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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION STATEMENT

How diverse is Economics and why does it matter?

It is well established that Economics as a profession suffers from a lack of diversity. As per an interim report published by the AEA Ad Hoc Committee on the Professional Climate in Economics in 2018, there is significant evidence of discrimination and harassment against women and minority groups, although most of the evidence is anecdotal. Economics is lagging behind other fields in terms of equal opportunities, and biases (both conscious and subconscious) are leading to denial of fair treatment. The report also finds lack of systematic data collection on these issues through surveys and other reporting mechanisms. Inadequate incentives, requirements and accountability mechanisms for departments and organizations to adopt best practices are culminating in a professional climate that is not sufficiently welcoming of women and other under-represented groups. A downstream effect of this is a lack of interest towards Economics among high school students and potential majors from diverse backgrounds.

This concern has also been raised in research published in academic journals. For example, Bayer & Rouse (2016)[1] points out that in 2014 only 42 economics doctorates were awarded to African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans out of 500 to U.S. citizens and permanent residents, and only 157 to women. 23.5% of tenured and tenure-track faculty were women, with 15% at the full professor level versus 31% at the assistant level. Only 6.3% were African American, Hispanic, or Native American, with 4% at full professor against 8.1% at assistant. In 2014, only 28.4% of economics bachelor's degrees went to women and 14.7% to minorities. Between 1995-2014, the percentage of new economics PhDs awarded to women stagnated between 30-37%, while those to minorities declined from 11.4% in 2007 to 7% in 2014.

This phenomenon is referred as the “leaky pipeline” problem (Buckles (2019)[2]) because people from under-represented sections of the society ultimately select themselves out of the profession leading to a lack of intellectual diversity. This can be detrimental for the field because homogeneity in background and experience can result in blind spots in research topics, methods and policy prescriptions. Diversity fosters fresh insights and innovations and for Economics to thrive as a field, it is imperative that people from all walks of life are welcomed.

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[1] Bayer, A., & Rouse, C. E. (2016). Diversity in the economics profession: A new attack on an old problem. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *30*(4), 221-242.
[2] Buckles, K. (2019). Fixing the leaky pipeline: Strategies for making economics work for women at every stage. *Journal of economic perspectives*, *33*(1), 43-60.

What have I done so far?

In my roles as a TA and instructor, I aim to create an encouraging environment that facilitates learning. I hold office hours and accommodate appointments to maximize availability. Some students hesitate to share difficulties publicly, so I provide private conversations during office hours to build trust and support. My student-centric approach focuses on responsive assistance, and dedication to their growth.

I believe all students deserve equitable, quality education regardless of their background. It is my responsibility to create an inclusive environment accommodating diverse needs. At UW-Milwaukee, I have attended Accessibility Resource Center workshops to better understand and help create more equitable learning. I also participate in discussions on inclusive teaching. My goal is for students to feel recognized, valued, and empowered.

To develop my skills, I have attended workshops on pedagogical tools and regularly apply new techniques in my courses. I blend lectures, real-world examples, activities, and practice materials for multifaceted engagement. Moving forward, I will continue this student-centric approach, improve my skills, and foster an inclusive environment accessible to all learning needs. I am committed to evaluating my strategies and working with colleagues and students to evolve as an instructor. My aim is to equip students with skills, nurture their potential, and promote lifelong learning.

In addition to my classroom efforts, at Millsaps College, I am actively working with my colleagues across multiple disciplines to secure a grant through the Gulf Scholars Program (GSP). This is an initiative of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Gulf Research Program. The GSP aims to prepare college students as the next generation of change agents across several fields to address the complex environmental and social challenges in the Gulf of Mexico region. Through this program, my colleagues and I plan to develop an interdisciplinary and transformative educational experience that engages students from diverse backgrounds, including those from historically marginalized communities. We aim to stress on place-based education, critical pedagogy, and integrative learning. This work closely aligns with my commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, as it actively seeks to engage and empower students from all walks of life.

Although not in an official capacity, at UW-Milwaukee I have also mentored students in multiple semesters through a program called Panthers International Pals (PIP) organized by the UWM Centre for International Education. The goal was to help incoming international students settle down in a new country as smoothly as possible.

Through my research, I aim to shed light on certain understudied behavioral aspects among older adults. For example, the mechanisms driving marital stability and divorce are largely studied among younger couples – much less is known about what factors affect marital dissolution and satisfaction among older adults. As life expectancy increases, it becomes crucial to support healthy marriages in later life stages.

Similarly, mental health issues are less frequently examined in elderly populations. Older generations grew up in an era when mental health carried heavy stigma and lacked awareness. Hence problems often go undiagnosed or untreated. As a researcher I strive to explore psychological dimensions for seniors, an area that deserves more attention. My goal is to be a voice for vulnerable groups and quantify relationships that can inform supportive policies and interventions.

By focusing my research on groups that have historically seen less scholarly attention, I hope to diversify the knowledge base in on these topics. Existing studies have centered heavily around particular demographics, failing to capture a wider range of life-cycle outcomes. My work throws light on less visible sections of society. Focused analyses on relatively less studied cohorts will promote intellectual diversity in the field as well.