

Accounting Research Workshop (ARW) – winter 2025/2026

Speaker: Marshall Vance, Associate Professor of Accounting

University: Virginia Tech

Date: December 2, 2025

Topic: *“Mandatory Salary Range Disclosure and the Gender Pay Gap”*

Marshall Vance’s presentation at the Accounting Research Workshop examined the real effects of mandatory salary range disclosure laws on compensation structures and gender pay disparities. Using a rich dataset of verified employee-level compensation from a large crowdsourced platform, the study investigates how pay transparency requirements in job postings influence wages, equity compensation, and overall pay outcomes for men and women.

Drawing on economic theory and the emerging literature on pay transparency, Vance analysed how external disclosure affects negotiation behaviour, employer pay-setting practices, and the distribution of different compensation components. While transparency laws aim to mitigate information asymmetries and reduce inequities, the results show a more complex reality. The implementation of wage disclosure rules is associated with modest increases in salaries for both genders, but these gains do **not** narrow the gender salary gap. More strikingly, the study documents a substantial decline in equity compensation for women, with no comparable change for men, ultimately widening the overall gender pay gap.

The findings highlight an important trade-off: although transparency may foster higher cash wages, it can prompt firms to adjust less regulated components of pay—especially equity grants, which are more subjective and less formalized. These adjustments appear to disproportionately disadvantage women, particularly in settings with greater scope for negotiation, weaker HR formalization, and among incumbent employees who rely more heavily on equity-based retention incentives.

The workshop discussion engaged with both the empirical design and the broader labour-market implications of the study. Participants explored the robustness of the results, potential behavioural mechanisms driving gender-differentiated effects, and avenues for future research that could incorporate international transparency regulations. The active Q&A underscored the study’s relevance for current debates on pay transparency policies and their unintended consequences for workplace equity.