

TO: Assembly
FROM: Meg Haskins
RE: **Equality & Diversity: Core SU Position**
DATE: 12 March 2019

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. Historically, under-represented groups have experienced exclusion, marginalisation 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 these groups and challenge the existing structural inequalities which could prevent, or limit, this liberation.

Definition of a better future:

Any practices or behaviours which directly, or indirectly, result in discrimination, injustice or social exclusion should be challenged. Equality and diversity should be embedded in decision making, practice and activity across the University community. The struggle for liberation, inclusion and social change is reliant 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 consider and develop with consideration of the needs and interests of all members of its student community, and actively seek out their voices. Ultimately, liberation should be embedded throughout the work of the Union, to ensure that the Union is the champion of **all** students.

The barriers:

There are currently small numbers of individuals from underrepresented groups within the Durham University community, and as such the Durham culture and environment tends to privilege those from groups which make up the larger proportions of the Durham student body. This homogeneity reinforces a negative culture of exclusion and marginalisation which is experienced by underrepresented groups.

As Durham pushes for diversification and continues to promote the recruitment of students and staff from underrepresented groups, the lack of specialised support and services presents an additional layer of exclusion which could affect the retention of staff and students from these groups.

Belief about the change and the responsibilities:

The position of Durham Students' Union is:

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.