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Research Statement

As a passionate economist, my research lies at the intersection of labor markets, inequality, education, and financial technologies. With a profound commitment to understanding and addressing systemic challenges, I aim to illuminate the intricacies of both K-12 and higher education systems, particularly within underserved and marginalized communities. Leveraging advanced econometric methods and data analysis, my research seeks to uncover critical insights that inform policy decisions, driving systemic change in education and labor markets. Additionally, I explore how financial technologies are reshaping industries, particularly within lending markets, to address economic inequalities.

Past Research

My research portfolio includes extensive analyses of anti-discrimination policies and government-funded teacher staffing initiatives, particularly in regions experiencing socioeconomic disparities. One of my notable publications, in collaboration with Henry Tran and Douglas Smith (2022), evaluated the Rural Recruitment Initiative (RRI) in South Carolina. This initiative provided funding to eligible districts, without prescribing specific uses. Our study revealed the promises and pitfalls of such open-ended policy approaches, highlighting the need for district follow-up and increased financial support to achieve sustainable results.

Furthermore, my research has documented the subtle inequalities that persist in rural education systems, including salary structures that disadvantage rural teachers. For example, my collaboration on the Abbeville vs. South Carolina school funding lawsuit illustrated how under-investment in rural schools perpetuated staffing challenges. We examined salary structures to determine whether "front-loading" (early experience-based raises) or "back-loading" (later experience-based raises) could improve teacher retention in these underserved districts. This work has contributed to a growing understanding of how structural pay differences impact workforce stability in the education sector.

Ongoing and Future Research

Building on my previous work, I am now exploring teacher staffing and mobility decisions on a national scale, examining how socioeconomic factors, gender biases, and institutional practices contribute to inequality in education. In collaboration with interdisciplinary teams, I am also studying the broader labor market implications of LGBT employment anti-discrimination policies, aiming to understand their effects on workplace equity.

At the intersection of labor economics and education, my future research will focus on topics such as college affordability, financial literacy, and personal finance management, particularly for teachers and students transitioning to the workforce. With the support of the SPARC Graduate Research Grant from the University of South Carolina, I am currently advancing my research on education policy, contributing to ongoing discussions in both academic and policy circles on higher education.

In addition to my focus on education, I have expanded my research to financial technologies. My interest lies in how marketplace lenders—FinTech companies that provide new loan opportunities—are disrupting tradi-

tional lending markets. By applying industrial organization theories, I examine how the entry of these new firms affects the behavior of incumbent banks and reshapes the lending industry. This multidimensional perspective allows me to contribute to both financial economics and labor markets, highlighting the connection between access to credit and economic opportunity.

Future Research Directions
Looking ahead, I plan to collaborate with interdisciplinary teams to explore the intersection of education, technology, and public policy. By bridging these disciplines, I aim to develop holistic solutions that address educational disparities while promoting inclusivity and equity. I am particularly interested in harnessing the power of data analytics to inform policies that foster community growth and social progress, especially for marginalized and underserved communities.

My future research endeavors will continue to focus on the labor market outcomes of educational policies, as well as the evolving role of financial technologies in shaping access to economic resources. Through these efforts, I hope to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical solutions that improve equity in education and labor markets.

With a strong foundation in both theoretical and empirical research, I am excited to collaborate with institutions that share my vision for a more inclusive and equitable economic landscape. I remain open to exploring innovative research avenues that align with this mission, particularly at the intersection of education, labor markets, and financial technologies.