

Peiran(Pam) Cheng

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Education

Northeastern University, Ph.D. in Economics	Sept 2021 – May 2026 (Expected)
University of Wisconsin - Madison, MA in Economics	2019 - 2021
Xi'an Jiaotong University, MA in Finance; BA in Finance (magna cum laude)	2013 - 2019

Research Interest

Applied Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Education Economics, Health Economics, Public Finance

Research

Balancing budgets, Limiting Access: The Impact of State Appropriation Cut on Public University Decisions, Peiran Cheng, Job Market Paper

- State appropriations are a central source of funding for public higher education in the United States, and fluctuations in these transfers play a critical role in shaping universities' decisions. This paper examines how changes in state appropriations, in conjunction with economic downturns and booms, affect higher education outcomes. Exploiting cross-state variation in the stringency of balanced budget requirements, I implement an instrumental variables strategy using institution-level panel data from 2002 to 2019. I find that institutions in states with stricter balanced budget requirements experience a sharper cut in state appropriations during and immediately following the economic downturns, whereas institutions in states with weaker requirements can smooth adjustments over time. In response to these appropriation cuts, universities reduce undergraduate enrollment, raise tuition, and shift the composition of majors toward lower-cost fields.

Reducing the Supply of Unused Opioids: An Evaluation of a Community Health Center Opioid Return Program, Alicia Sasser Modestino (PI), Peiran Cheng, Gary Young, Muhammad Noor E Alam, Alicia Mam Dacunha, and Elese Laflamme (under review by xx, accepted by APPAM)

- More than one-third of opioid-related deaths are attributed to secondary users of prescription opioids with two-thirds obtaining painkillers from family and friends. Using a randomized control trial, we test the effectiveness of a community-based medication return program. Treated patients were 3.0 percentage points more likely to return medication relative to the control group, yet these effects remained small even when coupled with a text reminder, financial incentive, mail back envelope, or clinician involvement. Our results suggest that while medication return programs may remove opioids from some households, they are unlikely to meaningfully reduce the supply of opioids within a community.

Evaluating The Impact of A Income Shock on Crime: Evidence from 2021 Child Tax Credit Expansion, Co-authored with Shenghao Peng

- In this paper, we study the effects of the CTC 2021 on crime, using two main sources of variation: 1) variation in income eligibility threshold, which expanded access or increased benefits for some families, and 2) variation in number of children, which increased benefits. The main contribution of this study is firstly providing the empirical evidence on the relationship between CTC expansion and crime. We find that CTC benefits lead to a slight reduction in crime.

Work in Progress

"The Impact of Free Trade Zone Establishment on Financial Innovation"

Seminars and Conference Presentations

2025

Association For Public Policy Analysis & Management (APPAM);
Community to Community (C2C) Research Seminar

Teaching/Research Experience

Teaching(Northeastern University)

- Instructor: Econ 1116 Principles of Microeconomics Summer 2024
- Recitation: Econ 1126 Recitation for Principles of Microeconomics
- Teaching Assistant: ECON 2316 Labor Economics ECON 3410 Labor Economics

Research Assistant(Northeastern University)

- Research Assistant, Community to Community (C2C) Program Jun 2023 - present
- Research Assistant, Opioid Buyback Program Jun 2022 - present

Fellowships and Awards

Doctoral Fellowship, Department of Economics, Northeastern University	2021-2026
Graduate Scholarship, Department of Finance, Xi'an Jiaotong University	2017-2019
Siyuan Scholarship, Department of Finance, Xi'an Jiaotong University	2013-2017

Work Experience

Other Information

Languages: Mandarin Chinese(native), English (fluent)

Technologies: Stata, R-studio, Matlab, Python