

William Waller

CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMPLOYMENT & AFFILIATIONS

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA

Visiting Assistant Professor of Finance

January 2019-present

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

Post-doctoral Fellow in Finance

September 2015-May 2017

EDUCATION

The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Ph.D. in Business Administration – Finance

May 2015

Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX

M.S. in Personal Financial Planning

May 2009

Minor in Finance

B.S. in Animal Science

May 2007

Summa cum Laude with Honors

Minors in Agribusiness Management and Chemistry

PUBLICATIONS

Revealing Shorts: An Examination of Large Short Position Disclosures

with Charles M. Jones and Adam V. Reed

Review of Financial Studies, 2016, 29(12): 3278–3320.

How Important is Financial Risk?

with Gregory W. Brown and Söhnke M. Bartram

Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis, 2015, 50(4): 801–824.

WORKING PAPERS

Taxes and the Fed: Theory and Evidence from Equities

with Anthony M. Diercks

Option to Resubmit to *Review of Financial Studies*

We provide a critical theoretical and empirical analysis that suggests a key driver of fiscal effects on equity markets is the Federal Reserve. For the Post-1980 era, tax cuts lead to higher cash flow news and higher discount rates. The discount rate news tends to dominate such that tax cuts are associated with lower equity returns. For the Pre-1980 era, the results flip. This empirical instability is confirmed across multiple measures of tax shocks at different frequencies. We motivate our empirical findings with a standard New Keynesian model that exhibits a shift in the aggressiveness of monetary policy.

Evaluating Private Equity Performance Using Stochastic Discount Factors with Oleg Gredil and Morten Sørensen

We examine the performance of 2,750 private equity funds incepted during 1979-2008 using the discount factors implied by the two leading consumption-based asset pricing models (CBAPMs): Habit Formation and Long-run Risks. Our approach is motivated by the observation that investment mandates and cash flow patterns of university endowments and public pension funds are strongly consistent with the preferences of a representative investor in those models. Under these discount factors, venture capital did not destroy value in post-2000 vintages and has outperformed buyouts and generalists in the full sample, in contrast to CAPM-based evidence. Also we find that 2007-08 venture vintages has been on track to provide a relatively good hedge for consumption shocks during and post crisis in comparison to buyout funds. Moreover, there is virtually no spike in private equity excess returns in late 90s according to CBAPMs.

Default, Recovery, and the Macroeconomy

While recent theoretical research has highlighted the importance of time-series variation in the cost of financial distress in explaining well-documented corporate debt puzzles, empirical research has found that estimates of firm recovery rates are unrelated to overall market conditions. This paper answers the question: do default costs vary across the business cycle or are aggregate measures of default costs simply picking up differences in asset quality? Specifically by jointly estimating a model of ex-ante recovery rates and default probabilities, I find that a one standard deviation increase in the level of interest rates is associated with a 0.3% increase in the cost of default (decrease in recovery rate) and with firms liquidated 13 months earlier than the case of no change in interest rates. Moreover, a one standard deviation increase in the slope of interest rates is associated with a 0.7% decrease in the cost of default (increase in recovery rate) and with firms delaying the default decision 45 months than in the case of no change in interest rates.

Yes, U.S. Stocks are Getting Riskier with Gregory W. Brown

Over the last few decades U.S. stocks have become significantly more volatile. This result holds even when excluding the financial crisis period of 2008-2009. Both the market index and individual stocks have become more volatile indicating that higher volatility is not just the result of higher idiosyncratic risk or increased correlations among stocks. Instead, the increase in risk is due entirely to more frequent and more extreme spikes in volatility. We find that after decomposing volatility into a long-run component and a transitory component, there is no meaningful trend in the long-run component. In contrast, our measure of transitory volatility has tripled over the last 40 years. The upward trend in the transitory component is primarily the result of changing characteristics of the typical publicly-traded firm due to the appearance of many new and riskier firms (e.g., technology stocks). Our findings show that the expansion of U.S. stock markets in recent decades has fundamentally altered the types of risks born by equity investors.

RESEARCH IN
PROGRESS

Long and Short Disclosures in Activist Investing with Charles M. Jones and Adam V. Reed

- PRESENTATIONS 2018
- Tulane University
 - Louisiana State University
- 2016
- Financial Management Association Annual Meeting, Las Vegas, NV
 - Midwest Finance Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA
- 2015
- Eastern Finance Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA
 - Securities and Exchange Commission
 - George Washington University
- 2012
- European Finance Association Annual Meeting, Copenhagen, Denmark
 - FDIC-Cornell-UH Derivative Securities and Risk Management Conference
- 2011
- Conference on Financial Economics and Accounting, Bloomington, IN
- 2009
- Southwest Finance Association Annual Meeting, Oklahoma City, OK
- TEACHING
- CMU 70-495: Corporate Finance (Case Studies)
- Spring 2016 (2 Sections), Spring 2017 (2 Sections)
- UNC BUSI 408: Corporate Finance
- Summer 2013, Spring 2014 (2 Sections)
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICE
- Referee - Journal of Banking and Finance (2016), Review of Finance (2015)
- Discussant - Midwest Finance Association (2016), Eastern Finance Association (2015)
- POPULAR PRESS
- Vlastelica, R., "Why the Disney deal suggests the tax bill may mean little for the economy," *MarketWatch*, December 16, 2017.
- Lahart, J., "The Fed Versus Tax Cuts," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2017.
- Boesler, M., "Fed Study Suggests Trump May Have Fed to Thank for Stock Rally," *Bloomberg*, October 12, 2017.
- Gandel, S., "The Big Board's 'Icky' Attack on Short-Sellers," *Bloomberg*, June 30, 2017.
- Powell, R., "How to better understand your risk tolerance," *MarketWatch*, May 23, 2012.
- Hough, J., "Why the Stock Market Has Turned Bipolar," *Smart Money*, August 11, 2011.
- McDermott, M., "Funds Drop Redemption Fees as Market-Timing Fears Wane," *BoardIQ*, July 5, 2011.
- Brown, J., "The Fee That Makes You Money," *Banking My Way*.

AWARDS

American Finance Association Doctoral Student Travel Grant, 2012
Inquire Europe Research Grant (€10,000), 2011
Best Paper Award Academy of Financial Services Annual Meeting, 2009
Best Paper Award Academy of Financial Services Annual Meeting, 2008
College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Banner Bearer, 2007
Presidential Endowed Scholar, 2003–2007
College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources Dean’s Scholar, 2003–2007
Carl B. and Florence E. King Foundation Scholar, 2003–2007

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Waller, W., D. Nanigian, and M.S. Finke, 2018, Redemption Fees: Reward for Punishment, *Journal of Financial Services Professionals*, 72(2): 49–68.
Finke, M.S., S.J. Huston, and W. Waller, 2009, Do Contracts Impact Comprehensive Financial Advice? *Financial Services Review* 18(2): 177–194.
Hanna, S.D., W. Waller, and M.S. Finke, 2008, The Concept of Risk Tolerance in Personal Financial Planning, *Journal of Personal Finance* 7(1): 96–108.

REFERENCES

Gregory W. Brown (gregwbrown@unc.edu, +1.919.962.9250)
Professor and Sarah Graham Distinguished Scholar of Finance, UNC at Chapel Hill
Director of the Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise
Dissertation Committee Chair

Oleg Gredil (ogredil@tulane.edu, +1.919.428.8459)
Assistant Professor of Finance, Tulane University

Charles M. Jones (cj88@columbia.edu, +1.212.854.4109)
Robert W. Lear Professor of Finance and Economics, Columbia University

Adam V. Reed (adamvreed@gmail.com, +1.919.962.9785)
Professor and Julian Price Distinguished Scholar of Finance, UNC at Chapel Hill