

MELANIE A. WADDELL
PhD Public Administration & Policy candidate
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Education

University of Georgia, Athens, GA
Ph.D. in Public Administration and Policy, 2026
Dissertation: How do States Budget for Disasters?
Committee: Katherine Willoughby (chair), David Bradford, and Felipe Lozano-Rojas

Northeastern University, Boston, MA
M.A. in Political Science, concentration in International Relations, 2016

Converse College, Spartanburg, SC
B.A. in Theater and Psychology, minor in Politics, 2014

Publications

Waddell, Melanie A. “Repeat audit findings: How FEMA responds to feedback.” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 100(2024): 104-157. Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2023.104157>.

Grants and Awards

ASPA Founder’s Fellow, 2024 – 2025
UGA PADP Summer Research Assistantship (*in lieu of Research Grant*), ~\$2800, 2024
UGA PADP Summer Research Grant, ~\$1000, 2023
Outstanding TA Award, February 2022

Travel Grants for Conferences:
UGA School of Public and International Affairs Scholarship, \$925, 2024
UGA Graduate School Travel Grant, \$800, 2024
UGA Department of Public Administration and Policy (PADP) Travel Grant, \$500, 2024 (ABFM)
UGA PADP Travel Grant, \$500, 2024 (PMRC)
Public Financial Publications and Public Budgeting and Finance Consortium Travel Grant, ~\$2500, 2023 (ABFM)
UGA PADP Travel Grant, \$750, 2023

UGA Graduate School Travel Grant, \$550, 2023
 UGA Graduate School Travel Grant, \$850, 2022 (ABFM)
 UGA PADP Travel Grant, \$500, 2022 (ABFM)
 UGA Graduate School Travel Grant, \$1400, 2022 (ASPA)
 UGA PADP Travel Grant, \$500, 2022 (WSSA)

Working Papers

Strategic Decision-Making by U.S. States in Budgeting for Disasters: The Case of Covid-19 (*solo-authored*)

Practice What is Preached: Is FEMA Contracting Responsive to Advancing Democratic Values (*co-authored with Katherine Willoughby (UGA)*)

Who Gets What in Disaster Funding? The Importance of State Brokers as a Determinant for Resource Allocation (*solo-authored*)

Natural Hazard Mitigation: A Historical Data Review (*co-authored with Robert Hines (UNC-Charlotte) and Scott Langford (ASU)*)

How Does Project Management Matter? Examining the Impact of Management on Project Performance (*co-authored with Andrew Grandage (WCU), Mikhail Ivonchyk (SUNY-Albany), Robert Hines (UNC-Charlotte), and Jekyung Lee (Chungnam National)*)

Examining the Relationship Between FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program and Disaster Mitigation (*solo-authored*)

How to Deal with the Worst of the Worst: The Case of the Cascadia Subduction Zone (*solo-authored*)

Conferences

Papers Presented at

ABFM:

- 2024:
 - Examining the Relationship Between FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Program and Disaster Mitigation
 - How to Deal with the Worst of the Worst: The Case of the Cascadia Subduction Zone
 - Natural Hazard Mitigation: A Historical Data Review (*co-author presented*)

- 2023:
 - Strategic Decision-Making by U.S. States to Respond to Disasters: The Case of COVID-19
- 2022:
 - Who Gets What in Disaster Funding? The Importance of State Brokers as a Determinant for Resource Allocation
- 2021:
 - Using Repeat Audit Findings to Analyze FEMA's Response to Feedback
 - Practice What is Preached: Is FEMA Contracting Responsive to Advancing Democratic Values (*coauthored with Katherine Willoughby*)

APPAM:

- 2023:
 - Strategic Decision-Making by U.S. States to Respond to Disasters: The Case of COVID-19
- 2022:
 - Who Gets What in Disaster Funding? The Importance of State Brokers as a Determinant for Resource Allocation

ASPA:

- 2024:
 - Examining the relationship between FEMA BRIC program, disaster mitigation, & PET
- 2022:
 - Who Gets What in Disaster Funding? The Importance of State Brokers as a Determinant for Resource Allocation

PMRC:

- 2025:
 - How to Deal with the Worst of the Worst: The Case of the Cascadia Subduction Zone
- 2024:
 - How do States Budget for Disasters and Why Does It Matter?

SECoPA:

- 2024:
 - Natural Hazard Mitigation: A Historical Review (*co-author presented*)
- 2023:
 - Strategic Decision-Making by U.S. States to Respond to Disasters: The Case of COVID-19

WSSA:

- 2023:
 - How do States Budget for Disasters and Why Does it Matter?
- 2022:
 - Practice What is Preached? FEMA Contracting to Advance Democratic Values
 - Using Repeat Audit Findings to Analyze FEMA's Response to Feedback

Teaching

University of Georgia

Instructor of Record:

- PADP 4630: Public Administration and Budgeting (undergraduate), Fall 2023, Spring 2025 (*upcoming semester*)
Approx. 20 students per class
- PADP 3000: Introduction to Public Administration (undergraduate), 2022 – 2023; Fall 2024
Approx. 40-45 students per class (10 for e-class); 135 students total

Teaching Assistant:

- POLS 1101: Introduction to American Government (undergraduate), 2019 – 2022
Approx. 60 students per semester; 360 students total

Research
Experience

University of Georgia

Research Assistant to Professor Katherine Willoughby, 2023 – 2024; Summer 2024; Spring 2025

- I collected data on state performance information identified in state audits. This ongoing research will be used in analyzing states' recurring problem areas.

Research Assistant to Professor Felipe Lozano-Rojas, summer 2021

- I worked on collecting and organizing information for local sales tax rates. I was responsible for collecting Florida's sales taxes and county distances.

Certificates

Emerging Leaders, presented by the Graduate School at UGA. EL is a competitively selected personal leadership development program.

Certificate in Diversity and Inclusion, presented by the Office of

Institutional Diversity. CDI is designed to engage UGA faculty and staff in building capacity to contribute to and sustain diversity and inclusion across UGA campuses.

Service	Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) – panelist on Building Enthusiasm and Synergy for Current and Prospective Doctoral Students in Public Affairs Programs: Issues, Strategies and Outcomes , Fall 2024 Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) table representative, Fall 2023 Southeast Conference on Public Administration (SECoPA) social media representative , Fall 2023
Related Skills	R, Stata, Microsoft Office, LaTeX/Overleaf, Qualtrics
Professional Affiliations	ABFM, ASPA, APPAM, Infragard, NASPAA, NEMA, PBF Consortium, PRMA, SECM, SECoPA, WSSA