

TO: Assembly

FROM: Seun Twins & DCUD

RE: Amendment to **Equality & Diversity: Core SU Position**

DATE: 29 October 2020

The belief and its justification:

Durham should be inclusive and promote equal opportunity for all. Diversity should be celebrated, and Durham should be a welcoming environment where students, staff and visitors feel safe and can express themselves. However, historically, under-represented groups¹ have experienced exclusion, marginalisation, abuse, violence, toxicity and discrimination across all sectors in society, whilst traditional power structures have privileged white, cisgender, heterosexual males with no disability. Durham must continue to strive for the liberation of under-represented groups and challenge the existing cultural and structural inequalities which could prevent, or limit, this liberation.

Definition of a better future:

All practices or behaviours which directly, or indirectly, result in discrimination, injustice or social exclusion should be challenged and dismantled. Equality and diversity should be embedded in decision making, practice and activity across the University community. The struggle for liberation, inclusion and social change should be built upon effective, organised activism and the dismantling of systematic injustice. The Union should continue to campaign, lobby and support liberation work as well as offer representative functions for under-represented groups. Durham University should actively prioritise and platform a diverse range of student voices who represent the wide spectrum of student needs and interests. In addition, the University should commit to thorough consultation with the appropriate student leaders and representatives. Ultimately, liberation and inclusion should be embedded throughout the work of the Union (including all SU student groups) and any behaviours which do not support or further this goal should be condemned by the Union.

A better future is one where all students feel happy, safe and protected - resulting in a University experience they can take pride in.

The barriers:

Whilst the Durham community is made up of a range of diverse individuals, the Durham culture and environment tends to privilege white, cisgender, heterosexual males from middle-upper class backgrounds with no disability. This privilege reinforces a negative culture of exclusion and marginalisation which is experienced by under-represented groups who are unjustly faced with abuse and violence

¹ This refers to individuals or groups who have experienced discrimination based on their race, gender, gender identity, sexuality, class or background, nationality, age, religion, (dis)ability, ethnicity, care leavers, estranged students, student carers, student parents, relationships or any other element or intersection of their identity.

As Durham strives for diversification, decolonisation, digitisation, internationalisation and expansion, the lack of specialised support services presents an additional obstacle to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities:

The position of Durham Students' Union is:

That, Durham SU will actively condemn any behaviours, languages and beliefs which further victimise underrepresented groups.

That Durham SU will commit to the long-term pursuit of recognising, challenging and dismantling the dominant culture of hate existent within our community.

That, in the short term, Durham SU should promote a whole-University approach to mitigate the effects of oppression, disadvantage and discrimination.

That, in the long term, Durham SU should promote a whole-University approach to dismantle the existing structural inequalities and injustices which systematically oppress minority groups, to ensure that Durham is an inclusive, diverse and equal institution and city.