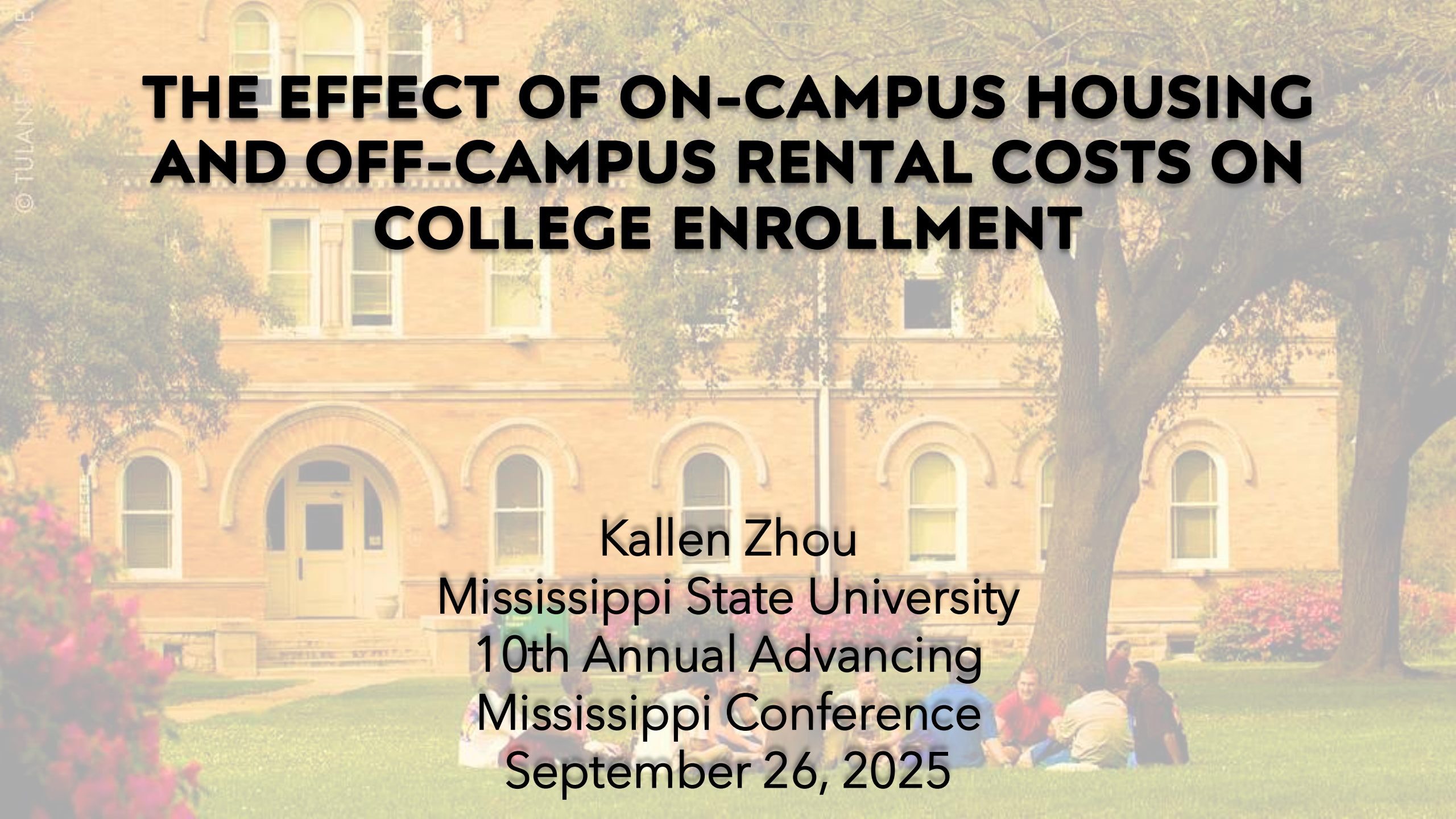

THE EFFECT OF ON-CAMPUS HOUSING AND OFF-CAMPUS RENTAL COSTS ON COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

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Mississippi State University
10th Annual Advancing Mississippi Conference
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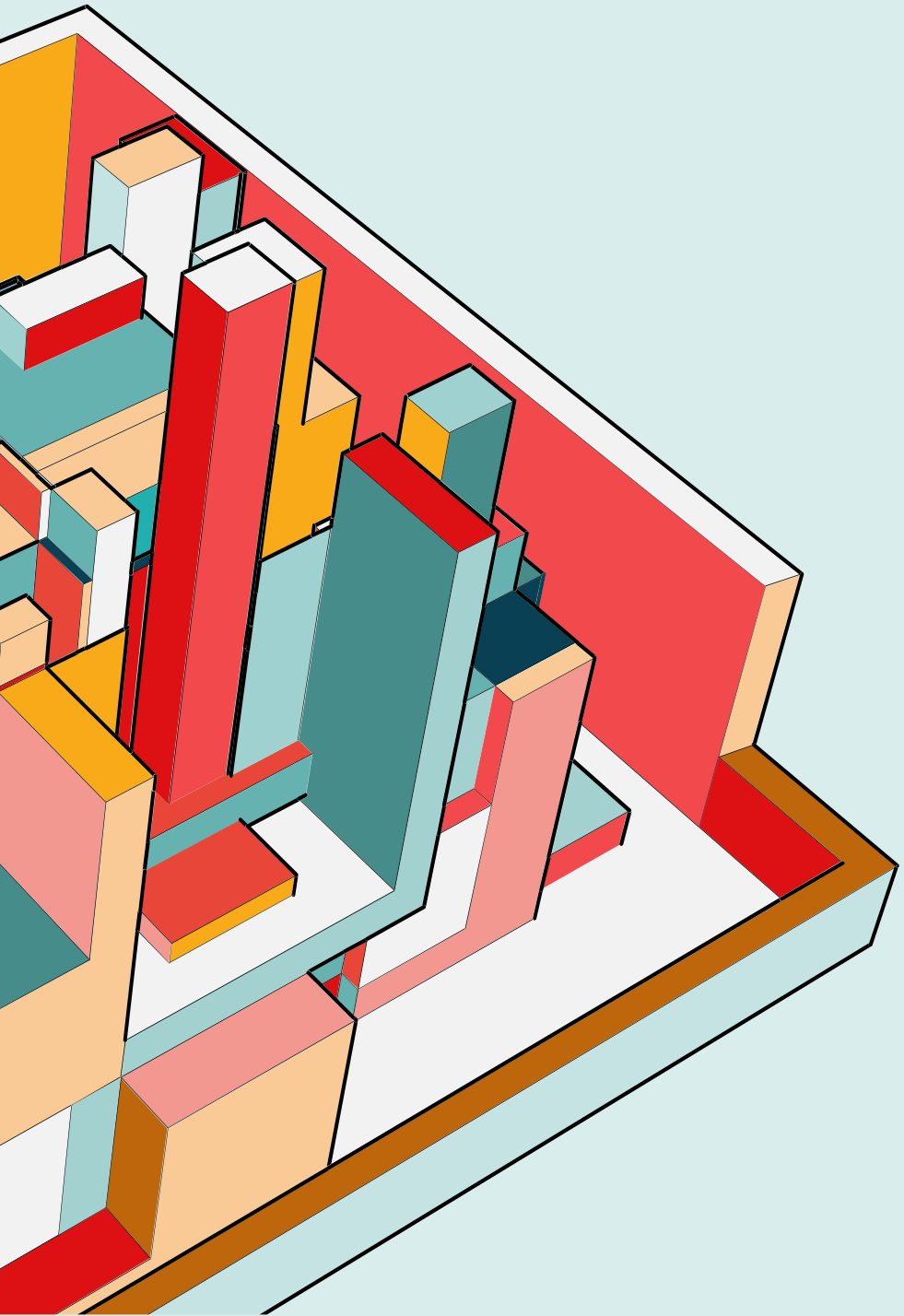
IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

Attendance at four-year post-secondary institutions increase household income around age 30 by ~20% on average (Smith et. al., 2020)

College is a powerful driver for upward mobility (Chetty et. al., 2017)

Larger segments of the population with higher education are significantly positively associated with GDP growth (Li et. al., 2024)

College enrollment can improve conditions on the micro and macro scale



THE GOAL

Increase college enrollment on the macro level

HOUSING AS A BARRIER

48% of students have experience some kind of housing insecurity with 14% having experienced homelessness (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2024).

Those who reported housing insecurity face around 8-12% reduction in the probability of degree attainment, facing lower GPAs and greater likelihood of enrolling part time (Broton, 2021).

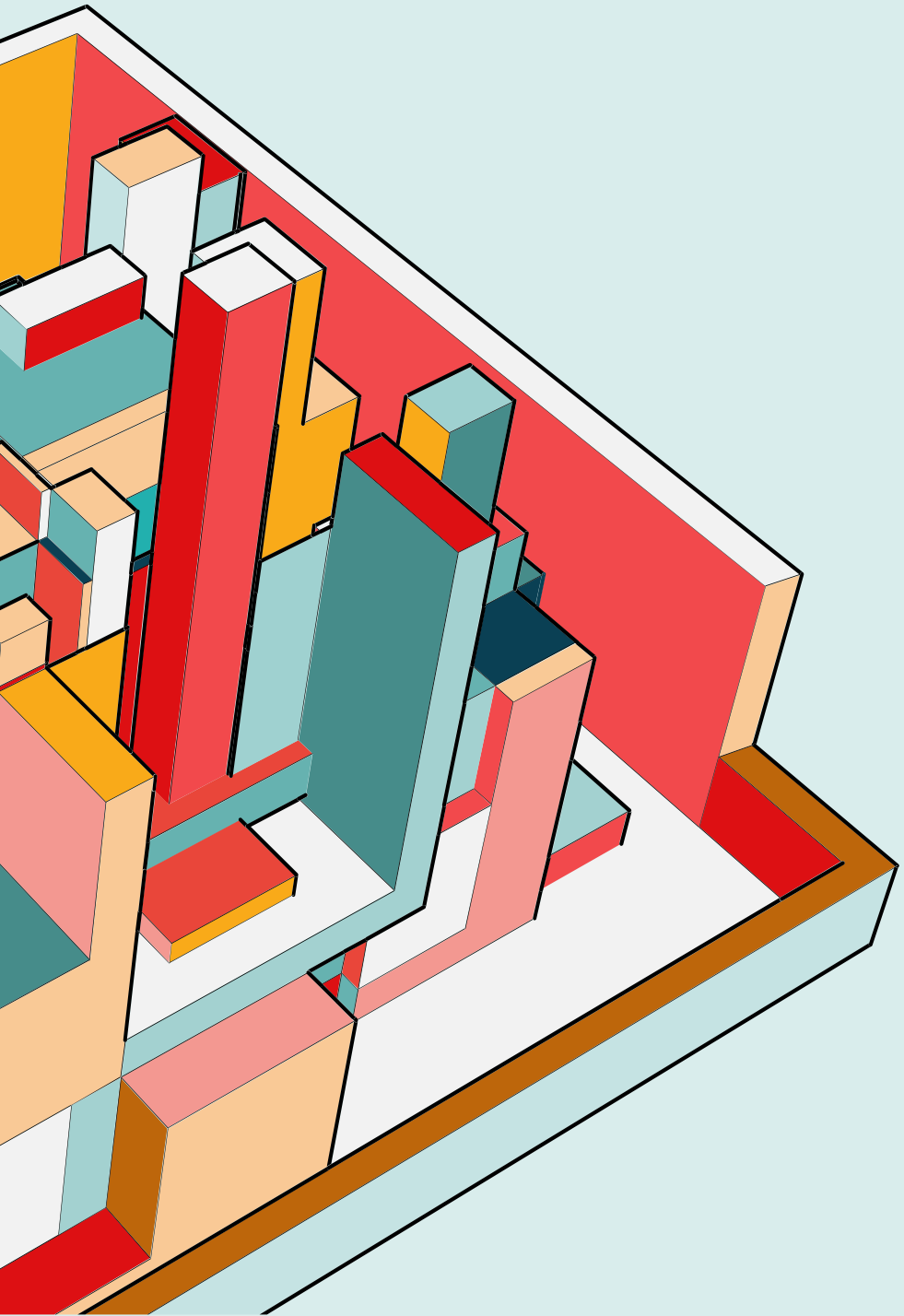
Housing poses a significant barrier to college students.

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

Productivity. If Mississippi increases attainment rate from 42% to 60%, the state could gain over $376 million and decreased social services spending (Childress et. al., 2023)

Improved Quality of Life. Completing a degree leads to improved circumstances for Mississippians with less dependence on public assistance and higher wages (Childress et. al., 2023)

RESEARCH QUESTION



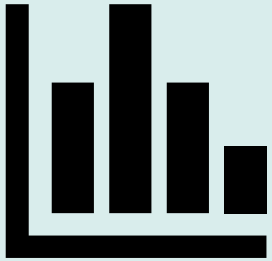
THE RESEARCH GAP

Not much is known on the quantification of housing insecurities affecting college enrollment

Research Question

To what extent do changes in on-campus housing and off-campus rental costs affect undergraduate enrollment rates at colleges and universities in Mississippi?

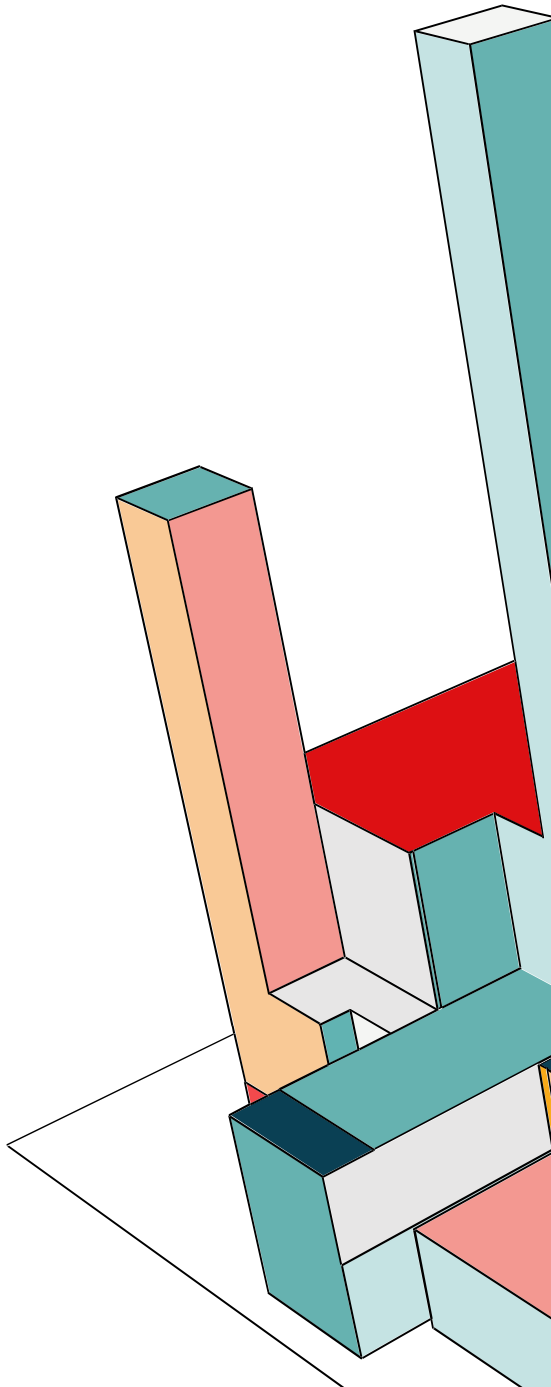
METHODOLOGY



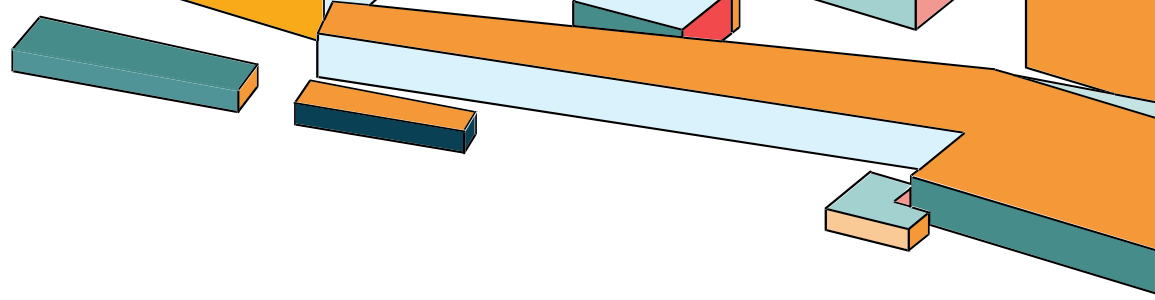
TWO-PART METHODOLOGY

CROSS SECTION SURVEY OF PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS

DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCES ESTIMATION



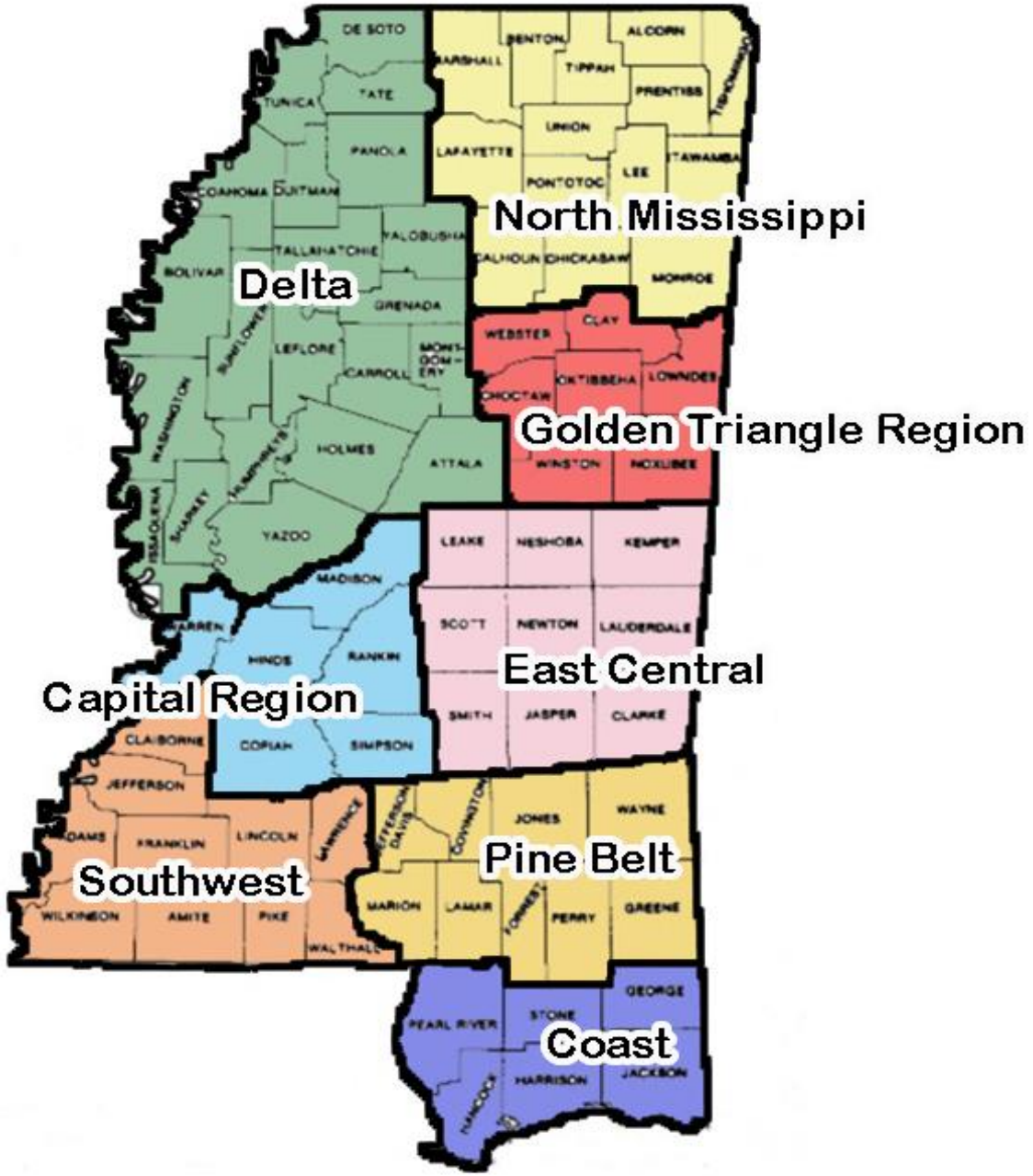
CROSS SECTION SURVEY OF PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS

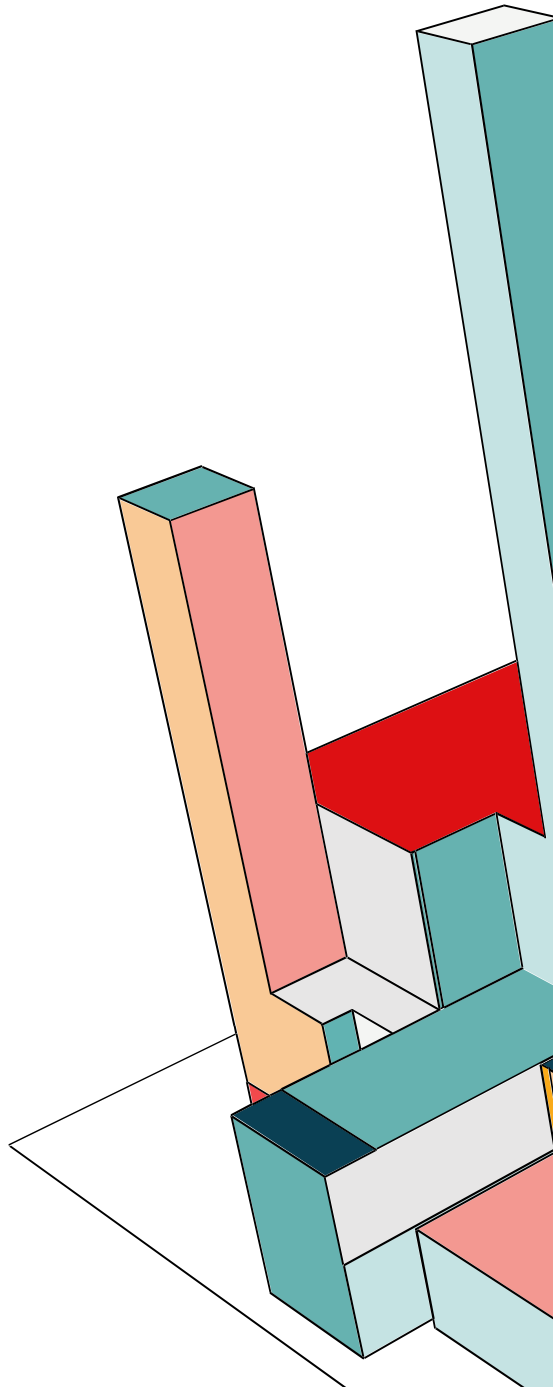


Purpose: Capture how students perceive housing as a barrier to college enrollment.

Approach: Cross-sectional survey of prospective and current students, stratified by region; ask students to rank their largest expected expenses.

Source: U.S. Senate, Office of Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith





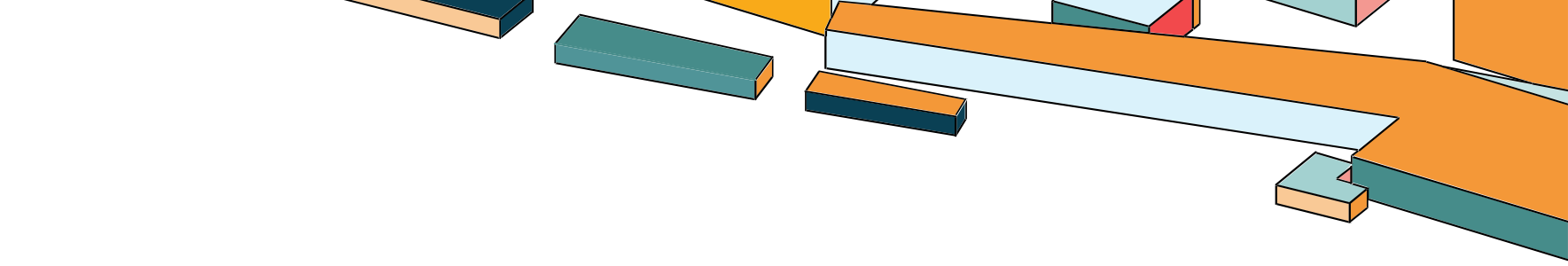
DIFFERENCE-IN-DIFFERENCE ESTIMATION

Purpose: Measure the causal effect of sudden rent increases on enrollment outcomes across Mississippi counties.

Data: Housing costs from HUD + Enrollment from NCES IPEDS and Common Data Sets.

Contribution: Quantifies whether housing cost shocks directly reduce college enrollment.

EXPECTATIONS



SURVEY

Connection. Survey results are to show whether students separated by regions view housing as a major barrier

Expectation. In regions with higher volatility, housing would be ranked higher

Higher rankings in more volatile regions

Student perceptions are shaped by the volatility of their local market.

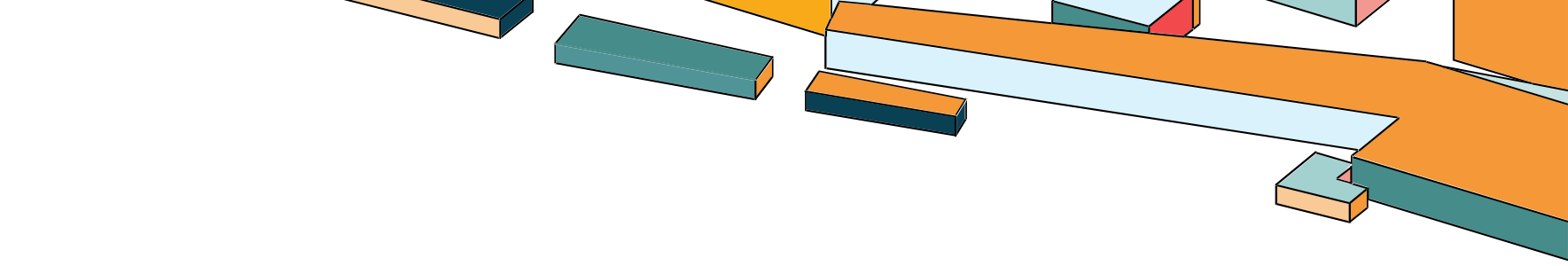
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Connection. The analysis isolates the causal impact of housing cost shocks, establishing a quantifiable relationship between rental volatility and enrollment.

Expectation. When housing costs spike, enrollment rates should fall more sharply at affected institutions compared to stable regions.

Rent shocks causally decrease undergraduate enrollment

Housing costs can shape access to higher education



SYNTHESIS

Survey: students in volatile rental regions see housing as a top barrier

DiD: rent shocks lead to a quantified enrollment decline

Rising costs that are both perceived and measured pose a threat to college access

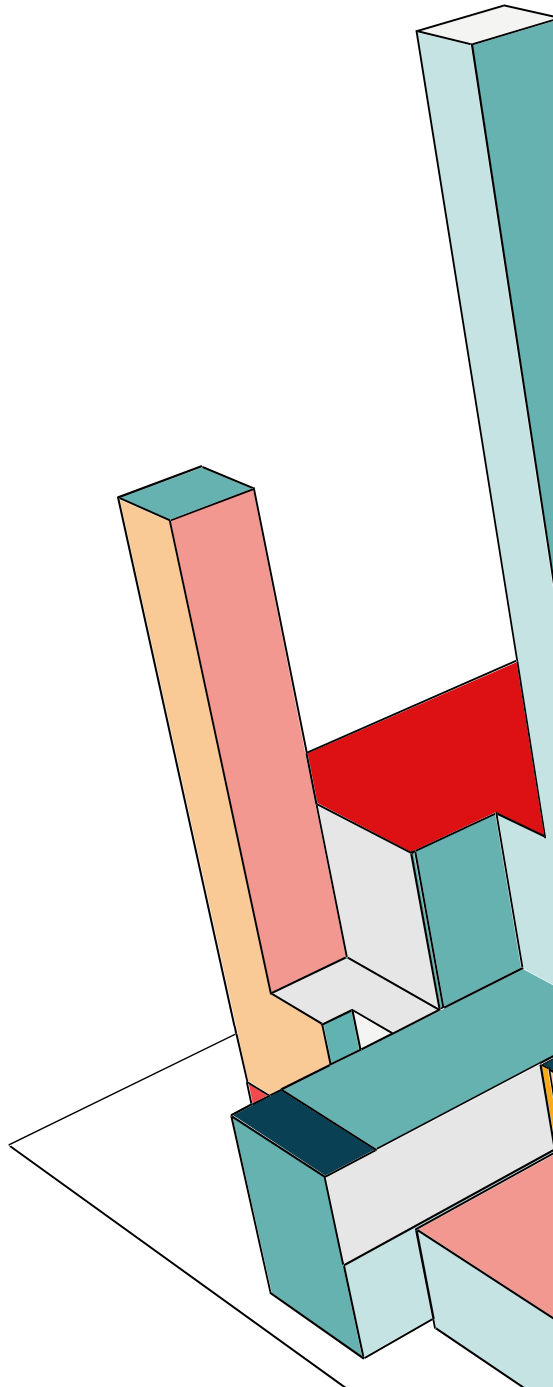
POLICY IMPLICATIONS

INSTITUTIONAL

EXPAND AFFORDABLE ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

EXPAND HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

WORK WITH LOCAL HOUSING

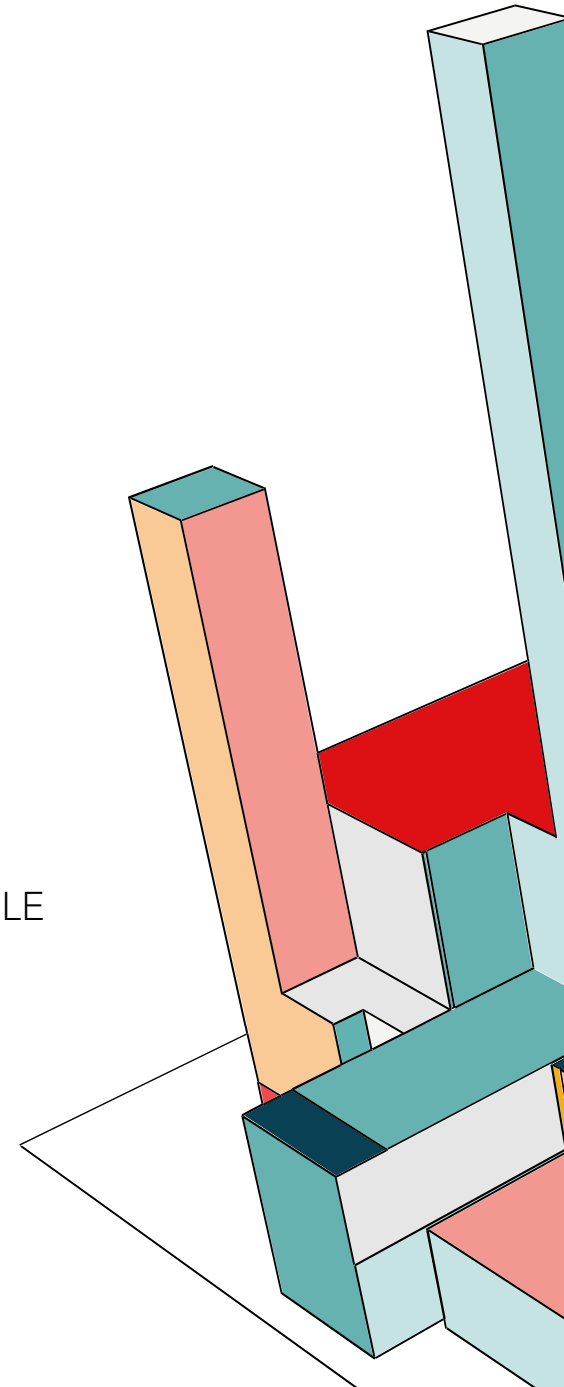


STATE

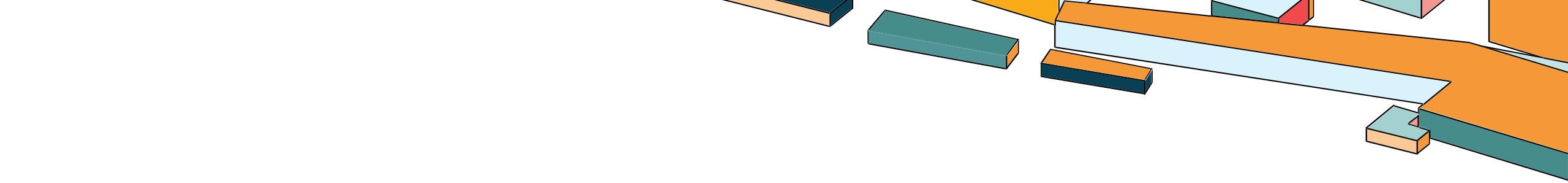
INCLUDE HOUSING COSTS IN STATE FINANCIAL AID

EXPAND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

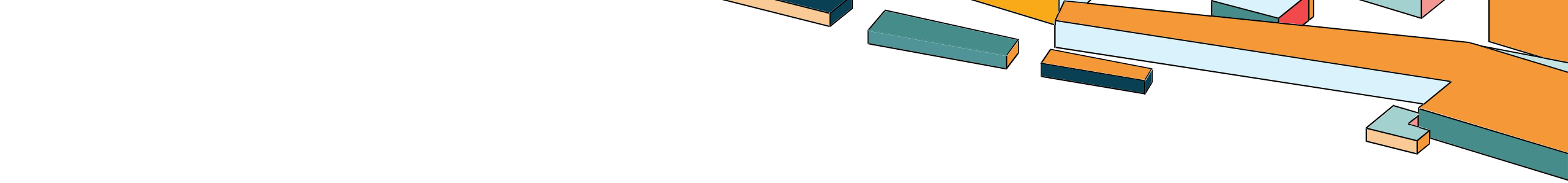
OFFER INSTITUTIONS FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



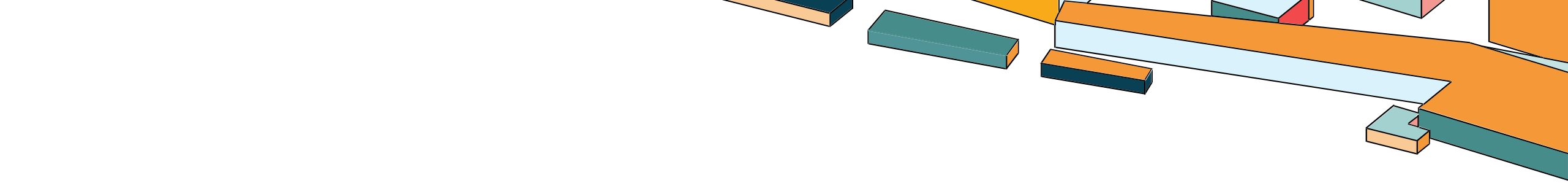
SUMMARY



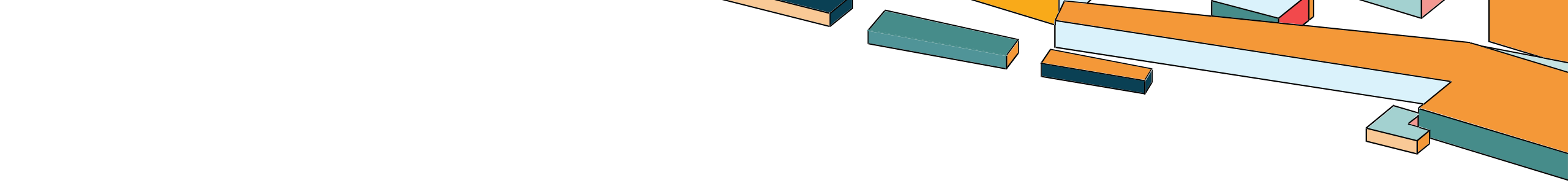
College enrollment drives economic growth, upward mobility, and improved quality of life in Mississippi.



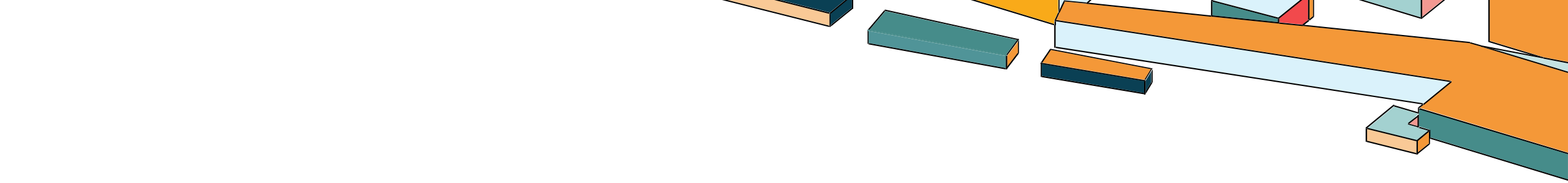
Housing insecurity is a major barrier, reducing degree attainment and discouraging enrollment.



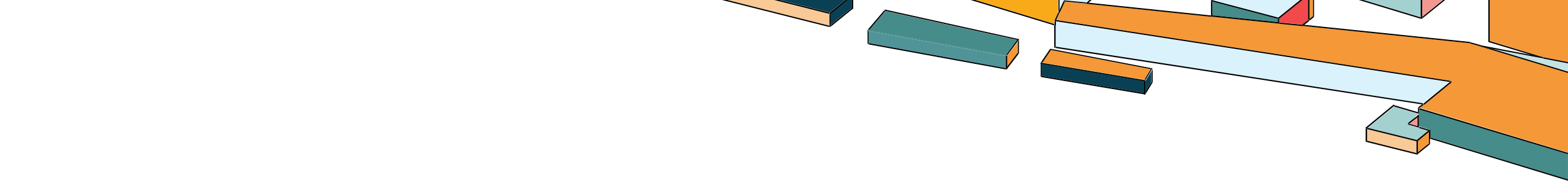
This project will investigate how changes in on-campus housing availability and off-campus rental costs may shape access to higher education.



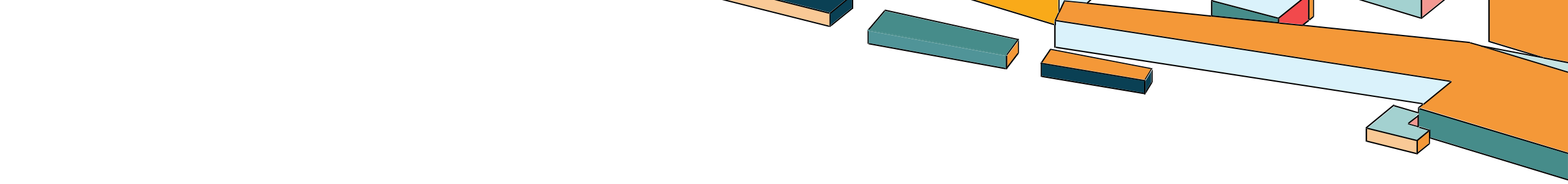
The proposed survey and statistical analysis will reveal both perceived and actual effects of housing costs.



It is anticipated that rising housing costs are expected to limit enrollment opportunities, particularly in volatile markets.



There’s a variety of policies on the state and institutional level that include direct or indirect actions.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION