

September 5, 2011

Search Committee
Department of Political Science
University of School Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3

Dear Search Committee Chair:

I am writing to apply for the tenure-track position in quantitative methodology at the University of School Name. I am currently a Ph.D Candidate in American politics with a minor in methodology in the Department of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. My research and teaching interests include methodology and American politics. My methods research agenda focuses on model selection, robust regression methods, multilevel/clustered data, and the use of Monte Carlo simulation to better understand issues that arise in applied analysis. Within American politics I am interested in political representation, mass/elite linkages, public opinion, and state politics.

In my dissertation, *Multidimensional Democracy: The Supply and Demand of Political Representation*, I demonstrate that accounting for four unique dimensions of representation—policy, service, allocation, and descriptive—in the same theoretical and empirical model is critical to fully understanding the concept. The project, which is currently supported by a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation, develops and tests a supply-and-demand theory, focusing on citizen preferences for and legislators' priorities over those four dimensions. The first empirical chapter—which is currently under review at *American Journal of Political Science*—uses novel survey-experimental evidence to examine the determinants of U.S. citizens' preferences for the four dimensions. The second empirical chapter—which I will submit for review this fall—examines legislators' priorities over the dimensions with data from a survey I administered to nearly 1,200 American state legislators. The final empirical chapter also examines legislators' priorities, but uses data coded from an original archive of 2,800 state legislators' websites. I have completed two of the three empirical chapters, and plan to defend the dissertation in March 2012.

Additionally, my published work includes several articles highlighting both of my research agendas. For example, a forthcoming article in *Political Analysis*, co-authored with my former graduate student colleague Bruce Desmarais (University of Massachusetts–Amherst), develops a novel sample-based cross-validation test for choosing between the conventional Cox proportional hazards model and a robust estimator. A solo-authored article in *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* on statistical inference with clustered data demonstrates the superiority of a bootstrap method that resamples entire clusters in estimating standard errors. A forthcoming article in *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, also co-authored with Bruce Desmarais, shows that median regression can be a useful alternative to ordinary least squares, and develops a sample-based cross-validation test to select between the two estimators. A paper with Ken Bollen (UNC, Sociology), Surajit Ray (Boston University, Statistics), and Jane Zavisca (University of Arizona, Sociology), which develops and assesses the performance of two new Bayes factor approximations, has been conditionally accepted (pending minor revisions) at *Sociological Methods & Research*. Finally, a forthcoming article in *Public*

Choice, co-authored with Tom Carsey, develops and tests a theory of how constituent ideological heterogeneity conditions legislators' responsiveness to the competing pressures of the median voter and the party.

I also have several current projects advancing my methodology research agenda. I have revised and resubmitted a solo-authored paper to *Statistics, Politics, and Policy* that extends the bootstrap cluster method mentioned above to multilevel and generalized estimating equation models. A second paper with Ken Bollen, Surajit Ray, and Jane Zavisca that extends our Bayes factor approximations to structural equation models has been invited for revision and resubmission to *Sociological Methodology*. Finally, Bruce Desmarais and I are preparing another paper for submission this fall that compares several model selection strategies within the context of the choice between a standard count model and zero-inflated count model.

My teaching experience and interests also cover both methods and American politics. I have taught short courses to faculty and students on the statistical environment R and typesetting system L^AT_EX at UNC's Odum Institute for Research in Social Science every semester since Spring 2010. In June 2011, I co-taught (with Tom Carsey) a week-long course titled "Monte Carlo Simulation and Resampling Methods for Social Scientists" through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). I have also served as a teaching assistant for four semesters in the political science department at UNC. This experience includes a semester leading a weekly lab session in a graduate-level methods course and three semesters teaching undergraduate discussion sections in introductory American government and state and local politics courses. As my enclosed teaching materials show, I consistently have earned strong evaluations from students.

Depending on the needs of the department at School Name, I am prepared to teach undergraduate level research methods courses, as well as courses on American government, state and local politics, campaigns and elections, public opinion, and political behavior. At the graduate level, I am particularly interested in teaching in a quantitative methods sequence, including courses in probability theory, linear models, and generalized linear models and maximum likelihood. Furthermore, I could offer specialized graduate courses on Monte Carlo simulation and resampling methods, Bayesian statistics, time series analysis, and scope and methods/research design. I would also like to teach graduate seminars on state and local politics, campaigns and elections, public opinion, and macro politics.

I have enclosed my curriculum vitae, research statement, teaching statement, the first two chapters from my dissertation, and two methods writing samples. My graduate transcript and letters of reference from UNC faculty members Tom Carsey, Virginia Gray, and Jim Stimson were also included separately by Christine Reynolds. Additional materials are available at my website: <http://jjharden.web.unc.edu/>. Please feel free to contact me if more information is needed to evaluate my application. I can be reached via phone at 919.600.9247 or by e-mail at jjharden@unc.edu. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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Enclosures (5)