



# Preparing to Teach Personal Finance

Elisabeth Curtis, Senior Lecturer  
Dartmouth College

SIEPR Teaching Personal Finance – Moving Forward

6 Oct 2023



# My background

Senior Lecturer at Dartmouth for the past 17 years

- Primarily responsible for core teaching: Economics 1 – Intro Micro and Economics 22 – Intermediate Macro
- Developed and taught two upper-level, seminar style, experiential learning courses: Economics 78 – Fed Challenge and Economics 70 – The Transformation of Poland to a Market Economy
- Since 2020 I have served on the Economic Department's Diversity Committee, mainly due to my role at Economics 1 instructor



# A Short History of Personal Finance at Dartmouth

**2016** – A course in personal finance was proposed by finance faculty; rejected by our Economics Curriculum Committee

- too closely resembled another course offered in finance
- not a curriculum priority, opportunity cost too high

**Spring 2021** – Offered a series of free workshops in personal finance to students

- Three evening workshops delivered by Economics faculty and guest speakers
- Due to significant demand, we continued to offer these in spring of 2022 and 2023

**Fall 2022** – Attended SIEPR Conference on Teaching Personal Finance

- Started work on a syllabus for a personal finance course, essentially a “mash up” of the courses offered by Anna Lusardi, John Campbell and Joe Fitter

**June 2023** – Economics Department approved “Economics 6 – Personal Finance” and subsequently approved by our College Divisional Council

**Spring 2024** – Economics 6 will be offered

- 1 section 3 credits, capped at a “medium size” of 24 students – I expect this to fill with a waitlist

# Course Development Challenges

- I am not an expert in the field of finance
  - I am taking advantage of the generosity of experts to share their knowledge and experience in teaching personal finance
- I needed to create a course in personal finance that is “Dartmouth worthy” and distinct from other finance offerings
- I needed to find initial financial support
  - funding for this course is not coming from the Economics Department budget but from a program budget called Political Economy Project
  - long term funding unknown

# Course Development Opportunities

- Inclusivity – aims to attract a larger student audience than a typical Economics course
  - Economics 6 purposefully has no prerequisites, a low course number and is designed to be accessible and appealing to any student, including First Gen and URM students
  - this course could be a good offering to students looking for a “soft introduction” to the field of Economics
- Fills a college void - will be the first of its kind at Dartmouth
  - from our workshop attendance and student feedback/questions, we hear from both graduates and undergraduates they are looking for ways to build their financial management skills before they start their first job

# and Future!

My hopes (expectations?):

- Either the Economics Dept embraces the course as a regular offering and/or the College picks this up as a priority course, allowing it to satisfy a distributive requirement
- The course is scaled up, either in number of sections or size of sections, or both (for reference, Econ 1 is capped at 45 students per section with 4 sections on average per term)

DARTMOUTH