

Plan of Action for Achieving Diversity and Inclusion with the Department of Economics October 2020

The Economics Department is committed to increasing the representation of underrepresented students, faculty and staff. Our understanding of the word “underrepresented” includes race, gender, and gender orientation, socioeconomic status, as well as persons with disabilities, mental health issues, and other characteristics that may result in stigma. We are committed to creating a welcoming and supportive culture in which all students, faculty and staff feel they belong and are able to thrive.

Through ongoing consultation with faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, and staff over the last several months, we have received feedback and constructive suggestions concerning representation, diversity, and departmental culture. We all share the strong desire to have a more open, positive, and inclusive culture and to have significantly more representation from minority groups. We have been working toward that end for many years, and the continuing transition in the department’s gender composition is one reflection of those efforts. However, we also agree that a greater commitment and sense of urgency is necessary.

An atmosphere of inclusivity is important for successful studying and positive classroom experiences. It also promotes the free exchange of ideas and stimulates creative research. Studies by our own faculty members and others (for example, [Hsieh, Hurst, Jones and Klenow, *Econometrica*, 2019](#)) show that large productivity gains follow from recruiting talent from underrepresented groups and creating a welcoming and supportive environment.

This plan of action describes several initiatives that we will implement in the Economics Department. We view these initiatives as first steps, and will add more in the future as we learn what works and what does not. Over the next months, we will regularly measure our progress towards our goal and ask you for additional constructive feedback.

Undergraduate Students

Our goals

- *Ensure there are strong lines of communication between undergraduates and the department - directly through small group meetings and indirectly through student leaders and graduate mentors. These steps will help us consider and, where feasible and appropriate, act upon all concerns quickly and efficiently. We hope they will provide opportunities for everyone to feel comfortable and confident in sharing their experiences and ideas.*
- *Attract students from underrepresented groups to the Economics major.*
- *Inform students about research on topics of social importance and work by scholars from underrepresented groups.*

1) Foster communication with undergraduate students through a combination of informal meetings and formal structures

- a) Regularly invite small groups of Economics majors to have informal discussions with departmental leadership. Topics may include: general ideas to improve the undergraduate experience in economics, suggestions for concrete changes to foster diversity, examples of behaviors by faculty, lecturers, TAs and/or other students that make students feel uncomfortable. With respect to such behaviors, it will be important to understand whether they are systemic or isolated, and to hear suggestions for addressing them.
- b) In 2019-2020, the department established a Committee on Departmental Culture, consisting of faculty, staff and graduate students. This year we plan to add undergraduate students representing diverse perspectives and interests.
- c) Create an undergraduate student arm within the Women's Empowerment and Rational Inclusion (WE-RISE) Group, based in the Stanford Economics department, with the following objectives:
 - i) Collaborate with graduate students in WE-RISE on initiatives focused on the undergraduate community.
 - ii) Gather feedback on issues faced by the undergraduate community and work with the Department of Economics on ways to improve them.
 - iii) Receive funding for specific initiatives from the organization as available and appropriate.

2) Integrate discussions about research on income inequality, racial and gender discrimination, and other topics of social importance into undergraduate classes.

- a) Strongly encourage faculty to integrate material addressing pressing social questions concerning underrepresented groups into their courses. Likewise encourage faculty to cover research by members of underrepresented groups.
- b) Create a department lecture series about economic research on discrimination, police brutality and related topics, as they are addressed in different fields of Economics.
- c) Create a Student-Initiated Course (SIC) that will cover research papers on discrimination written by scholars from underrepresented groups. The new course will be small, offered in spring quarter 2021, and organized through a collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students.

3) Bay Area Conference for Undergraduate Women in Economics (BACUWE)

- a) Organized by a committee of undergraduates, graduate students and faculty with a focus on the representation of women in Economics.
- b) Panel targeted at freshmen and sophomores focused on the Economics major and the opportunities provided by a degree in Economics.
- c) Presentations of honors theses by undergraduate seniors from universities around the Bay Area. Presenters will be selected by a committee of graduate students.
- d) Panel of graduate students focusing on the experience of pursuing a PhD in Economics.

- e) Panel of early career economists focusing on career opportunities for students receiving PhDs in Economics (academia, public and private sectors).

4) Mentoring program

- a) Develop an opt-in mentoring program where graduate students as well as undergraduate students in their junior and senior years mentor undergrads in their freshman and sophomore years, based on the model of the Women's Community Center (WCC). This program will include all undergraduates, with a focus on underrepresented groups. It should include some of the following:
 - b) Mentorship meetings to be held once a month between mentors and mentees.
 - c) Training for mentors covering the mentoring process, how to address possible situations mentees might find challenging, and useful ways to approach them.

Graduate students

Our goal

- *Maintain strong lines of communication between graduate students and the department*
- *Attract students from underrepresented groups to the graduate program.*
- *Organize social events that foster community, especially among underrepresented groups*
- *Discussions of work on social challenges and work by scholars from underrepresented minorities.*

5) Continue to foster open communication with graduate students through:

- a) Our existing periodic town hall meetings;
- b) Graduate student members of the Committee on Departmental Culture;
- c) Graduate student members of the Committee on the Quality of the Graduate Program;
- d) Close cooperation with WE-RISE, including funding.

6) Pathways to Research and Doctoral Careers (PREDOC)

Through SIEPR, the department participates in PREDOC <https://predoc.org/>.

The program is a new collaboration between many universities to proactively reach out, mentor and recruit students from underrepresented backgrounds. The goal of the program is to diversify graduate programs and thereby the field of economics.

7) Collaboration with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and AEA Summer Program for Underrepresented Minorities

Outreach to historically black colleges and universities to attract students to our graduate program. We have already started a collaboration with Spelman College with the help of our current graduate students, and will expand on this effort.

8) Sponsoring social events that foster community within underrepresented groups

- a) Hold a "women's dinner" once per quarter with both faculty and students.

- b) Hold a “queer in econ breakfast” once per quarter for the queer grad student community.

9) Creating a department-wide book club each quarter open to faculty, staff and graduate students

Each quarter, we will choose a book on an economic, social or political subject. There will be particular focus on promoting work by scholars from underrepresented groups and reading books on the social challenges facing those groups. We will have a 2-hour discussion of the selected book. Where possible, we will invite the author to Stanford to speak to the department (including undergraduates) directly.

Faculty

Our goal

- *Attract faculty from underrepresented groups to the economics department.*

10) Hiring of New Faculty

The Economics Department has an active faculty search through the Impacts of Race in America initiative:

<https://president.stanford.edu/2020/06/30/advancing-racial-justice-at-stanford/>

Everyone

- *Promote an inclusive culture in the economics department.*

11) Training on implicit bias

University Human Resources (UHR) at Stanford will create mandatory training on implicit bias for faculty and staff as outlined in [the message from Stanford Provost Persis Drell on September 23, 2020](#). The training will focus on racism, bias, inclusivity, and other related topics.

12) New online learning course developed by Stanford faculty

Encourage students, faculty and staff to use a new, free online learning resource developed by Stanford GSB faculty Sarah Soule, Maggie Neale, and Hannah Yanow: [Anti-Racism & Allyship Journey](#). The self-paced, seven-day online program focuses on unconscious bias and how to be an ally against it.

Stanford Diversity-Related Resources

- [Stanford's Presidential Initiative - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access in a Learning Community \(IDEAL\)](#)
- [IDEAL Dashboard](#)
- [Diversity Works](#)
- [Office of Inclusion, Belonging and Intergroup Communication](#)
- [Centers for Equity, Community, and Leadership](#)
- [VPGE Diversity Initiatives](#)

- [Diversity and First-Gen Office](#)
- [Office of Accessible Education](#)
- [Diversity and Access Office](#)
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#)
- [Bechtel International Center](#)