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DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Last semester, a student emailed me a link to an episode of Planet Money titled, "Economics, Sexism, and Data." In this episode of the popular NPR show, they tell the story of Alice Wu's senior thesis in which she analyzes the language used on econjobrumors.com to describe fellow economists and finds a striking disparity between the words used to describe women and those used to describe their male colleagues.ⁱ Data from the American Economic Association further demonstrate the lack of diversity in the profession. Women are in the minority at every rung of the academic career ladder in Economics. About one third of economics majors are female, about one quarter of Assistant Professors of Economics are female, and only about a tenth of tenured faculty in economics are female.ⁱⁱ The data are even more bleak for minority students: only 7.3% of Economics PhD's awarded in the 2016-2017 school year were awarded to under-represented minorities.ⁱⁱⁱ This lack of diversity in economics means that there are backgrounds, experiences, and insights that could improve the discipline, but are not being included. This document outlines the actions that I currently take and plan to take in the future to increase the representation of women, under-represented minorities, and students from low-income backgrounds in economics by (1) drawing more students from diverse backgrounds into introductory economics courses, (2) ensuring that more students succeed in these courses, and (3) guiding students through obstacles to achieve their career goals.

The task of getting a more diverse cohort of economists in the door to introductory economics courses begins before they even arrive on a college campus. Reaching out to high school students with information about the broad range of topics that economics majors can study will widen the set of students who consider it as a potential major. In my current position, I have spoken with local high school teachers and I am planning to take a group of economics majors to speak with high school classes about the major. Once students are in the college classroom, I highlight the wide variety of career paths available to economists by bringing in guest speakers from the community, the college, and other institutions. In the courses that I taught in my first year as an assistant professor, I invited an economics PhD student who researches the HIV/AIDS epidemic, another junior economics faculty member at a liberal arts school who researches Social Security, a local financial advisor, and a venture capitalist. These speakers motivated many students to consider graduate school in economics. Following these visits, I held an information session on economics graduate school and of the six students that attended, five were female. In a small department at a small college, these are exciting numbers. In the next year, I plan to expand my outreach efforts. I hope to have an economist at the Cleveland Federal Reserve visit my Money and Banking course, and, in addition to the two researchers who visited last year, whom I am bringing back again this year, I plan to invite an Industrial Organization economist, a field that is not currently represented in the department. Additionally, I am forming an interdisciplinary plan to take students to the Vermont Department of Taxes to introduce students to examples of government and public policy careers in economics.

Once students have developed an interest in economics, I create a support system to help them succeed. Students often report to me that the reason they are hesitant to take on an economics major is that they are intimidated by the mathematics required. When I teach theory-heavy courses like Intermediate Macroeconomics or Econometrics, I always focus on making the math unintimidating. My course evaluations, both at the University of Virginia and at Saint Michael's, confirm that students feel more confident in their mathematical abilities when they leave my class. Additionally, at the end of every semester, I send emails to students that performed particularly well in the course. It was receiving an email similar to this that led me to consider economics graduate school, so I know the effect that such a message of encouragement can have. Students from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds often do not have access to the support structure – tutors, training, SAT prep, parents with experience in academia, etc. – that students from wealthier backgrounds might have. By demonstrating tenacious, careful work, making myself available for any question, big or small, and by acknowledging good work when it is done, I can help overcome some of this disparity.

Once we have recruited a more diverse set of economics majors, and encouraged them to pursue economics further, a strong mentorship structure that lifts and amplifies the voices of women and under-represented minorities in the profession will make a big difference in sustaining these efforts. I have been working at this task since I was a graduate student at the University of Virginia. I started the Women in Academia reading group through the Jefferson Scholars Foundation. At the end of our first year, we hosted a panel discussion on the topics we had outlined in our readings, such as finding a mentor, and addressing sexual harassment. Once I became an assistant professor, I began hosting dinners to connect students with potential mentors with similar academic interests. When Principles of Macroeconomics students are struggling in the course, I pair them with older students who overcame similar struggles. I promote diversity in the profession as well. When I was elected to the Steering Committee for the Liberal Arts Macroeconomics Conference, I proposed that we include professional development topics in addition to teaching topics in next year's conference. Macroeconomics is particularly male-dominated, even within the male dominated economics discipline, and female junior faculty often struggle to learn the ropes of the publishing process. The purpose of these professional development sessions would be to give junior faculty in the liberal arts the opportunity to learn from their peers and from senior faculty who have been successful in publishing.

Diversity in the classroom and throughout economics is critical for the success of the discipline. By recruiting a more diverse group of economics majors, helping them to succeed, and mentoring them throughout their careers, I hope to increase this diversity.

ⁱ *Episode 910: Economics, Sexism, Data*. NPR.org. url: <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/03/720139562/episode-910-economics-sexism-data> (visited on 07/11/2019).

ⁱⁱ Anne O. Krueger. "Report of the Commission on Graduate Education in Economics". In: *Journal of Economic Literature* 29.3 (1991), pp. 1035-1053. issn: 0022-0515. url: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2727610> (visited on 06/13/2019).

ⁱⁱⁱ Kathryn E Green. "REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF MINORITY GROUPS IN THE ECONOMICS PROFESSION (CSMGEP)". In: (), p. 26.