

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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The Economics profession faces a significant diversity gap for women and underrepresented minorities, lagging behind other fields and the general population (Bayer and Rouse, 2016; CSMGEP, 2022; Koffi and Wantchekon, forth.). As a researcher, educator, and mentor, I recognize the exclusion individuals from minority backgrounds may face in academia. This lack of diversity poses challenges for learning, development, and recruitment, threatening academic excellence.

Outlooks from my academic journey. My experiences as a female graduate student and instructor have given me valuable insights into how cultural and socio-economic differences influence people's behaviors and opportunities. At the Toulouse School of Economics (TSE), 40% of graduate students were international, representing over 90 nationalities, fostering TSE's culture of openness. As an Erasmus fellow at Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona), I engaged with local and international students, volunteering at the Canpedró Social Center. Université de Montréal, where I pursued my Ph.D., offered me a bilingual and multicultural setting, reflecting the diverse spirit of the city itself, as well as opportunities to collaborate with McGill and Concordia universities through the CIREQ joint research center.

Thriving in diverse academic settings exposed me to various cultural perspectives on higher education. Notably, the professor-student dynamic is more hierarchical in France than in Spain or North America. In Spain and Canada, students may address instructors by their first names, a practice uncommon in French classrooms. French universities, by design, have less accessible instructors, even at the graduate level. Personalized interactions are rare, with as many as 300 students attending the same lecture in France. Conversations with West African colleagues at Université de Montréal and McGill revealed that deference toward instructors, particularly professors, may be more pronounced in other countries, especially in developing nations. Cultural differences might render some individuals unaware of available learning and development opportunities, placing them at a disadvantage.

In the academic environment, I have observed the unwelcoming nature for those not conforming to a specified gender schema. Negative behaviors and subtle gender discrimination can erode confidence, discouraging gender minority individuals from pursuing career advancement or leading them to give up on their economic or academic careers.

My experience in promoting an inclusive environment. These insights and the awareness of how different behaviors can be determined by individual backgrounds have helped

me draft different strategies to foster a safe, respectful and equitable academic environment.

Incoming international students may not be familiar with cultural differences in higher education, especially in approaching professors. As detailed in my teaching statement, fostering an inclusive classroom requires explicitly informing students about class norms, which cover communication, attendance, and academic standards. This practice has been crucial in introductory courses at Université de Montréal, featuring diverse students. Clearly defining ground rules has been a key factor in nurturing an atmosphere where students show respect for both each other and their learning environment and build trust in the teaching team. As an instructor, I have always encouraged all students experiencing any difficulty to come and talk to me directly so that we can deal with the issues they are facing together, in a safe environment.

During the March 2020 sanitary crisis and lockdown at Université de Montréal, adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for a safe space for students facing challenges. Being aware of diverse situations, such as international students in different time zones and those serving in the army, I adjusted teaching methods. Instead of live Zoom lectures, I implemented a detailed learning plan with pre-recorded videos, accommodating various circumstances. To further inclusivity, I organized additional online office hours and engaged with students through phone calls, ensuring equitable evaluations with a focus on a dissertation assignment.

Benefiting from the mentorship of women like my coauthors Emmanuelle Auriol and Alice Mesnard, as well as my current supervisor Erin Strumpf, has profoundly shaped my career. Their support and encouragement influenced my decision to pursue a Ph.D. and an academic career. I aspire to pay this kindness forward by supporting young economists, especially women. From fall 2022 to spring 2023, I collaborated on a policy report with a female graduate student from McGill University, providing guidance, insights, and encouragement. This rewarding experience fuels my commitment to ongoing mentorship and guidance in the future.

Promoting diversity and inclusion in Economics is a top priority. Recognizing the importance of mentorship and the role of female mentors, I am particularly driven to support women in Economics and inspire the next generation to challenge stereotypes. I will advise and inform all students about resources, encouraging them to leverage opportunities, and pledge to work collaboratively to address the diversity gap, creating an inclusive environment for all to thrive.

REFERENCES

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