

## A plea to decolonise the Curriculum.

Since May we've seen the biggest race equality movement of our time gain and lose traction after the killing of George Floyd. The Students' Unions and University have each put out their own statements and commitments to growth, but this is not enough and action needs to be taken at a modular level.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences students have told us how Eurocentric their courses are, how academics bring their own conscious and unconscious biases, how "pale/male/stale" academics still dominate, how race related discussions in seminars have been glossed over, silenced or 'not thought to be relevant' (or worse still, all eyes have fallen to the one BAME student in the class!) and how damaging this is on both students in the room and students' critical thinking skills afterwards.

Faculty of Medicine and Health students have told us how their course fails to prepare them for the realities of workplace racism, how their course doesn't discuss the psychosocial side of medicine, how their course is centric on "the white body", how common medical myths aren't challenged, how their lecturers are predominantly white and how damaging the lack of representation is.

Faculty of Natural Sciences students have told us how race issues 'just aren't covered' in their courses unless they specifically opt to take these modules (where lecturers are often just preaching to the choir), they want to know about ethnomathematics and structural inequalities, they want to know about where our knowledge comes from and they want to be prepared to be able have difficult conversations. "We don't listen to R Kelly anymore, why do we still reference Columbus without batting an eyelid?" (quote from a Keele100 held recently).

A more diverse curriculum would do much to shape our graduates' worldview, and in turn shape our future businesses, CEOs, politicians and leaders. We have a responsibility to our students regardless of the course they are on to educate them in matters *beyond* their courses.

Before you all jump to defend your own faculties and own courses saying "so-and-so does this module", "actually in our school we do this...", ask yourself if you're *truly* doing enough to ensure an equitable experience for *all* of your students.

This needs to be in CORE modules not just optional modules, and course content such as this needs to be retained after passionate lecturers move on (I've heard too many students tell me about a *loss* of diverse modules rather than growth!)

I appreciate that many of you will be completely redesigning your courses to enable online delivery for 2020/21, but whilst you're doing this, you should also be decolonising your curricula. This doesn't just mean adding Du Bois to the reading list, it means actively educating, fostering 'difficult' conversations and facilitating growth and learning in a safe environment. **"Not having the time" is not a good enough excuse, if you have time to ensure a smooth experience for your white students then you have time to ensure a smooth experience for every student.**