

Diversity and Inclusion Training

Department of Economics

The Department of Economics in the College of Science at Virginia Tech is committed to advancing issues of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as they apply to our missions of research, teaching, and service as a Land Grant Institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Our graduate program is dedicated to developing a community of leaders, engaged citizens, and researchers who value and promote a diverse and equitable society. We outline below the steps the Department of Economics will pursue to address the four required components in Resolution 2017-18A, 'Resolution to Incorporate an Inclusion and Diversity Component into Graduate Education'.

- The Economics Department will prepare a document outlining the department's expectations of civility, inclusion, and respect that are embedded in the Virginia Tech's Principles of Community:

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our ongoing efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We *affirm* the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We *affirm* the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).

This document will be considered as required reading for all graduate students, and we'll upload the document on the department website for ready access.

- The Department will include a statement summarizing the Virginia Tech Principles of Community in all syllabi for courses offered by the faculty and graduate students.
- During the orientation week, the Department will ensure that students complete the *Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Module* offered by the Virginia Tech's Office of Inclusion and Diversity. This module will address all dimensions of human diversity through interactive activities, students' point of view, and case studies to ensure that students learn and embrace *The Virginia Tech Principles of Community* as a part of their everyday actions, communications, and choice.

- The Department will ensure that students complete the *Diversity: Inclusion in the Modern Workplace Module* offered the Virginia Tech's Office of Inclusion and Diversity during the orientation week. This module will help teach graduate students how to create a more respectful and inclusive workplace.
- The Economics Department faculties currently offer a semester-long 1-credit course (Econ 5988: Preparing the Graduate Instructor) to the graduate students for preparing them to teach their classes. The course includes a module offered by the experts (e.g., a visitor from the center for Teaching and Learning at Virginia Tech) who teach principles and practices for making the classroom a safe place for the students. In addition, the course also directs students to the guidelines recommended and published by the American Economic Association (<https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/best-practices>). These guidelines offer practical suggestions for implementing and supporting a more diverse, inclusive, and productive profession. The departmental website hosts the supporting documents along with the public service video "*Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession*" – a collection of conversations between the Virginia Tech economics faculties and students on issues related to diversity, work-life balance, and mentoring (<https://econ.vt.edu/initiatives-for-diversity---inclusion.html>).
- The Economics department will continue to offer graduate courses (e.g., Labor Economics - Econ 6104, Development Economics – Econ 6054) that apply the tools of economics analysis to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For these courses, the graduate students are required to explore the causes and consequences of gender and racial disparities and the impact of public policies on these disparities. In addition, a number of our faculty are engaged in research on topics like gender equality, discrimination, and the economic history of slavery. Consequently, graduate students also engage in research on such topics, and we invite speakers that work on these themes.
- At the orientation to all incoming first-year students, the Economics department will formally introduce and discuss Virginia Tech's expectations for Graduate Education, Honor System, and Code of Conduct as outlined in the Graduate School Document (<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/academics/expectations.html>). The Department will also prepare a document outlining the resources that are available to address the complaints of misconduct. This document will be uploaded on the department website for ready access to the graduate students.
- The Economics Department will direct all graduate students to the resources available at Virginia Tech to detect and address implicit bias in the workplace. Examples of such resources include the presentation by the Professional and Organizational Development Specialist: (<https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/Initiatives/DiversityEducationandPrograms/inclusive-insights/implicit-bias-workplace.html>) with accompanying Discussion Guide ([How do I interrupt implicit bias in the workplace?](#))

- The Economics Department's initiatives to promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion extend to graduate student recruitments. Recently, the Department has decided to participate in the University's Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP) using its own funds. This program is intended to help recruit URM graduate students by introducing them to the University through this summer program. The Economics Department is now a member of ASHE (American Society of Hispanic Economists) with the same purpose in mind.

To sum up, the Department of Economics firmly believes in Virginia Tech's motto of *Ut Prosim* (That I may Serve) and is strongly committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within the University and the larger community of Southwest Virginia.