Labor Market Returns to “Some College”
Robustness Checks

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Identifying Labor Market Returns for community college students

Matched data:
- Full transcripts
- Durations/awards at transfer colleges
- Quarterly earnings pre-in-post college from UI records
- AR, CA, CO, FL, KY, MI, OH, VA, WA

Methods:
- Individual fixed effects models over period pre-in-post college controlling for personal, college, financial attributes
Earnings gains for Associate degree over non-completion of college are high, durable, consistent and robust.
1. Robust across alternative sample selections
Sample selections:

Young
Weak labor market attachment
Slow to exit college
Missing data pre-college entry
Zero earnings
Transfer students
2. Robust across most alternative functional form specifications
Quarterly Earnings by Quarters since First Entry - Female

Ohio data
Minaya and Scott-Clayton (2016)
3. Functional form issues that do not appear to matter:
   
   Adding time interaction covariates
   Ashenfelter dip
   Post-college indicators
4. Functional form issues that matter:

- **Time span** of data
- Individual time **trends**

Associate degree gains appear **higher** when these issues are addressed.
5. **Consistent** with results from ordinary least squares estimation
### Steady-state best estimate: Quarterly earnings gains
Associate degree over non-completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OLS</th>
<th>Fixed Effects</th>
<th>(FE-OLS)/OLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pooled:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>$2,989</td>
<td>$2,881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
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<td>$2,313</td>
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<tr>
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Fixed Effects Models

More **complex** to interpret
Require a lot more **more data**
Yield **consistent** steady-state results
Possibly **understate** returns
Reveal **earnings trajectories**