

Diversity Statement

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The American Economics Association begins its “Best Practices for Economists” with the statement: “It is no secret that the economics profession suffers from a profound lack of diversity.” This problem is not intractable; rather, it is a call to action. In my career as an economist, I will promote a more diverse and inclusive environment in economics through mentorship, research, and teaching.

Many steps in my career were made possible by good mentors, and I am committed to providing the same mentorship I received to a diverse group of students and colleagues. My undergraduate advisors helped me develop an interest in economics; the economists who I worked with during my research assistantship at the Federal Reserve Board helped me develop tools to do research; and my advisors at NYU guided me in asking and answering poignant research questions. Knowing how important that mentorship was for me, in my career going forward, I will work to provide that same mentorship to students and colleagues, especially those from under-represented groups in the field.

An important way to improve diversity in economics is to create seminar environments that feel welcoming and inclusive. So, in the fall of my fifth year, feeling frustrated with the lack of a space to share and receive feedback on early-stage research ideas, I, along with Tom Sargent and other students in my cohort, created a weekly group to discuss new research ideas. We responded to the way existing seminars were run, in which new ideas might be torn down, by creating a group focused on constructive criticism of new research ideas. We invited students who we knew might feel uncomfortable presenting in a larger seminar setting, and I found the group was successful because we created a space where people felt comfortable sharing their work without fear of unfairly harsh criticism. Personally, I found the group to be a productive way to engage with my peers, and I hope to create similar seminars going forward.

Teaching is another valuable way to improve diversity in economics. I am committed to using pedagogical tools that include and engage a diverse group of students. One particular approach that I have found successful at creating an inclusive environment is inquiry-based

learning. Rather than viewing economics as a body of knowledge that only an instructor could convey to students, this approach equips them with the tools to master these subjects on their own. Another important component of teaching inclusive courses is to incorporate topics that students might find important to their own lives, such as race, education, and income mobility. The inclusion of these topics reflects the true diversity of research within the discipline and engages students from diverse groups. Importantly, given the “profound lack of diversity” in economics, this approach has been demonstrated to increase enrollment in introductory courses among under-represented groups.

Economics has a long way to go to address its lack of diversity. However, we can take effective actions today to improve it. I am committed to promoting more diverse representation in the discipline through mentorship, research practices, and teaching.