

Race and Social Justice Initiatives

Economics

Analysis of issues of race and social justice, especially economic justice, is an integral part of the discipline of economics. Economists have made important contributions to our understanding of issues related to the generation of racial discrimination in economic opportunities and in the consequent disparities in income, wealth, intergenerational economic mobility and other aspects of economic status. The primary professional association for economists in the United States, the American Economic Association, has been active in promoting diversity in the profession and recently published *Best Practices for Economists: Building a More Diverse, Inclusive, and Productive Profession*, which our department is using to guide and improve our own practices.

This academic year, the Department of Economics has several activities and initiatives related to race and social justice. We provide a brief overview of these initiatives here.

Enhancing Incorporation of Race and Social Justice into our Curriculum

A major departmental initiative is focused on enhancing the incorporation of issues of race and social justice into our curriculum. Last year, the department commissioned committees to examine the learning goals of our undergraduate and graduate curriculums to more explicitly reflect issues of race and social justice. This year we are progressing to revising the learning goals to incorporate the work of the committees.

Undergraduate

Teaching of issues related to race and social justice is an essential part of elective courses such as The Economics of Race and Labor Economics and has long been incorporated into our core courses on an ad hoc basis. A key goal of our undergraduate curriculum review and reform is to institutionalize the teaching of race and social justice in our core courses.

Our undergraduate curriculum includes core courses in Principles of Microeconomics and Principles of Macroeconomics that are required of our undergraduate majors and also students in some other programs at Northeastern. Race and social justice are natural fits with these courses and many of our instructors already incorporate topics related to race and social justice into their course designs. Our overhaul of learning goals and course descriptions will ensure that this coverage will be incorporated into the course design of all offerings of these core courses in our department. The other core courses required of our majors are being similarly evaluated for incorporation of topics related to race and social justice.

Graduate

The curriculum for our MS and PhD programs is undergoing a similar review. Our graduate courses are more mathematical and abstract than our undergraduate courses, and so the ways in which discussion of race and social justice is included in our graduate courses differs from that of our undergraduate courses. We are currently engaged in revising the learning goals of our graduate programs and will then proceed to review of how our courses can be revised to support the learning goals.

Faculty Recruitment

Our department participated in several interdisciplinary faculty searches this year that have resulted in our attracting a more diverse faculty. Increased faculty diversity will be helpful in enabling us to provide guidance and mentorship to our increasingly diverse student body.

DIVERSEcon

This student-led group aims to increase awareness and diversity within the field of economics among both faculty and students at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The Economic Policy Forum

Our department's Economic Policy Forum sponsors presentations by leading scholars and policy makers on important economic policy issues. The theme of the Forum this year is "Economic Policy, (In)equality, and Economic Justice." In Spring 2021 we sponsored a conversation with Mary C. Daly, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, on "Equitable Growth, Opportunity, and Federal Reserve Policy."