

Explore

Initiatives for Diversity & Inclusion



Discussions with the Economics Department at Virginia Tech

2021 Award Winner



The recipient of the **2021 AEA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Diversity and Inclusion** is The Department of Economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. This award recognizes departments and organizations demonstrating outstanding achievement in diversity and inclusion practices. The steps taken by the Economics Department at Virginia Tech, as outlined in their application that can be read [here](#), include substantial changes in programs and practices that align with the AEA's [Best Practices for Economists Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession](#) and that aim to create a more diverse and inclusive environment for faculty and students. The department's [Initiatives for Diversity & Inclusion](#) are wide reaching and involve the principles curriculum, new courses on race, gender, and diversity and inclusion, graduate student training, a new postdoc position, faculty recruiting, and public outreach.

View the application [here](#).

Solutions to the challenges facing the world require the contribution of voices and talents of all of society. The Department of Economics at Virginia Tech is committed to making Economics welcoming and supportive environment for our students, faculty, and staff that attracts diverse experiences and knowledge to Economics.

We proudly promote the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence that is necessary to further the University's objective to be a leading land grant university. We understand our part in developing a community of leaders, engaged citizens, and researchers with the cultural competence to work with anyone on any problem, and the need to expand the field of economics by attracting students from all backgrounds.

To this end, the Department has undertaken a series of initiatives over the past few years to create a more inclusive environment, expand our offerings, and introduce more students to the economic way of thinking about these issues.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of our commitment to *action* to increase representation of historically underrepresented groups in Economics, and to promote the understanding of how Economics can be used to address issues of Diversity and Inclusion, the Department has implemented the following plan of action:

- Adoption of new materials and curriculum in our principles of economics courses that serve approximately 3000 students annually that had increased representation of women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups a specific goal of the textbooks
- **Introduction of a three-course sequence in the Economics of Race, Economics of Gender, and Economic History of Diversity and Inclusion** that introduce students to using economic tools to assess issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as an upper-level elective course Poverty and Discrimination.
- Development of a **Minor in the Economics of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity**, which trains students in both economic analysis and a broader understanding of identity and society, which is currently in the process of curriculum approval
- Development of a First-Year Experience course in Economics that includes modules dedicated to reading and discussing the AEA Professional Code of Conduct, developing a personal code of conduct, diversity and inclusion in professional and academic settings, and an overview of the economic history of diversity and inclusion.
- Public outreach about the importance of Diversity and Inclusion in economics through the creation and distribution of our public service video "*Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession*"
- Working to expand representation of historically underrepresented groups through active faculty recruitment and involvement through Virginia Tech's **Future Faculty Diversity Program**
- Include training on diversity in the classroom as part of our course that formally prepares graduate students for the classroom
- The creation and implementation of a **Post-Doctoral Position in Economics of Diversity & Inclusion**

CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

The Department is committed to continuing our efforts to expand representation of underrepresented groups in Economics, as well as developing an understanding of how economics can contribute to a better understanding of issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity for those outside the profession. To this end, we are continuing our efforts by implementing the following:

- Increase awareness and interest in majoring in Economics by working with initiatives to expand undergraduate recruitment at Virginia Tech, such as the **Black College Institute**, to increase the representation of historically underrepresented groups in the Economics Major
- Implementing a program to actively recruit and prepare a broader range of students for graduate training in economics
- Implementing a system of tracking our progress in increasing diversity (i) in our majors and minors, (ii) our faculty, (iii) our seminar participants
- Further developing programmatic offerings, including a capstone course for the Economics of Diversity and Inclusion minor
- Implement climate surveys for our majors, minors, and students in principles of economics to track our progress in creating inclusive environments
- Expand our Summer Undergraduate Research in Economics program with active recruitment of students from historically underrepresented groups
- Creation of affinity groups for Economics majors and graduate students

For More Information and Resources for Diversity and Inclusion:

American Economics Association (AEA) Resources:

- [DivEq](#)
- [Best Practices for Economists](#)
- [AEA's Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession \(CSWEP\)](#)
- [AEA's Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession \(CSMGEP\)](#)
- [AEA's Committee on the status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession](#)
- [AEA's Summer and Scholarship Program](#)

Resources at Virginia Tech:

- [InclusiveVT](#)
- [Cultural and Community Centers at Virginia Tech](#)
- [The Women's Center](#)

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