ELIZABETH SORENSEN MONTOYA

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3/11/2024
Jetson Leder-Luis and Sebastian Tello Trillo
NBER
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Dr. Leder-Luis and Dr. Tello Trillo

I would like to express my interest in participating in the NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research. This mentoring program would be a significant aid in strengthening my research skills and in expanding my knowledge of the available data and current frontiers for both health and aging research.

Currently, I am an economics PhD candidate in my fourth year at the University of Colorado – Boulder. My research focuses on the intersection between pollution and health, an area in which I wish to continue to work. While I have only done preliminary work in the economics of aging field, it is a space in which I have interest. At this current stage of my research career, I feel that I have developed important skills relevant to aging and health economics research such as interdisciplinary literature review, preparing applications for IRB approval, and working with restricted access health data. However, I find myself somewhat limited by the fact that I am one of few people working in health economics in my department. Feedback from and discussion with experts and peers is such a vital part of the research process. Participating in this program would allow me to discuss my research and ideas with respected health and aging economists and other mentees working in this space, elevating my own research, and allowing me to contribute further to this field.

Thank you for considering my application, I look forward to hearing your decision. My CV and a more detailed description of my research interests and interest in this program are below.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya

Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya

University of Colorado Boulder

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Education

In progress	Ph.D., Economics, University of Colorado Boulder *Dissertation Supervisor: Jonathan Hughes*
2022	Master of Arts, Economics, University of Colorado Boulder
2020	Master of Science, Economics, University of Oregon
2019	Bachelor of Science, Economics and Finance, Black Hills State University
	Bachelor of Arts, Spanish, Black Hills State University

Research Experience

2023—present	Research Assistant—Department of Economics & Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado Boulder - Reporting to Dr. Tania Barham and Dr. Lori Hunter
2022	Research Assistant—Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder - Reporting to Dr. Jonathan Hughes
2021	Research Assistant—Department of Economics, University of Colorado Boulder -Reporting to Dr. Mahdieh Yazdani
2018-2019	Undergraduate Research—Black Hills State University -Reporting to Dr. Ron DeBeaumont

Teaching Experience

Spring 2024	Instructor of Record—University of Colorado Boulder
	- Principles of Macroeconomics
2020—2023	Teaching Assistant—University of Colorado Boulder
	- Principles of Microeconomics
	- Principles of Macroeconomics
2018—2019	Economics Tutor—Black Hills State University
2017—2018	Spanish Tutor—Black Hills State University

Courses Completed

2020	Microeconomic Theory 1
	Macroeconomic Theory 1
	Math Stats for Economists
2021	Microeconomic Theory 2
	Macroeconomic Theory 2
	Econometrics
	Advanced Economic Theory
	International Trade Theory
	Labor Economics 1
2022	Environmental Economics I
	Economic Development 2
	Applied Microeconomics
	Economics Research Methods I
	Environmental Economics II
2023	Economics Research Methods II

Works in Progress

Birth Outcome Effects of Nitrate Contamination in Drinking Water

The Privatization of U.S. Community Water Systems and its Impact on Quality

Scholarships, Awards & Fellowships

2023	Third Year Paper Award – University of Colorado Boulder Economics Department
2022	Bacon Family Economics Graduate Scholarship – University of Colorado Boulder Economics Department
2016—present	Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society Member
2015	Cheisman Essay Scholarship Recipient

Software

R, Stata, Matlab, Python, Latex, Excel

Elizabeth Sorensen Montoya
NBER Mentoring Program on Aging and Health Economics Research Application
Research Interests and Motivation for Attending

My research thus far has focused on the intersection of environment and health, specifically in how exposure to environmental contaminants effects human health and in the determinants of exposure and contamination. I plan to continue working in this space. In particular, my current work looks at how the sale of municipally owned community water systems to private companies impacts drinking water quality. I have hand collected data and taken Safe Drinking Water Act violations data from the United States Environmental Protection Agency to perform this estimation. I am hoping to expand on this work to analyze how changes in ownership of water systems impacts the health of the served population. This would involve obtaining and compiling health data from multiple U.S. states, a task for which I would strongly benefit from receiving advice from other health economists.

Beyond this current work, I am also interested in topics related to health in rural America. Growing up in a small farming town with a population of less than 1,300, I have seen first-hand the negative impacts of a lack of access to adequate healthcare in rural areas. I think there are a lot of interesting questions regarding health and healthcare in rural areas, but I am underexposed to the work that has been done in this area.

I have done some preliminary work on the topic of retirement and migration as a research assistant, but do not have as strong of a background in aging economics research as I would like. I am particularly interested in investigating the potential link between Alzheimer's disease and environmental toxins. While I have good knowledge of the data available for measuring environmental toxins, I am limited in my knowledge of data for looking at conditions associated with aging. This workshop would make me more aware of what is out there and what is possible, allowing me to take this research from just an idea to something concrete that contributes to the field.

My main motivation for participating in this program is to be able to meet and talk with economists working on health and aging and other mentees working on these topics. In my department, there is only one faculty member that works in health economics and while I do work closely with her, her work focuses primarily on health in developing countries. My interests lie more on health and aging topics within the United States. As someone in the very early stages of my research career, being able to discuss my ideas with people who work in the field is crucial for setting me on the path to become a successful health and aging economics researcher. This is a one-day event, but the connections made will likely persist beyond that day. Having contact with health and aging economics researchers will strongly benefit my own research, which in turn will benefit these fields of research.