

# WALTER G. ECTON

[ecton@upenn.edu](mailto:ecton@upenn.edu)

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

August 2021-Present

Visiting Assistant Professor, Education Policy

## EDUCATION

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**, *PhD, Leadership and Policy Studies*

Awarded Summer 2021

Dissertation Title: *Three essays on career and technical education*

Paper 1: Trade-Offs in High School Curricular Choices for Career and Technical Education Students

Paper 2: Framing Public Opinion Towards Career and Technical Education

Paper 3: Heterogeneity in the Trajectories of Career and Technical Education Students

Dissertation Committee: Shaun M. Dougherty (chair), Celeste K. Carruthers, William R. Doyle, Carolyn J. Heinrich

Research Foci: Career and technical education  
Transitions between high school, college, and workforce  
Politics of education  
Quantitative methods

Awards: Graduate Honor Scholarship  
Peabody Dean's Fellowship

**UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS** (Scotland), *Master of Letters in Peace and Conflict Studies* Awarded November 2012

Award: Robert T. Jones Memorial Scholarship for full tuition, room and board (one of four students selected from Emory University's graduating class)

**EMORY UNIVERSITY**, *Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and Theater Studies*

Awarded May 2010

Awards: Emory College 2010 Class Orator Pi Sigma Alpha (Political Science Honor Society)  
100 Senior Honorary Alpha Psi Omega (Theater Honor Society)  
Omicron Delta Kappa (Leadership Honor Society)

## FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS & HONORS

Fordham Institute/American Enterprise Institute Emerging Education Policy Scholar	2021-2022
Josh Bleiberg Award for Service to the Department	2021
Outstanding Research Paper at the Association of Career and Technical Education Research Conference	2020
ECMC Foundation. Bridging the Gaps in Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Research Fellowship \$10,000 grant award and travel funding	2019-2020
Russell G. Hamilton Graduate Leadership Institute Dissertation Enhancement Grant \$2,000 grant to support dissertation research	2020
UCEA/AERA David L. Clark Scholar in K-12 Educational Administration and Policy	2020
American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Education Policy Academy Participant	2020

## PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Ecton, Walter G.; Bennett, Christopher; Nienhuser, H. Kenny; Castillo-Montoya, Milagros; Dougherty, Shaun M. (2021). If You Fund Them, Will They Come? Findings from a Graduate Student Fellowship Program. Forthcoming, *AERA Open*.

Dougherty, S., & Ecton, W. (2021). The economic effect of vocational education on student outcomes. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Economics and Finance*. Oxford University Press.

Sublett, Cameron; Ecton, Walter G; Atwell, Adam; D'Amico, Mark; Miller, Sabrina. (2021) Community College Alignment of Workforce Education and Local Labor Markets. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 28(1), 13-29.

### **ARTICLES CURRENTLY UNDER PEER REVIEW**

Ecton, Walter G.; Dzieszinski, Amberly. Using Punctuated Equilibrium to Understand Patterns of Institutional Budget Change in Higher Education.

Ecton, Walter G.; Dougherty, Shaun M. Examining Heterogeneity in the Trajectories of Career and Technical Students.

Atwell, Adam; Miller, Sabrina; Ecton, Walter G.; Sublett, Cameron; D'Amico, Mark. Navigating Changes in Economic and Policy Environments: Community Colleges Aligning Workforce Education with Local Labor Markets.

Soliz, Adela; Ecton, Walter G. Did the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act improve and expand vocational training at community colleges?

Ansel, Dana; Dougherty, Shaun M.; Ecton, Walter G.; Holden, Kristian; Theobald, Roddy (Authorship alphabetical). Student Entry into Regional Vocational Technical Schools in Massachusetts.

Ecton, Walter G. Career and Technical Education in an American Era of College and Career Readiness.

### **BOOK REVIEW**

Ecton, Walter G. (2021). Book Review: Understanding Community Colleges (J.S. Levin & S.T Kater, 2018). *Community College Review*, 49(1), 98-101.

### **RESEARCH BRIEF**

Carruthers, Celeste K; Ecton, Walter G.; Heinrich, Carolyn J. (2020). *Earning to Learn: Working While Enrolled in Tennessee Colleges and Universities*. Research brief for Tennessee Postsecondary Evaluation and Analysis Research Lab.

### **WORKING PAPERS**

Ecton, Walter G. Trade-Offs in High School Curricular Choices for Career and Technical Education Students.

Ecton, Walter G. Framing Public Opinion Towards Career and Technical Education.

Ecton, Walter G. Labor Market Alignment in Community College and Career and Technical Education Program Enrollment

Ecton, Walter G. Political Representation and the Distribution of Federal Spending to Institutions of Higher Education.

Ecton, Walter G. Exploring the Relationship Between College Attendance and Access to College Counseling in High School.

Ecton, Walter G.; Heinrich, Carolyn J. Earning to Learn: Working While Enrolled in Postsecondary Education.

Dougherty, Shaun M; Ecton, Walter G.; Macdonald, Isabel H.; Kreisman, Daniel. Increasing Individuals' Economic Stability through Massachusetts' Career and Technical Education.

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

Ecton, Walter G. (2021, accepted). Trade-Offs in High School Curricular Choices for Career and Technical Education Students. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Southern Economics Association* (SEA). Houston, TX.

- Ecton, Walter G.; Heinrich, Carolyn J.; Carruthers, Celeste K (2021, accepted). Earning to Learn: Working While Enrolled in Tennessee Colleges and Universities. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for the Study of Higher Ed* (ASHE). San Juan, PR.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2021). Framing Public Opinion Towards Career and Technical Education: Results from a Survey-Based Experiment. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy* (AEFP). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G.; Heinrich, Carolyn J. (2021). Earning to Learn: Working While Enrolled in Tennessee Colleges and Universities. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy* (AEFP). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2021, accepted). Framing Public Opinion of Career and Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *National Education Finance Academy* (NEFA). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2020). Trade-Offs in High School Curricular Choices for Career and Technical Education Students. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Public Policy and Management* (APPAM). Virtual meeting.
- Dougherty, Shaun M; Ecton, Walter G.; Macdonald, Isabel H.; Kreisman, Daniel (2020). Increasing Individuals' Economic Stability through Massachusetts' Career and Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Public Policy and Management* (APPAM). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G. & Dzieszinski, Amberly. (2020). Using Punctuated Equilibrium to Understand Patterns of Institutional Budget Change in Higher Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for the Study of Higher Education* (ASHE). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G.; Bennett, Christopher; Nienhusser, H. Kenny; Castillo-Montoya, Milagros; Dougherty, Shaun M. (2020). If You Fund Them, Will They Come? Findings from a Graduate Student Fellowship Program. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for the Study of Higher Education* (ASHE). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G.; Dougherty, Shaun M. (2020). Understanding Heterogeneity in the Selection into and Returns to Career and Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Career and Technical Education Research* (ACTER). Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2020). Framing Public Opinion Towards Career and Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *American Education Research Association* (AERA). San Francisco, CA (conference cancelled).
- Ecton, Walter G.; Bennett, Christopher; Nienhusser, H. Kenny; Castillo-Montoya, Milagros; & Dougherty, Shaun M. (2020). If You Fund Them, Will They Come? Findings From a Graduate Student Fellowship Program. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *American Education Research Association* (AERA). San Francisco, CA (conference cancelled).
- Ecton, Walter G. (2020). Labor Market Alignment in Community College Program Enrollment. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Council for the Study of Community Colleges* (CSCC). Tempe, AZ (conference cancelled).
- D'Amico, Mark; Sublett, Cameron; Atwell, Adam; Ecton, Walter G.; Miller, Sabina. (2020). Community College Alignment of Workforce Education and Local Labor Markets. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Council for the Study of Community Colleges* (CSCC). Tempe, AZ (conference cancelled).
- Ecton, Walter G. & Dougherty, Shaun M. (2020). Understanding Heterogeneity in the Selection into and Returns to Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *National Education Finance Academy*. Virtual meeting.
- Ecton, Walter G. & Dougherty, Shaun M. (2020). Understanding Heterogeneity in the Selection into and Returns to Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy* (AEFP). Virtual meeting.
- Dougherty, Shaun M; Ecton, Walter G.; Macdonald, Isabel H.; Kreisman, Daniel (2020). Increasing Individuals' Economic Stability through Massachusetts' Career and Technical Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy* (AEFP). Virtual meeting.

- Ecton, Walter G. (2019). Rethinking Career and Technical Education in an Era of College and Career Readiness. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Career and Technical Education Research (ACTER)*. Anaheim, CA.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2019). Political Representation and the Distribution of Federal Spending to Institutions of Higher Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *American Education Research Association (AERA)*. Toronto, Canada.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2019). Exploring the Relationship Between College Attendance and Access to College Counseling in High School. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *American Education Research Association (AERA)*. Toronto, Canada.
- Ecton, Walter G. & Dziesinski, Amberly. (2019). Using Punctuated Equilibrium to Understand Patterns of Institutional Budget Change in Higher Education. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *American Education Research Association (AERA)*. Toronto, Canada.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2019). Revisiting Career and Technical Education in the Era of College and Career Readiness. Poster presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)*. Kansas City, MO.
- Soliz, Adela & Ecton, Walter G. (2018). The Role of Stimulus Funding in Increasing and Improving Vocational Training at Community Colleges. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)*. Washington, DC.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2018). High School Career and Technical Education Course-Taking and Student Drop-Out, Graduation, and College Enrollment. Paper presentation at annual meeting of *Learning Sciences Graduate Student Conference (LSGSC)*. Nashville, TN.
- Soliz, Adela & Ecton, Walter G. (2018). The Role of Stimulus Funding in Increasing and Improving Vocational Training at Community Colleges. Paper presentation at annual meeting of the *Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)*. Portland, OR.

### **INVITED RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

- Ecton, Walter G. (2021). Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Program Evaluation and Data Sources. Harvard University Strategic Data Project. Virtual presentation.
- Ecton, Walter G. & Heinrich, Carolyn J. (2021). Earning to Learn: Working While Enrolled in Tennessee Colleges and Universities. Tennessee State P-20 Advisory Committee Meeting. Virtual presentation.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2020). Trade-Offs in High School Curricular Choices for Career and Technical Education Students. CTE Research Network. Virtual presentation.
- Ecton, Walter G. & Dougherty, Shaun M. (2019). Understanding Heterogeneity in the Selection into and Returns to Technical Education. Paper presentation at CTE Research Exchange Annual Partner Meeting. Atlanta, GA.
- Ecton, Walter G. (2018). Rethinking Career and Technical Education: The Effects of High School CTE Course-Taking on Student Drop-Out, Graduation, and Postsecondary Enrollment. Paper presentation at CTE Research Exchange Annual Partner Meeting. Nashville, TN.

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

American University

Instructor, *Quantitative Research in Education*. Masters course (online). Spring 2020.

Vanderbilt University

Instructor, *Policymaking and Quantitative Analysis*. College-level class for gifted high school students. Summers 2019 & 2020.  
Teaching Assistant to Dr. Shaun Dougherty, *Education Policy Analysis Methods*. Undergraduate course. Fall 2019.

Teaching Assistant to Dr. Adela Soliz, *Introduction to Public Policy*. Undergraduate course. Spring 2017.  
Teaching Assistant to Dr. Adela Soliz, *Postsecondary Access*. Masters course. Fall 2017.

Booker T. Washington Early College, Atlanta Public Schools  
Instructor, *AP United States History*, Spring 2013.  
Instructor, *United States History*, Fall 2011, Spring 2012, Spring 2013.  
Instructor, *American Government*, Fall 2012.  
Instructor, *World Geography*, Fall 2012.

Vanderbilt Certificate in College Teaching, Awarded Fall 2019.

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Vanderbilt University** (Nashville, TN), *Research Assistant* 8/2016-current

**Education Advisory Board** (Washington, DC), *Associate Director of Marketing and New Business Development* 12/2013-7/2016

- Conducted meetings at over 300 universities and community colleges with Cabinet-level administrators.
- Initiated new business relationships with a contract value of over \$4.5 million.

**Booker T. Washington Early College** (Atlanta, GA), *Social Studies Teacher* 7/2011-5/2013

- Taught 9th-12th grade U.S. History, American Government, and World Geography.
- Awarded 2011-2012 Booker T. Washington Early College Principal's Teacher of the Year Award.
- Recognized as Fall 2011 Teacher of the Quarter by fellow faculty members.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Economics of Education Review, *Reviewer* 2021  
Community College Review, *Reviewer* 2019-2020  
Career and Technical Education Research, *Reviewer* 2021  
Vanderbilt University, *PhD Admissions Student Chair* 2019-2020  
Vanderbilt University Graduate Student Council, *Departmental Representative* 2017-2018  
Peabody College Graduate Student Association, *Departmental Representative* 2016-2017  
Emory University Young Alumni Board, (Atlanta, GA) 2011-2016  
Emory High School Student Shadows Program (Atlanta, GA), *Cofounder and Chairperson* 2012-2013  
Posse Foundation (Washington, DC), *Interviewer* 2013

### **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)  
American Education Research Association (AERA)  
Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)  
Association for Career and Technical Education Research (ACTER)  
Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)  
Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC)