

History of Economics Diversity Caucus 2021-2022 Report on Activities

As of May 2023, there are 177 members on the Diversity Caucus mailing list.

The Diversity Caucus maintains a website with its mission, past milestones, and updates at <https://sites.google.com/view/diversityhet>.

The Caucus held general online meetings (in English) on: May 10, 2021; October 7, 2021; February 21, 2022; May 27, 2022; and October 12, 2022. We aim to hold general meetings with the full group at least twice per year, aside from special Caucus events like the Diversity Conference and working group meetings.

The Caucus steering committee aims to meet once every two months. Since the first official Caucus steering committee (Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche, Carl Wennerlind, and Ibanca Anand) was established in October 2021, the committee has met a total of five times.

HES Statement on Roe v. Wade

Following the June 2022 United States Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, members of the Diversity Caucus held a robust discussion over the mailing list. In light of that discussion, the committee drafted a statement on behalf of the caucus and shared it to the full group for reactions, which were generally favorable. The statement draft is attached in this report. The committee plans to publish it to the Diversity Caucus website shortly.

Petitioning HET Societies – Codes of Conduct

In 2020, emails were sent to all the HET societies to ask whether any initiatives regarding diversity were implemented in their respective organizations, especially inquiring into the existence of codes of conduct. The main aim was to open a conversation.

STOREP has had [a code of conduct](#) since 2018 and was a pioneer in comparisons to other HET societies. Other societies that also previously had codes of conduct (publicly available on their websites) are:

- ALAHPE <https://alahpe.org/en/#sobre>
- AISPE <http://www.aispe.eu/en/code-of-conduct/>

The caucus held a meeting and formed a subcommittee working specifically on the issue of codes of conduct. Many societies introduced codes of conduct following these conversations:

- Association Gide wrote and adopted a code of conduct in July 2022. It is publicly available online: <https://www.charlesgide.fr/charte-ethique-et-parite/>

- ESHET members had approved their code of conduct in November 2021 and a code of conduct was adopted. To our knowledge, it has not been sent again to the membership and is not currently available on the website of the society.
- HES adopted a code of conduct in June 2022. HES has communicated that they plan to add the code to their website soon; to our knowledge it has not been communicated widely among general members as of yet. HES now also has an Ombudsperson: Joe Persky; as well as a Respectful Behavior Committee (mandated by the Code of Conduct). The Committee is composed of Brad Bateman, Kirsten Madden, and Verena Halsmayer.
- THETS adopted a code of conduct. To our knowledge, it is not currently available on the website of the society.
- We had email conversations with the president of HETSA (Australian society) and with members of the society. A subcommittee on diversity issues (Riko Stevens, Miriam Bankovsky, and David Gilchrist) has been set up to work on some strategies.
- After an initial hostile reaction, the German *Ausschuss für die Geschichte der Wirtschaftswissenschaften*, which is one of 24 “Standing Field Committees” of the Verein für Socialpolitik (VfS), the association of economists in the German language area, got back to us: one of their members, Hans Michael Trautwein, sent us a summary document on diversity and the organization in July 2022, after informal discussion at the ESHET conference in Padova. What follows is a summary of its content from the point of view of the Caucus committee:
 - The VfS has: an equal opportunity officer and conducted a general survey on diversity in 2013. The general answer from the field committee was that the code of ethics of the VfS is “sufficient and that informal efforts to increase diversity are being made.” Membership in the field committees is restricted. The recruitment of new members follows a co-optation procedure. Currently, the “Ausschuss” for the history of economic thought has 46 members, and only two of them are women. The chairperson in the HET committee has changed (it is now Rainer Klump, see <https://www.socialpolitik.de/en/ausschuesse>, the previous chairperson is still the vice-chairperson). The Caucus committee decided to continue discussing this informally with some members of the German-speaking HET community and decide later on whether or not to start a new dialogue with the new chairperson.
- The Caucus had no answers from the Japanese Society.

Mentorship Discussion

The topic of mentorship has come up informally in previous Diversity Caucus meetings and it was determined by the steering committee that a focused conversation would be productive. Specifically, we were interested in how mentorship could serve as a vehicle to retain early career scholars, especially individuals with marginalized identities, in our field. If the Caucus

were to take action to promote and facilitate mentorship, what might that look like? What would be the practical considerations? The meeting began by introducing these questions.

It was determined that the Caucus should not implement any formal program as formal mentoring schemes have several disadvantages. Nevertheless, many fruitful ideas emerged from the discussion, including:

- **Conferences:** The Caucus can provide recommendations to promote productive relationships between senior and early career scholars at HET societies' conferences. The Early Career Scholars lunch at the HES conference was mentioned as a best practice that can be adopted by other societies. Since the HES lunch is by invitation only, it was further recommended that the Diversity Caucus sponsor other networking events at conferences, like happy hours or lunches. The Caucus can also organize panels around mentorship.
- **Mentor/Mentee Lists:** The Caucus can survey members to see who might be willing to have their information shared on some sort of list or database as a potential mentor or mentee. This resource can then be used by members to develop relationships organically. Lists can include information like research area, location, specific topics (parenting in academia, presenting at conferences, publishing, etc.), and mentorship styles.
- **Mentorship Best Practices:** More than facilitating relationships, it was determined that the Caucus can help provide examples of what good mentorship looks like, especially when it comes to mentoring scholars from underrepresented backgrounds.

Working groups

From the three working groups that have been active during the first year of the Caucus, none have survived. The Caucus website includes a list of proposed working groups.

Channels of Communication

We still have the following channels of communication:

- A mailing list (names and affiliations) to contact all the members of the caucus (diversityhet@googlegroups.com),
- A website (<https://sites.google.com/view/diversityhet>)
- A twitter account (@diversityhet). Maria Bach is the person in charge on the Twitter account.

Governance

The steering committee was renewed in early 2023. Cléo Chassonnery-Zaïgouche has formally completed her service commitment, and Carl Wennerlind and Ibanca Anand are in the second year of their two-year commitment. The committee conducted a poll in December 2022 to ask for volunteers to join the steering committee. We received six responses but no

official commitments. The committee plans to finalize new member(s) by the summer of 2023.

What's Next?

- **Conference 'Diversity Kit'**

The committee has talked extensively on how to build new resources for the community. One recurrent idea that came out of discussion was the creation of a 'diversity kit' for conference's organizers. The idea of such a document would be to list a certain number of practices that enhance diversity in conferences. Such a document would include tips on how to organize sessions for newcomers to HET conferences, the making of gender balanced conference programs and keynote speakers selection, and ideas for panels.

- **Diversity Caucus's sponsored session in majors HET conferences**

A two-day conference on Diversity was organized and held over Zoom in May 2021, spearheaded by caucus member Scott Scheall. It brought together people from across geographies and areas of study, including many participants who had never attended a HET conference before. The idea would be to pursue the spirit of such a conference by organizing recurrent sessions in majors HET conferences around the globe. These session would be of two types:

- Sessions on topics: new avenues in research (new places), studies on issues of gender and race within the history of economics
- Sessions on professional practice and development: how to write good reviews, how to be a good mentor, etc.
- These two types of subjects correspond to the two main senses of 'diversity' (in terms of who is writing HET, and of what is written on) that emerged over the years.

The Caucus aims to maintain a list of society conferences organized through the year and send a call for volunteers (to organize or contribute to a session).

Data Collection on Diversity in our Field

The Caucus committee failed to secure funds from the 2022 HES New Initiatives Fund to conduct a survey on demographic and institutional diversity in our field. The proposal submitted by the Caucus committee is attached to this report. We aim to either reapply to the New Initiatives Fund or find alternative funding sources for this project, which we believe can provide some illuminating and workable data for scholars hoping to make our discipline more diverse.

Addendum 1: Roe vs. Wade Statement

History of Economics Diversity Caucus

Thoughts Regarding the June 2022 Overturn of Roe v. Wade in the United States

On June 24th, 2022 the Supreme Court of the United States voted 5-4 to officially overturn *Roe v. Wade*, a 1973 decision that declared the rights to abortion were protected under the U.S. Constitution. This was a historic reversal of nearly fifty years of legal precedent protecting the bodily autonomy and reproductive rights of pregnant people. The decision has since led to the rollback of abortion rights in nearly half of U.S. states and will likely lead to further removal of protections at state levels.

The decision sparked ongoing discussion among members of the History of Economics Diversity Caucus. Members of the Caucus believe this decision carries not only personal and emotional impacts, but significant professional impacts, as well. The upcoming 2023 and 2024 AEA/ASSA meetings, at which HES has sponsored sessions for the last ___ years, are to be held in states where abortion has become illegal and other reproductive rights are being rapidly dismantled (Louisiana and Texas, respectively). This puts some scholars at serious risk if they were, for instance, to be denied medical care in the case of a pregnancy complication. Caucus members shared and discussed the [Open Letter to the Executive Committee of the AEA](#), which explains these adverse professional effects. The Letter, signed by hundreds of scholars, including several members of our Caucus, urges AEA to consider relocating the conferences and makes scholars' participation at the conferences contingent on this reconsideration.

While virtual attendance options for scholars is a short-term response, we recognize that they are far from equitable, especially if the majority of conference attendees are in-person. We believe all scholars wishing to engage in conferences in-person should feel equally safe and encouraged in doing so, and not disproportionately impacted due to their identity. We urge Societies to select locations for future events where this would be the case to the greatest extent possible. We urge consciousness and proactiveness on this matter, not only to secure the rights of pregnant people within our profession, but for any scholars whose political liberties may be at stake amidst a transforming political landscape in countries across the world. We take this event as an impulse to reflect on the context of conferences and disciplinary gathering in general, and make improvements to make participants feel safe(r). Beyond a commitment to the rights and safety of members within our profession, the Caucus is reflecting on how we can use our positions as scholars to effect change. We are, for instance, discussing the possibility of organizing a virtual seminar on the history of economics and reproductive rights. For these endeavors, we would very much appreciate the support and participation of the wider History of Economics community.

Addendum 2: Proposal for HES New Initiatives Fund

March 4, 2022

Dear New Initiatives Fund Committee Members:

The HET diversity caucus is applying for funds to conduct a study of the degree of gender and regional diversity within the field of History of Economic Thought. We are proposing to gather data about the gender, regional, and departmental representation in the following venues: main journals publishing HET (HOPE, JHET, EJHET, HEI, and *Æconomia*), prizes awarded by the main societies (article, monograph, distinguished fellows, young scholar award, etc.), conference participation (HES, ESHET, ASSA), and membership (HES, ESHET). We are interested in gathering this data for the years 1980 to 2022. While the caucus is not limiting its interest in diversity to gender, region and departments, in the project we are proposing, these modalities are the only ones on which we can gather similar data to produce a comparative picture over time and institutions. The diversity caucus is convinced that having access to this data will help us carry out our work more effectively and ultimately serve the broader community by promoting excellence through greater diversity.

We are planning on hiring one or two student researchers at Barnard College during the month of May and June. They will construct a database in which they gather information about the gender, region/country of employment, and department of employment of all scholars who have published in the main HET journals, won awards, presented at conferences, and been members of HES and ESHET.

We anticipate that it will take approximately 40 hours to gather the information, 10 hours to reconcile the data, and 20 hours to analyze the data – the last step would be conducted in concert with the members of the diversity caucus. We would like to pay the student researcher(s) \$20/hour. We are therefore requesting \$1700 (\$1400 labor and \$300 incidentals).

We thank you for considering our proposal. Please do not hesitate to be in touch, should you require any additional information.

Yours Sincerely,

Ibanca Anand, Cleo Chassonnery-Zaigouche, and Carl Wennerlind