

# Direct Admissions: Investigating a Promising, Low-Cost Policy Innovation to Increase College Access and Equity

Convening on Direct Admissions

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**Dr. Jennifer Delaney**, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

**Dr. Manuel González Canché**, *University of Pennsylvania*

**Taylor Odle**, *University of Pennsylvania*



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# The Project

## Goals

- To rigorously **evaluate** the Direct Admissions program in Idaho, with a focus on (1) applications and (2) enrollment across racial, socioeconomic, and geographic contexts.
- To **model** a translation of direct admissions to Great Lakes/Midwestern states.

## Support

- The Joyce Foundation (Sameer Gadkaree)

## Evaluating Direct Admissions

- Promising news from Idaho, including increased college-going rates, college applications, and enrollment.
- Need to answer the **causal-inference** question: “Did Direct Admissions do this?”
  - Ability to control for other factors related to these outcomes (e.g., unemployment).
- Quasi-Experimental Methods:
  - Difference-in-Differences (DID)
  - Generalized Synthetic Control Method (GSCM)



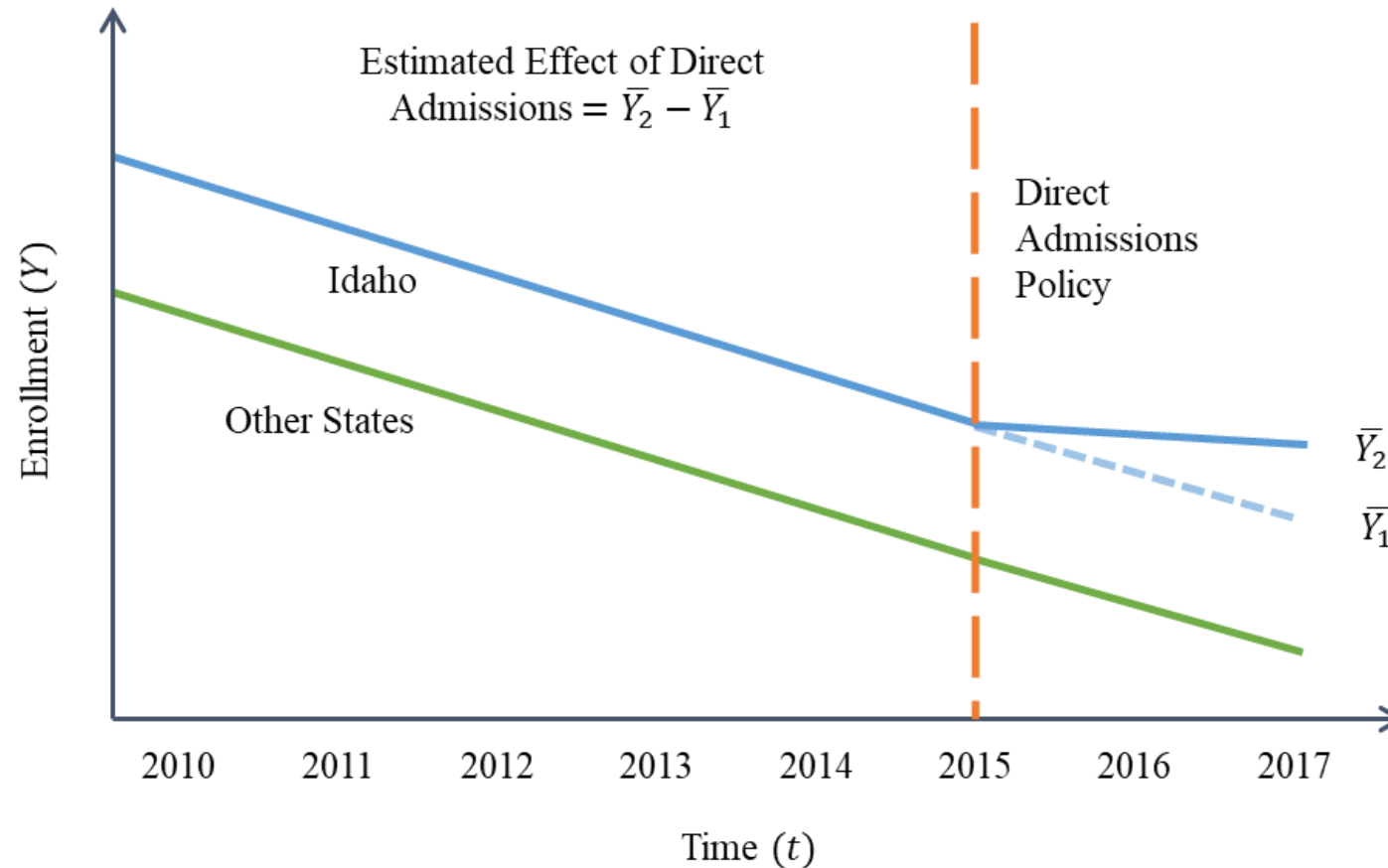
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# Difference-in-Differences

Compare (1) Idaho to Other States *before* Direct Admissions and (2) Idaho to Other States *after* Direct Admissions. After accounting for additional factors related to the outcome, difference may be effect of Direct Admissions.



## State

- FTE Enrollment
- Applications

## Institutions

- Undergraduate Enrollment
- In-State Students
- Percent Pell
- Percent Racial Minority



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# DID Results: State

	FTE Enrollment	Applications
<b>Direct Admissions</b>	<b>6,831.67*</b> (3,020.97)	<b>-6,417.68*</b> (3,076.50)
States	50	50
Years	2010-2017	2010-2017
<i>n</i>	400	400
Controls	Yes	Yes
State and Year FE	Yes	Yes

1. +  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .
2. All models include state and year fixed effects.
3. Heteroscedastic robust standard errors, clustered at state level (in parentheses).
4. Controls: Net Tuition Revenue, State Appropriations, Gini Coefficient, Unemployment Rate, High School Attainment (%), BA Attainment (%), High School Senior Population.
5. Financial predictors inflation adjusted to the Consumer Price Index (2018).
6. Counterfactual: All other states.



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# DID Results: Institutions

	UG Enrollment	In-State UGs	Percent Pell	Percent Minority
<b>Direct Admissions</b>	<b>929.36**</b> (345.54)	<b>100.81+</b> (58.70)	<b>-1.97</b> (1.89)	<b>-0.87</b> (1.69)
Colleges	67	67	67	67
Years	2010-2016	2010-2016	2010-2016	2010-2016
<i>n</i>	469	469	469	469
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
College and Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. +  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

2. All models include college and year fixed effects.

3. Heteroscedastic robust standard errors, clustered at college level (in parentheses).

4. Controls: Tuition and Fee Rate, State Appropriations, Scholarship and Fellowship Expenditures, Graduation Rate.

5. Financial predictors inflation adjusted to the Consumer Price Index (2017).

6. Counterfactual: Public colleges in Illinois ( $n=59$ ).



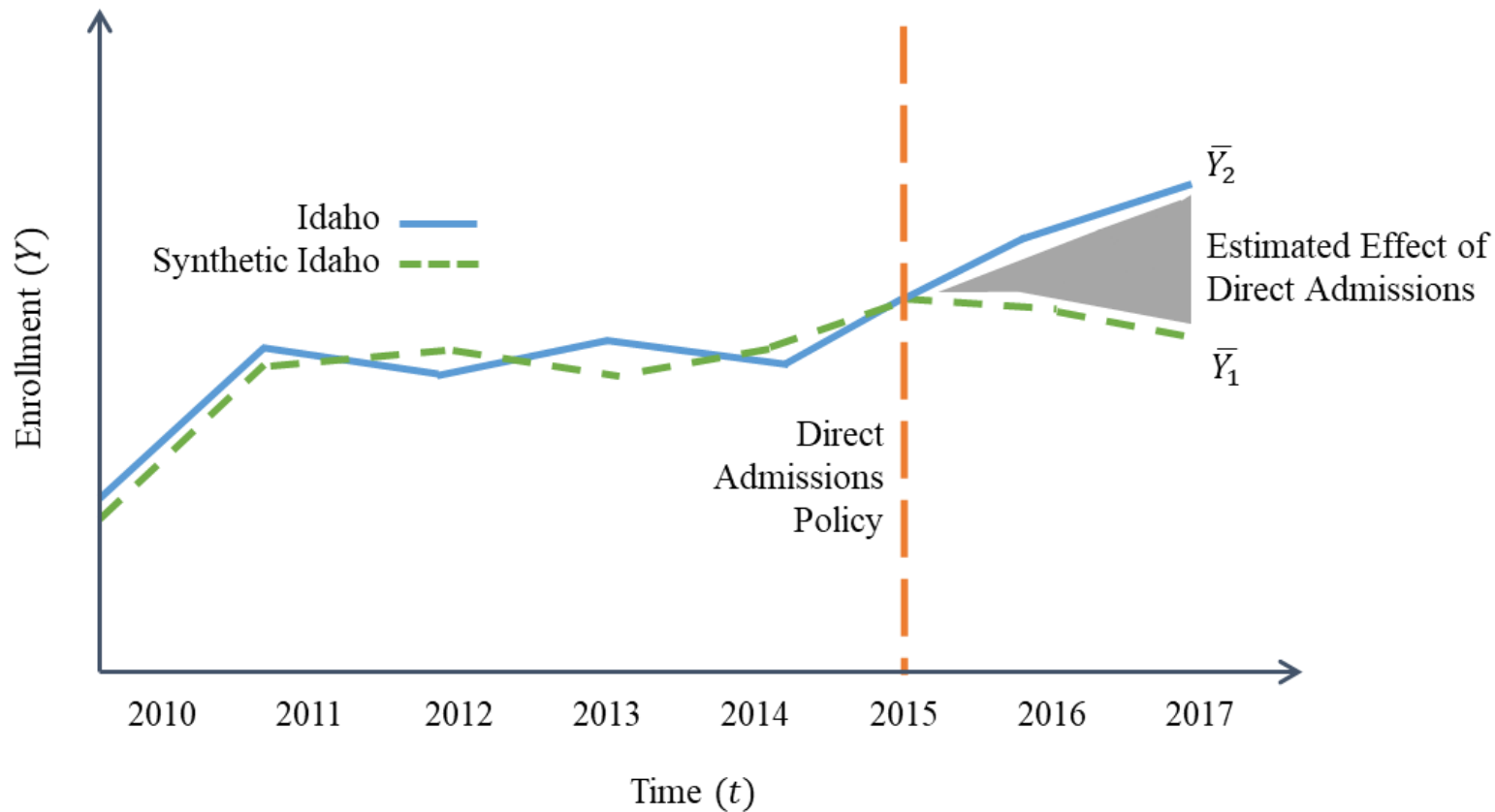
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# Generalized Synthetic Control Method

Instead of comparing Idaho to Other States, we weight all other states to create a Synthetic Idaho. After accounting for additional factors, differences between Idaho and Synthetic Idaho may be effect of Direct Admissions.



## State

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## Institutions

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# GSCM Results: State

	FTE Enrollment	Applications
<b>Direct Admissions</b>	<b>-4,853</b> (9,776)	<b>-1,862</b> (23,899)
States (Idaho + Donor Pool)	50	50
Years	2010-2017	2010-2017
<i>n</i>	400	400
Controls	Yes	Yes
State and Year FE	Yes	Yes

1. +  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .
2. All models include state and year fixed effects.
3. Standard errors reported in parentheses.
4. Controls: Net Tuition Revenue, State Appropriations, Gini Coefficient, Unemployment Rate, High School Attainment (%), BA Attainment (%), High School Senior Population.
5. Financial predictors inflation adjusted to the Consumer Price Index (2018).
6. Counterfactual: Synthetic Idaho (from all other states).



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# GSCM Results: Institutions

	UG Enrollment	In-State UGs	Percent Pell	Percent Minority
<b>Direct Admissions</b>	<b>-149.50</b>	<b>147.50+</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>2.75</b>
	(645.40)	(94.33)	(2.04)	(4.25)
Colleges (Idaho + Donor Pool)	1,510	1,510	1,510	1,510
Years	2010-2016	2010-2016	2010-2016	2010-2016
<i>n</i>	10,570	10,570	10,570	10,570
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
College and Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1. +  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

2. All models include college and year fixed effects.

3. Standard errors reported in parentheses.

4. Controls: Tuition and Fee Rate, State Appropriations, Scholarship and Fellowship Expenditures, Graduation Rate.

5. Financial predictors inflation adjusted to the Consumer Price Index (2017).

6. Counterfactual: Synthetic Idaho colleges (from all other public colleges).



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# Projecting Direct Admissions

DID: Statewide increase in FTE of 11.32%

GSCM: Institutional increase of 11.02% UG; increase of 11.09-16.30% In-State UGs

State	FTE
Idaho	11.32%
Great Lakes	35,069
Illinois	41,639
Indiana	27,069
Michigan	46,080
Minnesota	23,289
Ohio	46,592
Wisconsin	25,743
<b>Total</b>	<b>210,412</b>

Institutions	UG	In-State UGs
Idaho	11.02%	11.09 – 16.30%
Great Lakes	963	138 – 203
Illinois	929	125 – 183
Indiana	1,980	327 – 481
Michigan	1,119	166 – 244
Minnesota	622	78 – 114
Ohio	888	133 – 196
Wisconsin	951	133 – 195
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,489</b>	<b>962 – 1,413</b>



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# Summary

## Findings

- Direct admissions may increase state (FTE) and institutional (UG) enrollment, particularly among in-state populations.
- Promising, low-cost, and viable mechanism to increase enrollment.
- Transferrable to other states and regions.

## Future Research

- Can direct admissions influence **other outcomes**, like student-institution or student-program match?
- How does the inclusion of **financial aid** information in direct admissions letters influence outcomes?
- In what ways does direct admissions intersect with **related policies**, like common applications?



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# Policy Recommendations



States should consider direct admissions policies as **effective and low-cost** mechanisms to increase the enrollment of students in public higher education.

States should explore policies related to direct admissions systems (*e.g.*, **common applications**), regardless of their decision to/to not adopt direct admissions.



States should maintain their focus on the identification and adoption of policies seeking to increase the enrollment of **low-income and racial minority students**.

States should **partner with researchers and policy organizations** in the design and evaluation of direct admissions, common application, and related policies.



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**Dr. Jennifer Delaney**  
*University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*  
delaneyj@illinois.edu



**Dr. Manuel González Canché**  
*University of Pennsylvania*  
msgc@upenn.edu



**Taylor Odle**  
*University of Pennsylvania*  
todle@upenn.edu



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