

Student's Name

Professor's Name

Course Name/Code

Date

Graduate School Essay Example for UChicago: Economics

I grew up in a neighborhood in Detroit where the grocery store closed when I was twelve and did not reopen. For several years, the nearest full-service supermarket was three bus transfers away. I did not have a framework for understanding this as a policy failure until I took an economics course in my first year at Wayne State University and encountered the literature on food deserts and retail location decisions. What had been a fact of my geography became a research question.

I spent the following three years studying it. My senior thesis, supervised by Professor Kwame Addo, examined the relationship between retail food access and health outcomes in Wayne County over a 15-year period, using a difference-in-differences design to isolate the effect of store closures from broader economic trends. The paper was accepted for presentation at the Undergraduate Economics Research Symposium at the University of Michigan.

UChicago's PhD program in Economics draws me because of the program's methodological rigor and because of Professor Sarah Kim's research on the welfare effects of neighborhood retail change. My thesis raised a question I could not answer at the undergraduate level: whether the documented effects on health outcomes are mediated primarily by price, variety, or access constraints, and whether those mechanisms respond differently to different policy interventions. The answer requires the econometric tools and the data infrastructure that UChicago's program can provide.