

Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I am strongly committed to the mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in both the economics profession and in the higher education community. The economics profession, in particular, can benefit from efforts to promote gender and race equality; about a quarter of all economists are women and a fifth come from racial minority groups. A mere 4% of the profession is composed of Black economists. As a child of upper-middle class parents, I come from a background of privilege and advantages; however, as a woman of South Asian descent and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I have unique perspectives on the professional environment among economists. I fully intend to leverage these perspectives to promote a culture of safety and respect around my colleagues as well as in my classroom.

The best way to make underrepresented groups feel more comfortable to express their opinions, identities, and values is to increase the numbers of those groups; I know this from my own experiences, when I have hesitated to voice my opinions or even ask questions as the only woman in a class. When I have more company in the form of fellow women as classmates, I am much more likely to speak up. I think that, as a long-term goal, we as a profession can make it a goal promote inclusion in this way. It would greatly benefit our discipline to have talented and diverse researchers with new perspectives and ideas. If I am in a position in higher education, I would be happy to be a part of efforts to recruit students and colleagues from diverse backgrounds as well as other efforts to promote DEI goals.

In the short-term, it is important to create safe spaces for underrepresented groups to express their opinions as well as their experiences. Moreover, it is important to take these experiences seriously and address them to the best of our ability. For example, as a former organizer of the graduate student brown bag in the economics department, I noticed that women tended to give presentations during the pandemic, over Zoom, a lot more often than before the pandemic, when there was no virtual option. As the university returned to in-person classes and activities, I made a big push to have a hybrid format for our brown bags, offering both in-person and Zoom presentation options so that women – who tend to be mothers and have childcare responsibilities – can be involved in the research culture. Small accommodations can go a long way, and as long as we listen with the intention of inclusion, there are a lot of small changes to promote DEI.

DEI is particularly important at the main point of entry into the field of economics: undergraduate courses. In both my capacity as a Teaching Assistant (TA) and Graduate Part-Time Instructor (GPTI), I consider promoting DEI goals a key responsibility to my students. First, there are numerous dimensions of “diversity”: gender identity, race, sexual orientation, economic class, and disability are all factors which influence the learning experience. It is important to understand how each of these aspects of identity can affect the experience, to communicate a willingness to help in any way, and to follow through on this promise. I am careful to never make anyone feel foolish for speaking out and voicing their opinions; I communicate to students through the syllabus and verbally that I do not tolerate any rudeness. For any students who require disability accommodations, I ensure that I am in contact with them and offer my support throughout the course. When students fall behind, I make it a point to reach out and offer my support, as well. To

the best of my ability, I encourage non-traditional students to reach out to me for anything as well as their classmates. I am constantly learning about new ways to promote DEI in my classroom and attend workshops that keep me informed about undergraduate students' experiences on campus.

I feel all aspects of my identity are supported by my mentors, and I intend to spread the goodwill in any future position I find myself in.