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Competition Details

Competition Title: 2023 Innovation in Co-Curricular Education

Category:

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Submission Deadline: 02/12/2023 11:59 PM

Application Information

Submitted By: Aselia Urmanbetova

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Application Title: Extra-/Co-Curricular Activities to Enhance the Sense of Belonging Among Economics Students

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Personal Details

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Primary School or Department

School of Economics

Primary Appointment Title: Academic Professional, Undergraduate Teaching Coordinator

Application Details

Proposal Title

Extra-/Co-Curricular Activities to Enhance the Sense of Belonging Among Economics Students

2023 CTL Innovation in Co-Curricular Education Award Nomination

Extra-/Co-Curricular Activities to Enhance the Sense of Belonging Among Economics Students

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Undergraduate Teaching Coordinator
School of Economics
Georgia Institute of Technology

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Full Title

Extra-/Co-Curricular Activities for Diversity in Economics (ECA4DE): Discovering Careers and Diversity in Economics Through Extra- and Co-Curricular Activities and Inter-Institutional Student Club Collaborative

Description

The ECA4DE initiative has been developed for the students at Georgia Institute of Technology who are interested in learning more about Economics, whether they are majoring/minoring in Economics or related fields or not.

Problem Statement

Despite being one of the highest paid majors,¹ economics programs struggle to increase their enrolments, especially from women and minority groups (Bayer and Wilcox, 2019).² While Georgia Tech’s econ program has had a strong women student enrollment in the last 10 years (with a small

¹ In 2021 economics majors are in the top ten highest earning occupations with \$66,100 and \$146,400 as the starting and mid-career salary levels: <https://www.aeaweb.org/resources/students/careers/earnings>.

² Bayer and Wilcox (2019) calculate that during the period of 2011-2015, there are only 31.3% female students in economics as opposed to 57.3% among all graduates in the US; and 11.8% of under-represented minorities (URM, which included African American, Hispanics/Latinos, Native Americans) in economics vs. 19.9% among all majors.

decreased from 51% in 2013-2014 to 47% in 2022-23), its African-American and Latino students have increased only by a modest fraction: enrollment among African-American students increased from 4% in 2013-14 to 6% in 2022-23 and among Latino students from 6% in 2013-14 to 7% in 2022-23.³ In AY 2019-202, the School of Economics at Georgia Institute of Technology has charged itself with the goal to increase its enrollments among historically URM and First Gen students. One of the vectors of this work was to utilize and expand the school's existing, albeit then underutilized, extra- and co-curricular infrastructure.

Fit with Georgia Tech's Strategic Mission

School of Economics co-/extra-curricular and student organization efforts, led by Dr. Urmanbetova, support all six of Georgia Tech's strategic areas of development over 2020-2023: Amplifying Impact, Championing Innovation, Connecting Globally, Expanding Access, Cultivating Well-Being, and Leading by Example. By focusing on the sore and well-documented issue of diversity, equity, belonging, and inclusion within the wider profession of economics,⁴ the ECA4DE **amplifies impact** and provides opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to **lead by example** and become the agents of change for greater equity. The innovative approach towards using the existing institutional and inter-institutional infrastructures to close programmatic gaps in advising and decrease administrative costs both **champion innovation** and help **connect** student audiences across multiple institutions and faculty and administrators **globally** through its international honor society arm. Lastly, by creating safe-space and trauma-informed mentoring and advisory services, the initiative helps **expand access** to students of all backgrounds to learn how to contribute to human progress through economics while **cultivating** and deepening the practice of support, nourishment, and emotional and mental **well-being** not just among students, but everyone who get engaged with programing and events.

Objectives

The main objective of the extra- and co-curricular cluster programming is to inform students on the diverse landscape of careers open to economics and related majors, bring together current students and both recent and professionally established alumni, faculty advisors and administrators from other economics departments across the country, as well as economics professionals and academics to explore, discuss, and, most importantly, build long-lasting support networks for GT economics students. This overall programmatic advisement through co- and extra-curricular approach can be termed as "Discovering Economics" with the focus on careers, internship, and further academic opportunities open to undergraduate and graduate students in economics. The main building blocks of the extra-/co-curricular infrastructure are (1) the **Economics Club** at Georgia Tech, (2) the **Omicron Delta Epsilon** (ODE) The International Economics Honor Society, and (3) the **Economics Collaborative of the Atlanta-Area Institutions** (ECo3AI).

³ Calculations made by Aselia Urmanbetova based on the student enrollment data from GT's Leading Insight Through Empowerment (LITE) data downloaded on February 11, 2023. Ethnicity grouping is provided by the LITE and do not enable a more detailed or accurate analysis of student intersectionality.

⁴ Dynan and Rouse (1997), Bayer and Rouse (2019), Bayer and Wilcox (2019), and Schultz and Stansbury (2022), etc.

Intended Audience

The intended audience includes undergraduate and graduate students not just from the School of Economics, but anyone who may have an interest in economics and related fields. Specifically, the Economics Club at Georgia Tech focuses on programming mainly for undergraduate students who major/minor in economics or related fields and plan to go on the job market after receiving their undergraduate degrees. The Club's programming involves connecting with economics alumni in various fields and inviting prominent recruiters, such as Deloitte and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, to talk about their career opportunities. ODE's programming focuses on the graduate school paths and includes panels on different graduate degrees, including MS in Economics, Law School, MBA, and PhD in Economics and other fields. In addition, ODE works to create opportunities for undergraduate students interested in economics research – to learn more about research paths and skills and connect with the current faculty and doctoral students in informal and more personal (Coffee Chats with groups of five-six students) settings to talk about research. Lastly, ECo3AI provides Georgia Tech students with the opportunity to connect to economics professionals and academics within bigger communities of students and faculty from other Atlanta-area schools. During these meetings, students from different schools can connect with each other, thereby creating a safe and friendly environment for heartfelt dialog around the issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the economics profession.

Targeted Learning Outcomes

The targeted learning outcomes can be grouped into three main areas based on the three audiences that benefit from this initiative: (1) **student leaders** directly involved in programmatic development, (2) **student organization members** at large at Georgia Tech and other institutions, and (3) **school administrators and faculty** working on the initiative. For student leaders, the learning outcomes include team building and leadership skills, building up their confidence to network, delegate, learn how to plan events, carry out efficient and effective event logistics and communications, build event itineraries, moderate panels, and engage in different public speaking exercises. All student leaders, without exception, have been able to utilize and capitalize on their Econ Club/ODE/ECo3AI experiences to get internships, write stellar graduate school applications, and land their first post-GT careers. The learning outcomes for the wider target audience of all students who participated in the ECA4DE events included, but were not limited to, connecting with GT IAC and economics alumni, learning from their experiences, understanding basic requirements for effective job-search, interviews, graduate applications, and the importance of cultivating long-term mentoring relationships as both mentees and mentors. Lastly, the learning outcomes for school administrators and faculty included the ability to utilize the existing, sometimes limited, administrative resources to create effective communications and programmatic development with the narrower, and thus more effective and richer, focus on the topics, skills, and themes that are relevant to the current student body.

Approach: Organizational Principles

The initiative was built using the three-pronged approach of leaning on: (1) efficient programming, (2) focus on safe-space, relevancy, diversity, and growth mindset, and (3) activity scalability and generalizability.

- Efficient programming included building up strong teams of active student leaders by teaching them basic **project management skills** with the focus on **effective communications** using multiple media

for contact such as MS Teams and GroupMe, **accountability buddy** system for timely deliverables, standing **online office hours** for planning meetings, **just-in-time advisement** by advisors, and **inter-institutional event planning** for the full academic year cycle.

- The second organizational principle was the laser focus on relevant topics and feedback of students collected both via regular **pre- and post-event surveys** and from informal conversations outside of the events. **Post-event debriefs** were used to recalibrate the thematic focus and operational approaches for the next series of events.
- Lastly, the resulting growing body of **documentation and standard operating procedures** enabled our student leaders, administrators, and faculty to lean on their own learning-by-doing overtime, thereby creating **long-lasting institutional memory** to improve on the current programming as well as scale up to and employ at other institutions.

Evaluation, Documentation, and Impact

In terms of numbers, the Economics Club at Georgia Tech has grown by 124% since August 2020, while the ODE grew by 48 members to the total of 369 members in the Georgia Tech chapter of the ODE. ODE at GT became its own separately chartered organization led by predominantly women students and women students of color. The two organizations hosted and co-hosted over 30 events by December 2022. Lastly, during 2021-2022 ECo3AI events have reached at least 300 registered event-attendees from eight Georgia institutions, in addition to the student and faculty representing the four core ECo3AI institutions, and the professionals from the Atlanta Fed and the Atlanta Economics Club.

Anecdotal evidence and student feedback indicate that the initiative is closing at least some informational gaps about economics careers, especially for the historically URM and First-Generation students. Many students from these two groups have expressed their appreciation for having a forum to connect, get to know each other, learn effective strategies to build their own professional and academic support structures. Notably, literature on diversity in economics finds that general programmatic messaging and nudges towards women and URM students are not effective.⁵ However, our anecdotal evidence suggest that individual approaches towards mentoring and advising, employed through the extra- and co-curricular activities, make a big difference in the lives of women, URM, and First-Gen students. Lastly, the ECo3AI post-event surveys indicate that students find these events overwhelmingly supportive of their interest in economics. Specifically, 93% of survey respondents found that they could become part of professional economics networks and 100% of respondents agreed that they could benefit from being part of economics professional networks.⁶

Further, the work on restructuring the extra- and co-curricular activities around the Economics Club at Georgia Tech, its ODE Chapter, and ECo3AI has been presented at:

- 2021 Georgia Tech Academic Advisors Network Best Practices Conference, “Re-igniting Extra-curricular Activities During Covid”, online, May 25, 2021.
- 2022 Southern Economic Association, “Discovering Careers and Diversity in Economics Through Inter-Institutional Student Club Collaborative,” November 19-21, 2022, Fort Lauderdale, FL.

⁵ Pugatch, Todd, and Elizabeth Schroeder. “Promoting Female Interest in Economics: Limits to Nudges.” *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, vol. 111, May 2021, pp. 123–27.

⁶ The results are from the Relevance, Belonging and Growth Mindset survey adapted for extra- and co-curricular programs. The survey is relatively recent and has only 30 responses as of February 2023.

- 2023 Allied Social Science Associations American Economic Association, “Discovering Careers and Diversity in Economics Through Inter-Institutional Student Club Collaborative,” January 6-8, 2023, New Orleans, LA.

Relevant feedback and comments were gathered at each annual occasion listed above with most of the commentary being of extremely favorable nature. Notably, the paper presentation “Discovering Careers and Diversity in Economics Through Inter-Institutional Student Club Collaborative” has been accepted to the 2023 ASSA AEA as part of the ODE session, which included ODE faculty advisors, administrators, and doctoral candidates from several economics programs across the US. Moreover, the audience at both the 2022 SEA and 2023 AEA sessions included scholars from Europe and Canada, extending the reach of this work to the international advisory/faculty cadre.

Perhaps some of the most cherished feedback on this work came from the faculty and administrators participating in the ECo3AI, who shared that this work enabled them to feel rewarded, connected, safe, and enhanced their own sense of belonging and relevancy among their URM and First-Generation students. In other words, the dreaded burden of unpaid service grew to become the source of professional joy and pride.

Future Growth

In the next 2-3 years, the ECA4DE hopes to deepen its roots within the student body to help them build even bigger and more supportive professional alumni networks, in private, public, and most notably, academic spheres. Doing so will enable the fostered culture of camaraderie and unyielding support of all students, staff, and faculty, but especially of those who are from the URM and other intersectional backgrounds, grow and reach other economics networks and academic programs. Currently, the focus is to increase Econ Club student engagement, increase ODE numbers and create research-focused conversations and events, and engage even greater number of faculty members and administrators, career counselors in IAC and GT, and other schools and universities. Lastly, we are developing an inter-institutional IRB protocol to collect more in-depth and consistent data and feedback on the impact of the GT Economics and ECo3AI student organizations.

Works Cited

1. Bayer and Rouse (2019) Diversity in the Economics Profession: A New Attack on an Old Problem, *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30(4): 221-242.
2. Amanda Bayer & David W. Wilcox (2019) The unequal distribution of economic education: A report on the race, ethnicity, and gender of economics majors at U.S. colleges and universities, *The Journal of Economic Education*, 50:3, 299-320, DOI: 10.1080/00220485.2019.1618766.
3. Karen E. Dynan and Cecilia Elena Rouse (1997) The Underrepresentation of Women in Economics: A Study of the Undergraduate Economics Students, *The Journal of Economic Education*, 28, 4, Pp. 350-368.
4. Robert Schultz and Anna Stansbury (2022) Socioeconomic Diversity of Economics PhDs, Working Paper, Peterson Institute for International Economics, March 2022, available at: [extension://elhekieabhbkmcefcobjddigjcaadp/https://www.piie.com/sites/default/files/documents/wp22-4.pdf](https://elhekieabhbkmcefcobjddigjcaadp/https://www.piie.com/sites/default/files/documents/wp22-4.pdf).



Date: February 9, 2023

To: GT CTL Awards Committee

From: Laura Taylor, Chair
School of Economics

RE: Nomination of Aselia Urmanbetova for the
2023 CTL Innovation in Co-Curricular Education Award

I am delighted to submit this application for **Dr. Aselia Urmanbetova** for the 2023 Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation Award in Co-Curricular Education.

Dr. Urmanbetova is the faculty advisor to the Economics Club and the Georgia Tech chapter of ODE, The Economics Honor Society. The Economics Club is open to any student at Georgia Tech with an interest in economics, while ODE is only open to students who have completed 15 hours or more of economics courses with a grade of 3.0 or higher.

In 2020, Dr. Urmanbetova assumed the role of faculty advisor to both clubs and initiated a series of action to renew and invigorate both clubs. During 2019-2020, Dr. Urmanbetova conducted surveys of both groups on the type of activities student members were eager to participate in. This provided both the direction and updated missions for both organizations. In 2020-2021, both groups established renewed organizational charters, built teams of devoted student leaders, and created multi-semester planning calendars for online and hybrid events. In 2021-22, both groups have built strategic alliances with other student organizations across campus and economics/ODE clubs in other Atlanta-area colleges.

The success of the clubs under Dr. Urmanbetova's guidance is reflected in the following points of pride:

- The Economics Club has grown in membership from 104 in August 2020 to 244 members in January 2023 (124% growth).
- From 2017-2022, ODE grew by 48 members (memberships are lifetime) to a total of 369 members in the Georgia Tech chapter of ODE.
- The Economics Club took the lead in forming ECo3AI (Economics Collaborative of Atlanta-Area Institutions). ECo3AI brings together student leaders, faculty advisors and administrators, as well as economics professionals to brainstorm, build support networks, and shed light on the diverse landscape of careers open to economics majors. This initiative has also provided students with the tools and information to tackle standard milestones students face while progressing on their career paths, both in the private and public sectors. Building such connections and positive spillovers is critically important for URM and first-gen students.

- Colleges that ECo3AI reached in addition to Georgia Tech: Georgia Gwinnett College, Oglethorpe University, Agnes Scott College, Spelman College, Morehouse College, Georgia State University, Emory University, Mercer University, and University of West Georgia; actively participating members are: Georgia Gwinnett College, Georgia Tech, and Oglethorpe.
- The Economics Club hosted and co-hosted 11 events in AY20/21 and 15 events in AY21/22. Examples of events are:
 - Exploring Atlanta’s Booming Job Market at the Intersection of Fintech, Payments and Economics (Guest speakers included the CEO of the Georgia Fintech Academy, a managing principle at 154 Advisors, a pricing strategy analyst at NCR, and Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta).
 - Gate Keeper Insights: Tips from Hiring Managers and HR Recruiters (Guest speakers included a talent acquisition recruiter at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, a manager at Georgia Power, an assistant director of career development at Oglethorpe University).
 - Gate Keeper Insights: The Importance of Building Strong Relationships with your professors (Guest speakers included two professors from smaller state schools – Mercer University and the University of West Georgia; the panel also included two student leaders from GSU and GT; by including students, the program offered practical and student-centric insights).
 - Entrepreneurship & Economics (Guest speakers were local entrepreneurs that had graduated with an economics degree)
 - Expanding Diversity in Economics (Guest speakers from University of Chicago)
 - How to answer “case questions” in an interview & workplace wellbeing once you land a job (Guest speakers from Deloitte, including SOE alumni)
- ODE was officially chartered as a student organization at Georgia Tech in Fall 2021 (it had been a chapter for over 20 years, but not officially recognized as a GT student organization)
- ODE created a mission statement that describes the chapter as the club with a focus on economics research. In AY20/21 and AY21/22, the club hosted a variety of events including:
 - Lunch brownbag with PhD and undergraduate students in economics
 - Informational session on economics PhD programs
 - Coffee chat with faculty to discuss research
 - Induction luncheon

Dr. Urmanbetova’s work with the students outside of the classroom enriches students’ experiences and promotes the sense of community, belonging and engagement, that is critical for students. Through her work and engagement, she truly helps students to thrive wholistically and, of course, academically. This is particularly true for students from the historically URM backgrounds, first generation, non-cisgender, and other intersectional student groups.

Lastly, her exemplary commitment to student success also extends to our faculty. She has partnered with two economics faculty and one academic advising staff member to expand the connection between students and faculty/staff. Their team is now working in three distinct directions: (1) building on efficient programming practices such as holding on-demand online

office hours for student leaders, (2) acquiring networking, job-search, and career development skills during the events of the Economics Club, and (3) connecting graduate and undergraduate students to help acquire and practice research skills at the undergraduate level by creating vertical mentoring pathways for graduate students within the ODE. Outside of Georgia Tech, Dr. Urmanbetova's co-/extra-curriculum network includes six actively engaged faculty and economics professionals in Georgia and five faculty in other states who are interested in creating similar experiences in their universities.

In short, Dr. Urmanbetova has channeled her passion for student advocacy into a successful and scalable model for student engagement, professional socialization, and learning within a friendly and sustainable setting. She is helping other faculty to do the same, and I cannot think of another person more deserving of this award.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions at all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Taylor".

Laura Taylor
Chair, School of Economics

February 12, 2023
Philip Vinson
Georgia Gwinnett College
School of Business
1000 University Center Lane
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
pvinson@ggc.edu

I am writing to enthusiastically support Dr. Aselia Urmanbetova from the School of Economics in the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts for the Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award at Georgia Tech. I have gotten to know Dr. Urmanbetova during the last two years while working in the Economic Collaborative of Atlanta-Area Institutions (ECo3AI) as faculty advisors to the econ clubs in our respective institutions. During her time advising the Economics Club at Georgia Tech, its membership has more than doubled. From the very beginning of our time working together, her passion for economics education and building an inclusive pipeline of economics professionals was clear.

Dr. Urmanbetova was instrumental in creating and building up the ECo3AI partnership, and we have met almost every month to build meaningful programming around students' co- and extra-curricular experiences. ECo3AI is comprised of four prominent institutional players: the Atlanta Economics Club (AEC), Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC), Georgia Tech (GT), and Oglethorpe University (OU). Its events have reached more than 100 students from 10 GA colleges: GGC, GT, OU, and Agnes Scott College, Spelman College, Morehouse College, Georgia State University, Emory University, Mercer University, and University of West Georgia.

ECo3AI plans, promotes and distributes events and other programming intended to inform Atlanta-area students about the field of economics, the benefits of a degree in economics, and to showcase diversity among economics professionals and practitioners. ECo3AI brings together student leaders, faculty advisors, and economics professionals to brainstorm, build support networks, and shed light on the diverse landscape of careers open to economics majors. This initiative also provides students with the tools and information to tackle standard milestones students face while progressing on their career paths, both in the private and public sectors. Building such connections and positive spillovers is critically important for underrepresented minority and first-generation students.

Despite its importance for student growth, serving as faculty advisors for student organizations often has high costs and few career benefits for the faculty advisor. However, we have demonstrated that it is possible to reduce programmatic and marketing costs by pulling resources across multiple institutions. In addition, ECo3AI seeks to address the lack of information students have regarding the types of skills and jobs that economics degrees provide. Students from our institutions participated in ECo3AI events, many of which were gatekeeper-themed, and discussed the "dos and don'ts" of networking, job searching, writing cover letters, asking for recommendations, etc. These events helped our students reduce many job-search-related uncertainties and, thus, their anxieties.

The ECo3AI community that Dr. Urmanbetova helped build enabled the faculty members to unite in the goal of helping students learn about the power of economics and a place to discuss our own experiences as students and as faculty. Both student leaders and faculty grew to enjoy both the events as well as our programming meetings and interactions which has led to tremendously enriching connections between faculty and students across institutions. We are incredibly lucky to have benefited from Dr. Urmanbetova's involvement in this endeavor.

Sincerely,



Philip Vinson
Assistant Professor of Economics
Georgia Gwinnett College

February 2023

Dear Awards Committee,

My name is Rupkatha Banerjee, and I am a December 2022 Georgia Tech graduate with a double major in Economics and Mathematics. I'm writing to you today with great enthusiasm to recommend Dr. Aselia Urmanbetova for the 2023 Innovation in Co-Curricular Education Award. I have been working with Dr. U for the past couple of years to develop a robust network of extracurricular opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in the Economics department. She's made a monumental impact on my undergraduate career, and I am honored to be writing this letter in support of her.

I met Dr. U as an undergraduate TA for the Economics department, where she is heavily involved in student wellbeing outside of the classroom. She serves as the head for all teaching assistants and was a very communicative and empathetic supervisor; she reached out to me in Spring 2021 as she was (and is) co-advising Economics Club and our chapter of Omicron Delta Epsilon (ODE), which is an international Economics Honor Society. Dr. U is passionate about fostering student leadership, and I began working with her to revive ODE and register it as a student organization. Her work with student organizations reflects her commitment to promoting diversity and equity in Economics. Under her advisement, I became the president of ODE, and the first WOC president of any of our Economics organizations and structured our executive board to platform underrepresented students in the field. This commitment is further reflected in her faculty roles. She was the chair of the Ivan Allen College DEI Council in 2021-2022 and presented to the Southern Economic Association about an inter-institutional collaborative initiative, the Economic Collaborative of Atlanta-Area Academic Institutions (ECo3AI), for increased undergraduate engagement, retention and recruitment into the field, and outreach to underrepresented groups. She is dedicated to challenging the rigidity of economics pedagogy, and I've had several meaningful discussions with her about the barriers to entry into Economics for non-white and non-cisgender students. Her research, work, and instruction all align with this goal. She has a penchant for not only advocating for individual students but also moving the field forward as a whole. Consequently, she's been an inspiration to me and fellow student leaders in IAC.

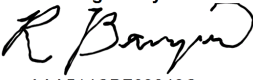
Through this vision, I've worked with her to develop more opportunities for students to involve themselves in research, network with peers and faculty, and learn about graduate school. With inspiration from graduate students in ODE, she is now working with us to create a more vertically integrated approach for research in the Economics department. Also under her advisement, Economics Club has doubled membership, ODE is a registered student organization, and ECo3AI has hosted several successful events at different Atlanta area universities. She is incredibly receptive to feedback and curates events and curricula based on the needs of students. Dr. U is a force of positive change in the Economics department.

For me and many other students, she's also a compassionate mentor and a safe space. Dr. U would schedule weekly check-ins with me to listen to my plans, worries, and all my academic and advocacy interests. From one of these meetings came the confidence to pursue a research project for an issue I was working on in SGA that needed empirical backing. Her office serves as a place for inspiration, trust, and hope. Even after graduation, she continues to connect me with

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her network and opportunities that I can benefit from, because of her desire to help students succeed. She's given me the validation as a researcher to be inquisitive and find intersections between economic research and inequity, and I know that I will always be able to rely on her as a source of advice, mentorship, and support. I am wiser and more secure in my own abilities because of her. Every student who has had her as an instructor or mentor is galvanized by her drive, her positivity, and her impetus to transform both the department and our field into a better place for everyone. We are truly fortunate to learn from her, and I can think of no other faculty member more deserving of this award.

Sincerely,
Rupkatha Banerjee

DocuSigned by:

AAA514CD763848C...

Dear Awards Committee,

The mentorship that Dr. Aselia Urmanbetova has provided me over the past four years has been a phenomenal part of my growth and development within my economics degree. Her teachings and wisdom have empowered me in more ways than one, specifically in discovering my career pathway in economics. Beginning with the fall semester of freshman year as one of over 150 students in her introduction to macroeconomics class, I never believed that I would gain even half of the skills that I have been exposed to as a senior. It was all thanks to Dr. Urmanbetova's taking the risk of placing me under her wing. I was very timid in approaching professors, but Dr. Urmanbetova was always positive and inviting, and it allowed me to want to attend office hours and learn more outside of the classroom.

Through Dr. Urmanbetova, I learned skills in economic coding and data science in SAS and was exposed to many accomplished women of color in the field of economics such as the current Governor in the Federal Reserve Board Lisa Cooke. Through this experience, it dawned on me just how important the issue of diversity within the discipline, something that Dr. Urmanbetova has always been vocal in advocating. This has encouraged me to look further into exploring academia in economics and what it would look like for me as a woman of color. I was able to write my first paper in econometrics published online, and this would later be the motivation I needed to participate in undergraduate research with Dr. Urmanbetova. I worked endlessly with my research partner to sift through data and utilize the skills from my previous SAS classes with Dr. Urmanbetova. It was not an easy journey, and it took hard work and long nights, but definitely a worthwhile experience in understanding the rigor of academic research. The experience made me admire my professors' work ethic and grit. It was truly inspirational to see her dedication to her line of work.

Dr. Urmanbetova has assisted in opportunities that I would not have had otherwise—this includes presenting our research at the American Economic Association's Conference in Teaching and Research in Economic Education, visiting the Chicago Federal Reserve, as well as having a role in my acceptance to the Becker Friedman Institute's Expanding Diversity in Economics research program. These, and my work as the current President of the Economics Club at Georgia Tech and Vice-President of the ODE, the international economics honor society, have allowed me to network with economic professionals and would later lead to many successes in exploring my career pathway.

Throughout my four years of undergraduate work, Dr. Urmanbetova has been an integral part of my journey. I cannot think of a more influential and hard-working professor willing to invest in the lives and futures of her students. I can attest to her just character is and how she has shown what it means for scholarship and mentorship to go hand in hand. She has passed down her wisdom to many other students like me, and the only way to show gratitude is to pass down the same kindness and passion that she has shown to us on to others. In short, I do not know of any other professor who is more worthy of the CTL Co-curricular Education Award.

Please feel free to reach out for any questions, I am happy to address them.

Sincerely,



Apueela Wekulom
President, Economics Club at Georgia Tech
Vice-President, Georgia Tech Chapter of ODE
BS Economics and International Affairs

Dear Awards Committee,

Dr. Urmanbetova has been a greatly influential aspect of my time at Georgia Tech. For the past two years, she has been my professor and my mentor: not only supporting me but also actively encouraging me to explore my interests. In Fall of 2021, I was a transfer student that started off as an International Affairs and Economics major. Through Dr. Urmanbetova's guidance, I switched majors to pursue my bachelor's in economics. I graduated this past December of 2022, and she urged me to consider higher education. I am currently seeking a dual degree in Quantitative and Computational Finance and Analytics.

Taking Dr. Urmanbetova's SAS course was my first step towards exploring my interest in data analytics. I found her course both simulating and intriguing – I had not realized that economics could be intertwined with coding and data. That course acted as the gateway towards my future interest in data science and machine learning. As her student, I found Dr. Urmanbetova highly accessible and easy to speak with. Her enthusiasm towards students was contagious, and I, along with several of my classmates, looked forward to attending her class, both due to her exceptional teaching and her bubbly personality. I remember admiring her dedication towards her students and towards teaching in general, a feeling that has only amplified now that I am a teaching assistant for her SAS course. Dr. Urmanbetova works hard to actively reach out towards students who are struggling, offering her time and expertise to catch up or form a plan of action in class. Despite her busy schedule, she always manages to make time for me and answer any questions I may have, be it grading or replying to a student. She is always receptive and open-minded to suggestions I may have, and I have never felt judgement stem from her. As her TA, I am watching her students grow into future economists (or perhaps data analysts) while continuing to grow myself with her support.

I have also worked with Dr. Urmanbetova on research and attended a conference (The Eleventh Annual AEA Conference on Teaching and Research in Economic Education) this past July. I found Dr. Urmanbetova to be highly patient and meticulous when training me and my peer. She is extremely knowledgeable and has an innovative thought process that helped us maximize our efficiency in data cleaning and modeling. She encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and use SAS instead of my go-to programming language (Python). I can

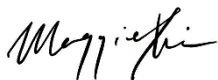
confidently say the research process was enlightening and further fueled my interest in programming and data analysis.

I have also witnessed Dr. Urmanbetova's dedication towards students through student organizations, namely Economics Club and the Georgia Tech sector of Omicron Delta Epsilon (an international honor society for economics). Dr. Urmanbetova believes in diversity and inclusion and has welcomed many non-economics major students into Econ Club. I was on the executive team last semester and worked side by side with her to increase student engagement and plan detailed club events. I have personally experienced Econ Club's reorganization under Dr. Urmanbetova's guidance and have been impressed with the growth of the club, both in terms of student members and in terms of networking with outside groups/people. Her excitement and passion towards the subject are clearly visible through her tireless commitment and devotion towards improving the club.

I can wholeheartedly state my opinion that Dr. Urmanbetova truly deserves the Innovation in Co-curricular Education Award. She completely transformed and revitalized my undergraduate experience and continues to provide me with her unconditional support as my mentor. I have learned so much from her and have developed both as a student and as a person under her tutelage. I truly appreciate her hard work and believe she deserves recognition for all she does.

Sincerely,

Maggie Xia

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maggie Xia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.