

As an economics researcher, I share the growing concerns about the underrepresentation of minority and historically disadvantaged groups within my discipline. For example, Black, Hispanic, and Native American people in the US earned only 17.7% of the economics degrees awarded to the citizens and permanent residents of the country in 2019-2020, despite comprising 31.9% of the population.¹ In the case of research, only 28.7% of authors in international economics and 13.6% of authors in macroeconomics and finance were women between 2011 and 2020.² The underrepresentation of minority and historically disadvantaged groups in economics is a worrying issue, especially considering the field's unique influence in policymaking. By marginalizing a significant share of the population in the relevant study and discussions, a lack of diversity and inclusion can lead to systematically biased policy outcomes.

In addition to the statistics, my understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has also been enriched by personal experience. As an instructor at UC Berkeley, I have seen firsthand how my students are stratified across identities in terms of not only race, ethnicity, and gender, but also socioeconomic status, disability, culture, and more. As an international student growing up in a working class family, who has also faced differences in language, culture, and class, I understand that the heterogeneous backgrounds of my students can come with barriers that prevent equal access to education and other resources. It is my firm belief that the alleviation of such barriers in higher education, especially by educators, is vital in helping individuals achieve their full potential. I have put this belief into action during my time at UC Berkeley.

As a concrete example, when teaching an upper-level class on macroeconomics and international finance, I realized that my office hours tended to be dominated by sophisticated questions from students with advanced work/internship experience. Meanwhile, students without the relevant background knowledge or from disadvantaged backgrounds struggled to participate on an equal level. The situation has been further confirmed after I privately reached out to an African American student and a student with a learning disability, where I learned that they were "too shy to attend my office hours." To ensure a full participation from all of my students, I responded by rearranging and extending my office hours to include dedicated one-to-one meeting slots. I then informed all of my students about the change, while politely reminding the relevant students the new option through emails. The adjustment of my office hours allowed me to more effectively accommodate my students' different backgrounds and experience. While improving my teaching quality, the one-to-one meetings also gave me a chance to realize that many of my students without the advanced experience or from disadvantaged backgrounds were among the hardest working students in class.

Aside from teaching, I have promoted DEI in research whenever possible. During the four years I have spent mentoring undergraduate students' research through the departmental Undergraduate Researcher Program, I have made a point to introduce international economics, finance, and macroeconomics to promising students whose identities are underrepresented in the fields. Three of these students have gone on to further their research careers by working at government/policy research institutions or applying for graduate schools.

Last but not least, I have shared, and learned, the practice to advance DEI in higher education through services. For instance, I have presented in the departmental pedagogy workshop repeatedly on how to efficiently collect feedback in large classes with a diverse body of students and respectfully support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The knowledge I gained from the workshop has helped me earn the Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor award as one of the top 10% of instructors in the graduate division of UC Berkeley.

For future efforts to foster DEI within and beyond economics, I plan to take the following steps. First, I intend to minimize barriers faced by students with diverse identities via actively adjusting my teaching methods to ensure each individual has the opportunity to achieve their potential inside my classroom. Secondly, I aim to continue my efforts in mentoring students from underrepresented groups in research, especially in the fields of international economics, finance, and macroeconomics. Thirdly, if the budget allows, I would like to lead reading groups to identify scholars from underrepresented groups who are doing promising work and invite them for seminars. Finally yet importantly, I will support institutional measures to combat discrimination and harassment.

¹ Hoover, Gary A., and Ebonya Washington. 2022. "Report: Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession (CSMGEP)." AEA Papers and Proceedings, Vol. 112, pp. 768-785..

² Bansak, Cynthia, Ellen E. Meade, and Martha Starr-McCluer. 2021. "Changes in Women's Representation in Economics: New Data from the AEA Papers and Proceedings." FEDS Notes. Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.