

DIVERSITY AND EQAULTY MANIFESTO

By Paul Owino

“There is an enemy. There is an intelligent, active, malign force working against us. Step one, is to recognize this. This recognition alone is enormously powerful;. It saved my life, it will save yours”.

-Seth Godin

To the uninitiated and the inexperienced when the conversation of equality and diversity is raised, it can be all too easy to fall into the modern stereotypical, politically correct idealized rhetoric they love to wax poetical, of the sociopolitical golden era that we apparently live in. They talk about this time in which mutual respect, compassion and understanding, is a given. They criticize and condemn with bullish idealism who those can't see the utopia that they have imagined in their heads, and brought to life with sanctimonious platitudes. Platitudes that fade just as quickly when the mind wanders, unburdened by reality. A luxury that experience quickly takes away.

To us, those who unfortunately are experienced in the realities of prejudice and the difficulties involved in finding equality and diversity, talk of the struggle for a voice, for identity and of acceptance. For us equality and diversity, sparks memories of pain and fear that serves only to keep us filled with anxiety and self-doubt. But equality and diversity also represents, ideologies of progress, signaling not too any one group of prejudiced, but too all, a signal to our minds of, of determination and unshakable resolve to strive for these, oh so misunderstood ideals.

To me above all, experience has shown me the divide between reality and these admirable ideals, and between those who see in the world today the peak of equality and diversity and those of us who still work towards achieving these ideals. To believe and hope in a better community and society as a whole, where all are accepted for who they are as groups and as individuals and that all are given the same opportunities. That is not reality, at least it hasn't been mine, or that of many others. I refuse to accept any fantasy steeped in utopian idealism, because if I do, I could never truly understand prejudice, and its warped hold on people's hearts. If I chose to accept the fantasy I would also not be able to further the ideals I believe this office and so many in the world and throughout history have espoused.

I BELIEVE

- That through experience comes wisdom and patience,
- With empathy, understanding can be fostered
- If we aim for sincerity only honesty can follow
- That knowledge empowers
- That nothing worth achieving can be done alone. I detest the idea that any one person has the solution to achieving these two lofty ideals, or can solve all the issues felt by so many different groups and individuals.

MY VISION is to perform to the best of my ability, all necessary duties required of me in the role of equality and diversity officer. These include but are by no means limited too:

- Ensuring that all Association activities and events take into account and represent the diversity of the entire postgraduate student body.
- Ensuring the continued promotion of equality throughout, the university
- Assessing and improving on current integration strategies put in place to help new postgraduate students, with particular focus on improving and encouraging cultural understanding
- Working in conjunction with and to help any and all gender or faith based groups in the promotion of their causes
- To help grow and nurture an environment and space of tolerance, but of empathy and constant dialogue.
- More importantly I will continuously strive to be your support system and sounding board, to help those who need the confidence to be their own voice.

- I won't be able to solve all the issues that all postgraduate students face when it comes to the prejudices that plague them through their time at keele. To do so would be disingenuous, if not a bold faced lie, and far from my intention. The very nature of prejudice and in turn equality and diversity is a capricious thing, multifaceted in its complexity. But to make no effort would be wrong.