

# Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

Eric Spurlino  
New York University  
[spurlino@nyu.edu](mailto:spurlino@nyu.edu)

The economics discipline has had a long and persistent lack of diversity and representation. This problem occurs across race (as of 2020 only 21% of academic economists were minorities), gender (only making up 23% of academic economists were women<sup>1</sup>), and socio-economic status<sup>2</sup>. These problems have fundamental negative implications on both the welfare of those in under-represented populations and the progress of the field as a whole. Because of this, I consider fostering diversity and inclusion within the profession to be a high priority. This priority has been demonstrated through my actions in my roles as an educator, a mentor, and a researcher.

As an instructor throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I saw first-hand how important it was to foster an inclusive community in the classroom. This was especially true while serving as a remote instructor for a 2021 summer course in undergraduate statistics. For a wide range of legal, socioeconomic, and personal reasons my students were spread across the globe. As an instructor, I worked hard to find ways to make each student feel engaged with the material, and to give each student a sense of belonging in the course. I did this by fostering an environment of flexibility, understanding, and communication. I made myself accessible via Zoom and e-mail to give students access to direct instruction and opportunities to learn who may otherwise feel marginalized by virtue of being on another continent. I also believe that instructors can help facilitate an environment of diversity and inclusion through the very content of their teaching. For example an instructor of behavioral economics I could teach the wide experimental literature on gender economics, and as an instructor of intermediate microeconomics I can explain the roles socioeconomic mobility plays in economic outcomes. Including such topics can make those from underrepresented backgrounds feel more engaged with the broader concepts of the course.

Outside of teaching, I have tried to use my role as a mentor and a researcher to help foster an inclusive environment. As an experimental economist, I have the unique opportunity of engaging with undergraduate students, especially those who may not have other points of access to the world of economic research. This is particularly true for research subjects because those who participate in paid economics experiments typically come from less economically advantaged backgrounds. While proctoring experiments at New York University's economics lab, I often receive e-mails and questions after the experiment from students interested in the research's questions and methodology. These questions have been great opportunities to engage with undergraduates who may have previously not seen economic research as something they could directly participate in and learn from.

As a faculty member, I hope to further engage undergraduate students from all backgrounds in this research by advising their original research and by offering research assistantships. Rather than simple data-cleaning, the accessibility of the field of experimental economics

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/01/22/the-race-problem-in-economics/>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.piie.com/publications/working-papers/socioeconomic-diversity-economics-phds>

allows a unique level of intellectual engagement with students as they assist in designing experiments, and collecting data themselves. As someone who had the privilege of having great undergraduate advisors and mentors, I know how important these opportunities are for the future academic success of students. By being an active advisor and mentor for those pursuing research in economics, I will be able make economic research more accessible and inclusive, and provide academic opportunities to those who have not typically had access to it.

As a member of your faculty, I would aim to contribute to the sense of inclusion and diversity in your department in all of the ways listed above. Together, as a field, I believe we can make substantial progress towards making our field more inclusive and diverse.