

Diversity Statement

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My commitment to diversity and inclusion is reflected in my experiences, research, and teaching. As an undergraduate, I attended Davidson College. As a liberal arts college, Davidson requires students to fulfill certain requirements to graduate. These graduation requirements encouraged me to take courses outside my fields of study, Economics and Religion. By taking courses in Anthropology, Art, Biology, History, Mathematics, and Sociology, I learned diverse methods of inquiry. My Davidson courses encouraged me to evaluate why we know, value, or believe certain things, and to question and revise our thinking when needed. I bring this background to my research, where I am interested in using the most appropriate methods to answer questions, even if those methods are not traditional to the field of economics.

After graduating from Davidson, I worked in Birmingham, AL with the nonprofit Impact Alabama (now Impact America). During my first year, I provided free vision screenings to rural and urban preschoolers, coached a Birmingham City middle school debate team, and managed a free income tax preparation program in Florence, AL. In my second year, I oversaw the marketing and outreach for half of our free income tax preparation programs. Over the course of two years, I gained valuable experience in addressing the consequences of poverty through health, economic, and education-based initiatives, which created lasting impact in local communities. These experiences drive my ongoing research agenda.

My current research focuses on rental housing evictions, an issue that disproportionately affects women and minorities. My current work signals my broader interest in issues that affect low- to moderate-income individuals, families, and communities. My experiences with Impact Alabama push me to pursue topics that can inform Federal, state, or local public policy aimed at improving marginalized communities. Women, minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals have often not benefited from public policy. In fact, some public policies have been created specifically to harm these groups (e.g. redlining). I want to participate in research that creates solutions for all people, but especially those that have been disregarded.

In my classroom, I focus on creating a learning environment like that which I had at Davidson, one where students are comfortable asking and answering questions. For example, research shows a gender gap in classroom participation, so I make a concerted effort to use teaching strategies that are inclusive and encourage participation by all students. When posing questions to the class, I often implement think-pair-share (TPS), a collaborative learning strategy that I used during my time as a middle school debate coach. This strategy allows students to think individually about a question and then share their thoughts with classmates that I assign. I then ask students to present what they discussed to the entire class. I find this strategy to be an effective way to encourage more students to participate during class, because it allows students the opportunity to run their thoughts by someone else before they have to share them with the entire class. Additionally, by assigning pairs and/or groups, I ensure that students are working with different peers over the course of the semester, which allows them to engage with students outside their friend group.

Lastly, I know that I still have much to learn on how to improve diversity and inclusion in economics, as well as on how to become a better ally. I do my best to continue to learn by engaging on Twitter, keeping up with information from AEA subcommittees, reading books, and participating in seminars. I am not afraid to discuss these topics. I gave a presentation on diversity to my department because I believed we needed to discuss these important issues. We must acknowledge our problems, or where we have fallen short, if we hope to make lasting change.