

Editorial: Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Special Issue

Thomas O'Toole-Mills

University of Essex

Abstract

Equality, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) are core values of both the Essex Student Journal (ESJ) and University of Essex more broadly. The Journal wanted to celebrate these values in Volume 14 (academic year 2022-23) by launching a special issue dedicated to EDI. This special issue was a great success, publishing eight items; almost half of all publications that year. The EDI Special Issue helped to highlight the importance of EDI, giving voice to Essex students on these important topics, and acted as an inspiration for further experimentation in the opportunities the Journal provides to students.

Keywords: equality, diversity, inclusivity, EDI, special issue, Essex Student Journal

Date of Submission: 16.04.2024

Date of Acceptance: 16.04.2024

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity Special Issue

What is a journal but a means to share ideas. At the Essex Student Journal, we aim to share the ideas of our students: to give them a voice at a time in their lives that they often lack the opportunity to be heard. Their ideas are the ones that will shape the future, and if nothing has been clearer over the past few years, it's the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusivity. Whether that's debates over LGBT+ rights, refugees, antisemitism, or women's bodily autonomy, these are issues that have tangible impacts on peoples' lives.

So as a journal that has aimed to champion EDI and our students since its launch in 2020, how could we contribute to these important conversations and, more importantly, help our students contribute?

The idea behind the [EDI Special Issue](#) was to provide a means to highlight the perspectives of our students on the pressing issues of today and give them a platform to discuss what is important to them at a time when new ideas are desperately needed to overcome the challenges we face as a society. The Journal had not run a special issue before, so we approached it as an experiment to see how we could expand what we offered to our students.

We were pleased to see that students responded positively to the opportunity. Our Student Journal Editor for '22-'23 and PGR student, [Aisyah Shamshum](#), took on the task of running the special issue with enthusiasm. A lot of its success comes down to her hard work: she promoted the special issue through building connections, sharing on social media, and conversing with students. In particular, Aisyah worked closely with the [Black Researchers' Hub](#) to help share opportunities at the Journal with black students, and attended a variety of conferences and events to speak about the Journal to students and encourage them to submit.

The result was that roughly half of our publications (8) for 2022/23 were in the special issue – a great proportion considering the year also saw the most publications ever for the Essex Student Journal (17 in total, compared to a previous height of 12).

It was great to see the variety of issues being discussed too, with topics including economic inequality, military intervention, police violence, and much more. Seeing the expertise and insights of our students is inspirational and gives great hope for the future. Table 1 below illustrates the full breadth of topics covered by the special issue and shows how differently students across various disciplines engage with the theme of EDI.

Publications in the EDI Special Issue

Author	Publication Title	DOI
Grace Upton	The inequalities women and those of an ethnic minority have to face in the world of economy	doi.org/10.5526/esj.234
Kristine Apine	Should We Support International Military Intervention to Prevent Oppression?	doi.org/10.5526/esj.243
Stefan Lygopoulos	Economic Inequality in the UK: Has it Gone Too Far?	doi.org/10.5526/esj.259
Yizhi Cao	Is the 'Millionaire Tax' Reasonable?	doi.org/10.5526/esj.262
Mawadah Nofal	The Digital Divide: what does it mean to be information-poor?	doi.org/10.5526/esj.242
Daisy Doardo	'Bad Apples'? Identifying aspects of police culture that enable police perpetrated violence against women and girls	doi.org/10.5526/esj.263
Louis Mitchell	Racial Injustice in America	doi.org/10.5526/esj.258
Stefan Lygopoulos	The Beautiful Game Blackened by its Carbon Footprint? The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar	doi.org/10.5526/esj.248

Table 1 - Publications in the EDI Special Issue

Building on success

Following the success of the EDI Special Issue, the Journal has explored additional ways to raise the profile of our authors and give them a voice on the topics that are important to them. We have started several new initiatives throughout 2023-24 to help achieve this.

Firstly, we launched a special issue on sustainability in collaboration with the University's [Sustainability Team](#). Sustainability involves much more than just the environment, with the United Nations' [Sustainable Development Goals](#) addressing challenges ranging from environmental destruction to high quality education for all. As such, it is a natural expansion from the EDI Special Issue and looks set to contain even more publications.

Secondly, we opened a pilot scheme to publish creative writing in the Journal. This gives students from a completely different, and often highly competitive, genre the opportunity to become published authors. We are currently open to short fiction and poetry submissions, with the plan to expand into scripts and other forms of creative writing soon. The pilot scheme has been received positively so far, getting a lot of interest from students who hear about it and receiving several submissions within the first few months of the pilot starting. The first two of these were [recently published](#) in the Sustainability Special Issue. Whilst it has been a learning curve to begin publishing such a different type of content at the Journal, there is clearly a demand for it amongst our students and it helps ensure as many of them can be recognised for their work as possible.

Thirdly, we have been planning the first ever [Essex Student Journal Conference](#) to be held on Wednesday 1 May 2024. This event will give authors the opportunity to speak about their work in a conference setting and will bring together all the previous ESJ editors to share a history of the Journal. The Conference is open to all Essex students, alumni, and staff from all campuses. It's great to be able to provide our students and alumni with increased visibility of their efforts beyond publication and celebrate their successes!

Whilst challenging at times, launching these new initiatives has been rewarding and highlights the potential of the Journal and its community. We are keen to see both grow so we can provide more opportunities to University of Essex students and be a source of inspiration for them and others beyond the University. We intend to expand our creative writing support in the coming years, turn the ESJ Conference into a regular event, and find new, innovative ways to support our students.

Conclusion

To wrap up, I want to extend thanks to our hardworking students who make the Essex Student Journal possible. In particular, a big thank you to our Student Journal Editors, without whom providing all these opportunities for students would not be possible. Finally, thank you to Aisyah for all the great work in making the EDI Special Issue a success and helping lay a foundation for the Journal's future success.

If you want to find out more about the Essex Student Journal, you can contact the team on journal@essex.ac.uk or find out more on the [Essex Student Journal website](#).

References

Apine, K. A., (2023) "Should We Support International Military Intervention to Prevent Oppression?", *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.243>

Cao, Y., (2023) “Is the 'Millionaire Tax' Reasonable?”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1).

doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.262>

Doardo, D., (2023) “‘Bad Apples’? Identifying aspects of police culture that enable police perpetrated violence against women and girls”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1).

doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.263>

Lygdopoulos, S. J., (2023) “Economic Inequality in the UK: Has it Gone Too Far?”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.259>

Lygdopoulos, S. J., (2023) “The Beautiful Game Blackened by its Carbon Footprint? The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.248>

Mitchell, L., (2024) “Racial Injustice in America”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1).

doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.258>

Nofal, M., (2023) “The Digital Divide: what does it mean to be information-poor?”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.242>

Upton, G. E., (2023) “The inequalities women and those of an ethnic minority have to face in the world of economy.”, *Essex Student Journal* 14(S1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.5526/esj.234>

Copyright Statement

©Thomas O’Toole-Mills. This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY).