Title: The effects of marketing inclusivity in the wake of Covid-19 on university matriculation

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Abstract: We conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) aimed at increasing application and matriculation rates among women (and under-represented minority (URM) women) at California Polytechnic State University’s College of Business. RCT marketing addressed potential drivers of low participation rates in competitive environments, such as business and business schools, by women. The marketing emphasized collaboration, team work and inclusion and featured female faculty members. Because the RCT took place at the same time as the Covid-19 crisis we will also analyze whether the intervention tempered the enrollment effects of the pandemic and how that varies spatially across zip codes. Polls indicate that many students are deferring enrollment, committing to a gap year, or switching to a local community college in the wake of the crisis. Given our RCT, we will assess if inclusive messaging changes enrollment for students from low-income regions and URM students and whether this varied with Covid-19 severity by zip code. A rich set of data allow us to track how the intervention, the crisis, and their interaction impacted: response rates, application rates, and final matriculation rates by gender, race, and location.

Data description: The data collected include de-identified person data, individual click-through information of each marketing item emailed to the student with a time-stamp, time of application, if accepted, time to matriculation, and basic demographic data (gender, zip code, race/ethnicity). The original sample size at the time of application is 25,806 potential applicants and 2,265 admitted applicants.

JEL codes for the project: I210, I240, D9, M31

Key-words: gender, competition, inclusion, educational attainment, economic shocks