

LSE Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Economics (DICE) Mission Statement¹

We believe that economics has much to offer. We also believe that it needs to change.

We are particularly concerned by the lack of diversity and inclusion in terms of who has participated in economics,² which questions have been examined,³ and how these questions have been answered.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Economics (DICE) aims to build a LSE Economics Department that is:

- **Accessible** to individuals of all backgrounds.
- **Open** to critical self-reflection and intellectual pluralism in content and methods.
- **Aware** of its social responsibilities.

Initiatives

First Year Curriculum Review:⁴ Most economics courses at the LSE focus on research by white, male economists, and data and examples from Western settings.⁵ The aim of this review was to create a first year curriculum that better reflected the experiences and aspirations of the LSE's diverse student body, while also putting more emphasis on important questions, and encouraging critical thinking about the methods we use as economists.⁶ We are now building a checklist for all undergraduate economics courses at the LSE that wish to make similar changes.

Applicant Mentoring Scheme: We have established a mentoring scheme to link applicants from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds with LSE PhD students. Given that there are large inequalities in social capital and access to insider information, the aim of this scheme is to provide the participants with resources and support that they would not typically have. We are currently working on expanding the programme to a multi-university mentoring scheme.

Data Analysis: We are currently analysing the ethnicity data on economics students and faculty at LSE to compare it with other universities in the UK and London. Representation matters. Our economics department needs more diversity so that students and staff from underrepresented backgrounds have an environment in which they can thrive with confidence. Analysing this data will give us a better sense of the specific issues we are facing.

¹ In writing this, we were inspired by the D-Econ Team (<https://d-econ.org/mission/>).

² See: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/15133> for information on Ethnic diversity in UK economics, and <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/internacional/en/business/2015/07/1657943-female-economists-are-minority-at-brazils-top-universities.shtml> & <https://www.women-economics.com/> for discussions on under-representation of women in Brazil and Europe.

³ See Advani et. al. (2021) http://www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~uctpimr/research/ES_RR_Research.pdf.

⁴ Bayer, Hoover & Washington (2020) <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.34.3.193>, among others, calls for a broadening of introductory economics.

⁵ See Bayer et. al. (2020) <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pandp.20201051>

⁶ Curriculum reform has been called for in several other economics departments across the world. See, for example: <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/ucts-economics-curriculum-crisis/>

Aspirations

Diversity and Representation: We would like to see the department more actively promoting the recruitment of students and faculty from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. We would also like to see the LSE host more initiatives similar to the University of Chicago's Summer Institute,⁷ which would give young economists who do not have an affiliation with the School an opportunity to further develop their skills and networks.

Structural Change: In addition to thinking about who participates in economics, we also wish to address important structural issues in teaching and research, many of which disproportionately affect "minoritised"⁸ groups. For example, we would like the undergraduate curriculum to be organised around questions and data, rather than theory and methods. The examples used should relate in a meaningful way to minoritised individuals and communities who have been traditionally underrepresented within economics. In terms of theory and methods, applications pertaining to minoritised groups should not be seen as exceptions to the rule but as core components of the standard curriculum. As well as promoting teaching and research on issues that have been given insufficient attention, we would like scholars from minoritised groups to have real ownership over this process.⁹ In addition to working towards representation of these groups within our student body and faculty, this means fairly acknowledging the work of external collaborators from minoritised groups and taking an active interest in helping them overcome the structural barriers they face as economists.¹⁰

Benefit to the Department

By championing such initiatives, the LSE economics department and wider School community has much to gain. Research reflecting diverse perspectives, backgrounds and voices is less likely to systematically miss important issues that we can and should tackle in economics. The department will also be better positioned to attract the most talented students and faculty by creating an environment that everyone can feel connected to. In doing so, the department will position itself as a leader in a number of important areas of teaching and scholarship that we expect to become central to economics in the future.

⁷ <https://bfi.uchicago.edu/summer-institute>

⁸ In their book *Data Feminism*, D'Ignazio and Klein (2020) define the term "minoritised" as follows: "While the term minority describes a social group that is comprised of fewer people, minoritized indicates that a social group is actively devalued and oppressed by a dominant group, one that holds more economic, social, and political power."

⁹ See Sarsons (2015) https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/sarsons/files/gender_groupwork.pdf

¹⁰ See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10130950.2018.1460139> and <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/feb/04/black-female-professors-report> regarding structural barriers.