The Costs and Returns to College Majors

Faculty Member: Joseph Altonji

Proposal Description:

The project will estimate the instructional costs of producing a college graduate in specific fields of study, such as education or engineering. It will also estimate the labor market returns to each major, and study how the returns to a given major depend on the level of spending per student on the major. It will build on prior work by Altonji and Zimmerman described in http://www.nber.org/papers/w23029. The main data source is administrative records for the Arkansas higher education system. These data will be supplemented with information from a variety of sources on policy changes that influence the resources allocated to each major.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

The project will involve the assembly of data from a variety of sources, including the Arkansas state budgets, IPEDS, and government documents. It will also involve data processing and some statistical analysis using STATA. A facility with Excel and a basic knowledge of STATA will be very helpful. Prior experience in extracting data from the web will also be helpful. Students who have taken Economics 131 and 132 or 136 or an equivalent course in statistics/econometrics are especially welcome to apply.

HSSRO Application Link: HSSRO Application Link
Award:: William McGrew ’18
Project Type: HSSRO
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