

Diversity and Inclusion Statement: Stephen Pitts

The economics profession has historically suffered from a lack of diversity: the students who study economics are not representative of the broader population. Since economics research often concerns public policy, then conversations about policy often do not have representation from communities affected by these policies. I bring to this position both direct work with underrepresented communities and experience in community engagement that equip me to increase diversity and inclusion.

At the micro level, I decided to pursue graduate studies in economics because I wanted to understand the unjust systems that caused the migrants I met to migrate. I have invited my students to approach economics in the same way: using economic tools to analyze sources of injustice that affect their lives and the lives of people they know. With undergraduates at the University of San Francisco and the University of Minnesota, I have found success in seminar-format classes and group projects where students use the tools of economics to analyze their own and others' experiences. By making economics relevant to students from diverse backgrounds, I hope to attract and retain a more diverse student pool and increase inclusion.

At the macro level, I have helped build relationships between Jesuit institutions and Latin American contexts: the Encuentro Project in El Paso that hosted thirty groups during my tenure there and the Ignatian Center at Santa Clara University that has taken students, staff, and faculty to southern Mexico and Peru. I hope to do the same at Loyola University Chicago: building institutional relationships across the Jesuit network that expose our students to realities that expand their perspective and inspire their scholarship. Here we can increase diversity and inclusion on a systematic level.