future Energy Systems (FES), having received a generous grant of \$250,000 over five years (2018 – 2023) from the Canada First Research Excellence Fund. The project that I lead, titled "The Future of Energy and What It Means for Labor Markets," falls under the System Wide area of the FES initiative.

I also led in 2014 to 2015, and since continue to coordinate, an initiative to unite all economists at the university under an affiliation known as the University of Alberta Economists (UAE) on the Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) Network. According to the RePEc website, the description reads, "The UAE is an umbrella organization for economists on campus, providing a structure to stimulate collaborative research and promote the work of economists at the University of Alberta." Although the RePEc Network already uses the publication and working paper information of economists to rank them as individuals, departments, and universities, there had been no previous way to see our research output as a whole, with a current membership of 80 economists across our various faculties and departments.

Faculty

At the faculty level, I was recently awarded one of seven Signature Areas of Research and Creative Collaboration by the Faculty of Arts, on behalf of the nineteen affiliated researchers that I represent from within the Economics and Sociology departments. According to the Faculty of Arts website, "The Arts Signature Areas provide a mechanism for building research networks, facilitating collaboration, advancing cross-disciplinary research and creative activities, and enabling related teaching innovations. Each of the Faculty's signature areas will be supported for five years." Our group, tentatively titled "Understanding Labor Markets and Work", will receive support from and will work directly with the Faculty of Arts from 2020 to 2025, in order to bring further attention and resources to our related research.

I have also served and currently serve in a handful of other roles at the faculty level, including as a current member of the Arts Faculty Evaluation Committee for a three-year term (2020 to 2023), as a current member of the Arts Research Committee for a three-year term (2018 to 2021), as a previous member of the Dean's Advisory Selection (Hiring) Committee for two positions in the Sociology department (2016 to 2017), and as a previous member of the Bridging Program Committee (2014 to 2015).

Department

At the department level, my two most prominent and ongoing roles began as immediate thoughts upon my arrival in the Department of Economics in 2007. As mentioned earlier, the RePEc Network uses publication and working paper information on economists to rank them as individuals, departments, and universities. When I arrived at the university, I was very surprised that the department had only one registered economist with the network and, therefore, our Department of Economics did not even appear in the rankings for Canada. In addition, the working papers of our department members could not be easily found online.

Under my first prominent role for the department, as the head of Professional Outreach, I took it upon myself to help get every faculty member in our department signed up to the RePEc Network and get their publication records represented. This role continues today to sign up all new department members upon arrival at the university and make certain all of their publications are represented. Since 2008, our department has been steadily moving up the rankings for Canada, as well as among economics departments and universities.

Under my second prominent role for the department, as Editor of our Working Paper Series, I reintroduced this series in a new form, where papers of our faculty members would be entered onto the RePEc Network by the editor upon submission. Prior to my hiring, there were 15 department working papers in 2005, 8 papers in 2006, and only 3 papers in 2007. Also, these papers were only available on our local website and not on any representative network. Since 2009, when this series was relaunched with myself as co-editor and soon later as lone editor, I have handled a total of 208 papers and will continue to do so going forward.

I have had several related roles for the Institute for Public Economics (IPE), which is a sub-entity within our department. One of the most important roles was as a Co-Principal Investigator and co-writer of a leading piece in a report [6], which was produced by the institute and supported by a \$60,000 grant. I have also presented under the IPE banner on three occasions and chaired one session for them. Lastly, I served as a member of their Advisory Council, this past academic year (2019 – 2020). There may also be some overlap with the IPE and my Arts Signature Area in the immediate future.

I have served on several committees including (from present to past): Library Coordinator, Alternate of the Advisory Staff Selection (Hiring) Committee, Chair of the Research Committee, Member of the University of Alberta Economists (UAE) Committee, Member of the Visiting Speakers and Faculty Seminar/Workshop Committee, Member of the Course Caps Committee, Member of the Newsletter/Web Presence Committee, Member of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and Member of the Scholarships and Awards Committee.

4. Roles for the Media and Public

As a labor economist and graduate of a top policy school, who researches topics relevant to local, provincial, regional, and national interests, I intermittently deal with media requests (sometime frequently and sometimes not at all). According to Newsflo, I have at least 72 cumulative media mentions thus far, across several outlets of print, radio, and television. Figure 1 shows that, following my promotion to associate professor with tenure in 2014, my media mentions have grown substantially, from only 1 mention to 30 per year in 2019.

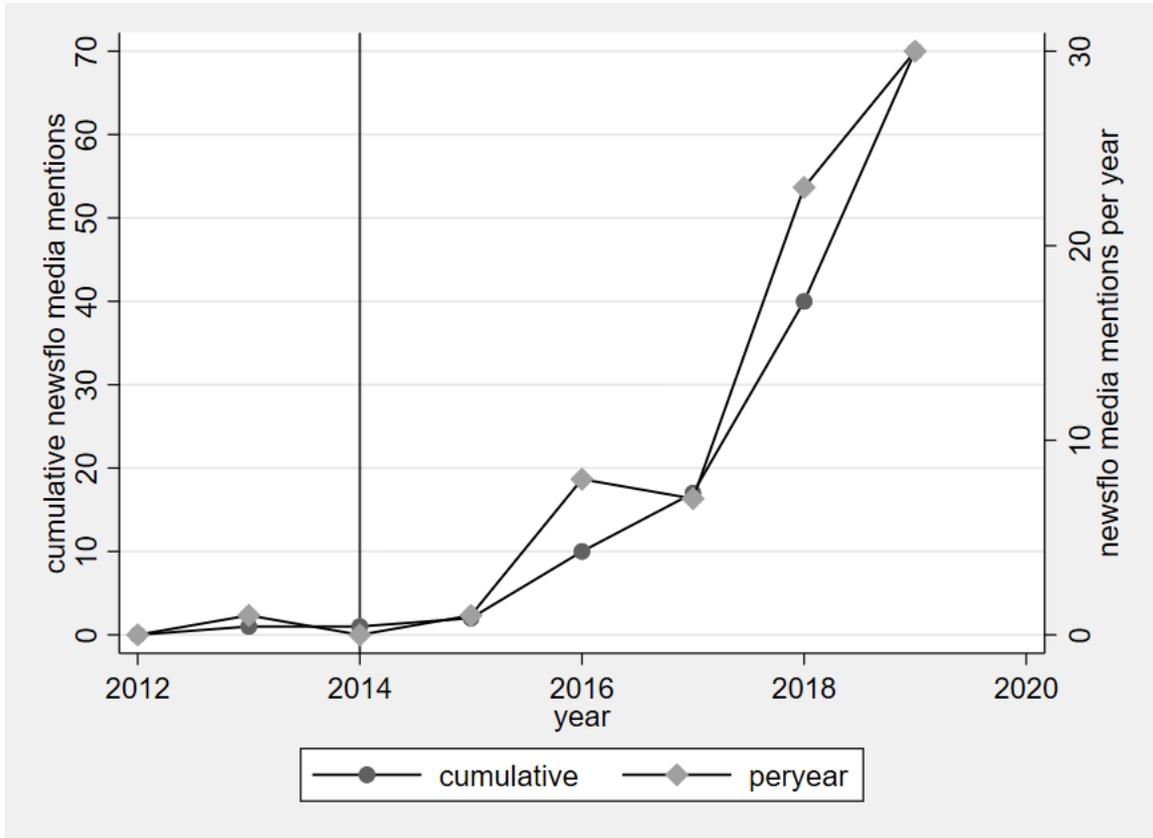
For print, these outlets include Bloomberg, Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, Financial Post, Folio, Gateway, Globe and Mail, National Post, Next Avenue, Spruce Grove Examiner, Star Metro, VICE, and Yahoo Finance. For radio, I have appeared on several shows, such as CBC Radio with Rod Kurtz, 630 CHED Radio with Ryan Jespersen, Global News Radio 770 CHQR with Angela Kokott, and Radio Canada. For television, CBC News, City News, CTV News, and Global TV News have been among the notable outlets.

One policy piece that I wrote ended up generating a lot of media attention [4]. To date, this is still the only in-depth study on Alberta's \$15 minimum wage policy. While most media coverage of this piece was fair, a small sliver of the coverage was dishonest and defamatory, leading to a response that I co-wrote with another economist to whom my detractors said had disagreed with me (who obviously did not), which appeared in the Globe and Mail [2].

This work then led to my becoming Chair of the Minimum Wage Expert Panel for the Government of Alberta, with a report to soon come [3], which also summarizes my new working paper [1] with fellow professor, Sebastian Fossati. Interestingly, I also wrote an op-ed [5] about how political parties in Alberta were being less than accurate in their employment numbers in the run-up to the 2019 election, which surprisingly received little media coverage.

Figures

Figure 1: Cumulative and Per Year Media Mentions According to Newsflo



Notes: The vertical line indicates the year of promotion to associate professor with tenure (2014).

References

- [1] Fossati, S., Marchand, J. 2020. First to \$15: Alberta’s Minimum Wage Policy on Employment by Wages, Ages, and Places.
- [2] Green, D., Marchand, J. 2018. Is a \$15 Minimum Wage Worth It? Here’s What the Numbers Say. *Globe and Mail*, Report on Business, B4, Oct. 16.
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- [4] Marchand, J. 2017. Thinking About Minimum Wage Increases in Alberta: Theoretically, Empirically, and Regionally. C.D. Howe Institute Commentary No. 491, C.D. Howe Institute, Sep.
- [5] Marchand, J. 2018. A Reality Check on Alberta’s Job Numbers. *Edmonton Journal*, Editorial, A7, Apr. 2.
- [6] Marchand, J., Song, T. 2013. Albertan Labour in the Previous Energy Boom. *An Examination of Alberta Labour Markets*, Institute for Public Economics, 10-24.