

MICHAEL J. ZENZ

mail@mjzenz.org | mjzenz.org

Data and policy analyst with 8+ years' experience using R, Python, SQL, and Tableau in higher education. Automated workflows, built predictive models, and developed reporting infrastructure. PhD-trained researcher, expert at translating complex data analysis into policy analysis and actionable insights for leadership.

EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin – Madison, College of Letters & Science | Madison, WI

Policy and Planning Analyst II | June 2019 – Present

- Led data analytics for program reviews of 160+ programs; automated biannual reports using R/Quarto; developed models for curricular completion, student success, and program redundancies
- Predicted student enrollment using regression and random forest models; visualized results in Tableau/Quarto for leadership and departments
- Analyzed grade gaps between various student group (ex. first-generation students) and used inferential statistics to explain possible causes
- Predicted likely impacts of policy and curricular changes on major and course demand through statistical modeling and scenario analysis
- Developed automated degree clearance system processing 4,000+ students/year with 100% accuracy over 8 years
- Developed and maintain two internal R packages standardizing common data operations to reduce code duplication and improve analytical accuracy and efficiency
- Cochaired Data Wonks, a campus professional development forum; spearheaded UW IT-sponsored SQL training database

Curriculum and Policy Analyst | July 2017 – June 2019

- Developed automated degree clearance system using R and Tableau to process degree audit data, determine completion status for 4,000+ students per year, and generate reports for Registrar, students, and advisors
- Developed campus's first Tableau self-service visualizations using student degree audit data, enabling faculty and administrators to analyze major coursework patterns, curricular exceptions, and degree clearance deficiencies
- Collaborated with campus DBAs to design, plan, and test new data warehouse for campus degree audit system (DARS), establishing technical infrastructure for institutional reporting
- Produced statistical analyses and custom data reports at the request of academic departments for program reviews and changes in accordance with campus data governance policies

Madison Councilytics | Madison, WI

Founder & Developer | 2023 – Present

Built and maintain civic transparency web application (councilytics.com) tracking Madison Common Council and commission voting records on housing policy. Developed automated data pipelines in R for scraping, processing, and visualizing voting data with YIMBY scoring methodology. Leverage AI coding and editing tools to enable non-technical team members to contribute commission reports, reducing administrative burden, and making the project sustainable with limited part-time and volunteer staff.

University of Arizona

PPEL Program | Tucson, AZ

Philosophy, Politics, Economics, and Law Postdoctoral Fellow | August 2016 – May 2017

Analyzed public policy problems using formal and statistical models; presented research findings to academic audiences

Edgewood College, Madison College, and Carroll University

Madison and Waukesha, WI

Adjunct Instructor | August 2015 – July 2016

Taught 10 courses in logic, political philosophy, and ethics

University of Maryland

Department of Philosophy | College Park, MD

Teaching Assistant and Graduate Student | August 2009 – May 2015

- Developed statistical model of public opinion for dissertation using Excel and LaTeX
- Used Stata to conduct linear regression analyses of survey data during interdisciplinary coursework

University of Wisconsin – Madison

Department of Psychology | Madison, WI

Associate Research Specialist | August 2007 – July 2009

Designed and executed visual perception experiments; analyzed data and created statistical visualizations using SPSS and Excel; created computer stimuli using C++

EDUCATION

University of Maryland

PhD in Philosophy | May 2015 | College Park, MD

Certificate from Committee on Philosophy, Politics, & Public Policy

Dissertation: "Political Representation, Public Opinion, and Democratic Choice"

University of Wisconsin – Madison

BA in Psychology, Philosophy | May 2007 | Madison, WI

3.98 GPA

SERVICE

Treasurer, North Street Neighborhood Association | 2024 – Present

Manage finances for 501(c)(3) organization serving Eken Park and Emerson East neighborhoods

Organizer, University of Wisconsin Data Wonks | 2024 – Present

A community of practice for individuals who work with data and technology at UW-Madison

PRESENTATIONS

CollegeSource 2025

June 2025 | San Diego, CA

"Harnessing uAchieve Audit Data to Support Operational & Analytic Needs"

Posit conf 2023

September 2023 | Chicago, IL

"Collaborating with Quarto"

Bayreuth PPE Research Forum

May 23, 2017 | Bayreuth, Germany

"Can an election be too fair?"

Center for Mathematical Philosophy

May 22, 2017 | Munich, Germany

"Proportionality and electoral districts"

Formal Ethics Conference - Erasmus University

May 31, 2014 | Rotterdam, Netherlands

"Reason-based preferences and deliberative democracy"

Decision, Games, and Logic - KTH Stockholm

June 18, 2013 | Stockholm, Sweden

"Stochastic preferences and interpersonal comparability"