To me, diversity is the acknowledgment and appreciation of others. Everyone’s story includes unique ingredients, whether that be language, gender, cultural upbringing, skills, religion, or even ‘neurodiversity’ (acknowledging there are different ways the brain functions). As a theatre director and lecturer, I have realised that each person has something exceptional to contribute to this world based on their differences and diverse perceptions. When each person recognises their own worth as well as the irreplaceable significance of those around them, that is when we can truly celebrate diversity and use it as a tool to make the world a better place.

Dr Alex Cahill
Lecturer in Theatre & Performance
Diversity, for me, is a recognition and celebration of the characteristics that make us individuals. Each of us have important components to our identity, whether it is our cultural heritage, gender, beliefs or something else, which define ‘who we are’ and how we experience the world. Each of us has a unique cocktail of influences that shape our identity – this is what makes people interesting!

In my opinion, small individual differences enrich our societies, offering a wide range of perspectives, influences and creativity. Harnessing the potential of diverse people increases the opportunities for positive relationships and the advancement of collective goals.

Diversity is also a celebration of the commonalities that people from different backgrounds share.
Diversity means equality of opportunity across the board. It also means tackling barriers and extra challenges faced by those in university from more diverse communities who face discrimination and oppression. This takes the form of raising awareness, creating equality in teaching, learning and assessment, and offering additional support to those who face oppression. Myself and my colleagues have formed FREDA (Forum for Race Equality and Diversity Awareness) and have put in place additional group and individual support to Black Asian Minority Ethnic students on the social work courses here at Plymouth University.

Sharon Soper
Lecturer in Social Work

Faculty of Health and Human Sciences
Diversity means trusting that it is not only safe to bring all of your ‘self’ to work (partner, family, friends) but that it is welcomed and embraced. Our organisation and its leaders must openly demonstrate their commitment to including and valuing everyone. Crucially this requires a critical evaluation of everything that we do and the courage to take radical action to make it happen.

Dr Virginia Fisher
Associate Professor (HR & Leadership)
Diversity is valuing difference, and that far from treating different people the same, we should take every measure possible to ensure that no person feels disadvantaged, excluded or compromised because of their personal characteristics. In some situations this means providing personalised support to ensure that every person; staff or student is able to succeed in their chosen endeavours. From my work as lead for pastoral care in the medical and dental schools, I know that even excellent students can struggle in their work if they have some personal troubles. Supporting them through tough times makes an enormous difference to their wellbeing and academic progress. In some situations it means developing an understanding of different perspectives and the value this brings to our work. Patients need their doctors to be able to understand their point of view, and how their health problem impacts on their life. Doctors who understand what it is like to be a patient will be naturally more compassionate. My interest in mental health stems from my own personal experiences. It is important to me that at Peninsula Medical School, we teach about inclusivity and awareness of the rise in mental health problems, and advocating for support and understanding rather than stigma and judgement. Such compassion in our students has the power to evolve them into healthcare providers for the future.

Dr Theresa Compton
Lecturer in Biomedical Sciences
Encouraging a diverse community is one of the core aspects of being a university – a place that can enable intellectual challenge, questioning and learning, from which springs an ever increasing understanding and appreciation of humanity. Speaking both professionally and personally, this is one of the many things I value about university life.

David Alder
Chief Marketing Officer
Whilst 1/3 of the world is starving and 1/3 of the world is having war, the rest of the world is still fighting for everyday rights, individuals still fighting to be accepted for who they are. Whether it is women’s rights, LGBT rights, children’s rights, the world is still trying to produce statistics and define what is the ‘norm’. I have been living in the UK for 18 years now. Am I a foreigner? Am I still entitled to keep my identity of who I am? Or am I expected to adapt to a degree that I will lose completely my Mediterranean passion and ways of expression? I am committed to diversity and inclusivity. Drawn by my own experiences of having to go against cultural beliefs, every day battles and challenges, I still fight, argue, and defend human rights. Through my job I encourage and empower individuals to feel free to be who they are. I have been working on my department’s Athena SWAN application for almost two years now. I faced challenges but at the same time opportunities. I have not sorted out all the problems, but I have contributed to solving some of the problems. I don’t believe in the norm. I support and promote differentiation. You cannot put numbers and statistics next to individuals.

Dr Ismini Vasileiou
Lecturer in Information Systems (Education)
Diversity, like ‘Inclusion’, is a highly political label or term, a slippery fish - impossible to grasp or define without being overly simplistic and missing the point. I see it like the God Janus; having two faces. The positive outward progressive face embracing and promoting the acceptance and valuing of all, the challenging of division, hatred, prejudice and discrimination. However, the negative regressive face has diluted the significance, richness and importance of the political stories which shaped many of the intersections which sit uncomfortably under the Diversity umbrella. Stories of ‘Race’, social class, sexuality, dis/ability, gender, age. These powerful political stories of civil and equal rights and the need for such struggles and stories to continue to be heard have become silenced via their colonisation by neo-liberal thinking and the less political language of ‘diversity’.

Ahmed and Swain (2006) call for a return to the political language of multi-culturalism, equal rights, anti-racism; they argue ‘diversity’ individuates difference, conceals inequalities and neutralises histories of antagonism and struggle. So the questions we might consider in working towards a more socially just world or workplace are; what does doing ‘Diversity work’ mean and what do we really understand about the politics of diversity?

Dr Suanne Gibson
Associate Professor (Senior Lecturer) in Education

UNIVERSITY OFPLYMOUTH
Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Diversity, to me, is being happy with the understanding that we are all beautifully adaptive beings, living in a constantly changing environment. We change on a moment by moment basis, gaining thereby a wonderful spectrum of skills, knowledge and attitudes. Just look at where we are, and how we have got here: it is highly likely that we have changed in many ways during that process, and we shall only continue to do so in the days ahead.

If we recognise this changing nature – the inherent diversity - within us, it makes it so much easier to appreciate the changes (the difference) in all those around us. That is celebrating diversity. It is a delightful, inspirational fountain of wonder and happiness, freely available to us all. That happiness will only be magnified if we come together and highlight the many beautiful ways in which we, as individuals, contribute to that wonderful spectrum of diversity. We can begin the process of being happy with ‘others’; by first being happy with ourselves.

We all belong to the most beautiful of families where every single person is precious. Let’s celebrate that!

Dr Poorna Gunasekera  
Associate Professor in Biomedical Sciences

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**SUN** | **MON** | **TUE** | **WED** | **THUR** | **FRI** | **SAT**
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28 | 29 | 30 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4
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12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18
19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25
26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1

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**SPECIAL DAYS**

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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Beltane - Samhain - Wicca/Pagan</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>Yom HaShoah - Judaism</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>Last Day of Ridvan - Baha’i</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>Saints Philip &amp; James - Christian</td>
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<td>06</td>
<td>Ramadan begins - Islam</td>
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<td>May Bank Holiday (UK)</td>
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<td>09</td>
<td>Yom HaZikaron - Judaism/Israeli</td>
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<td>International Day of Families</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Visakha Puja - Buddhist</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (UN)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Birthday of Guru Amar Das - Sikh</td>
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<td>Declaration of the Bab - Baha’i</td>
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<td>Lag B’Omer - Judaism</td>
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<td>Face Equality Day (UK)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Ascension of Baha’u’llah - Baha’i</td>
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<td>International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Ascension of Jesus - Christian</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>World No Tobacco Day (WHO)</td>
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**KEY**

- **Diversity**
- **Culture**
- **Faith**
- **Health**
- **International**
- **Bank Holiday**
Diversity is about embracing each other’s unique characteristics. It is about recognising each person’s uniqueness and the beauty within. Being diverse is beautiful and makes the world an interesting place to explore!

Embracing diversity is what allows us to grow as individuals and as a society. It teaches that we may not all share the same characteristics, yet we can embrace another’s uniqueness and grant dignity to each other to create a better world to live in. It is only by valuing diversity that we can break down the ‘barrier’ between the unknown and us. It is only then that individuality can be used as a valuable asset to enhance one’s mindset and create opportunities for creativity and development.

I am grateful for anything that gives me the opportunity to see things from a different perspective. I am grateful for meeting people whose uniqueness expanded my horizons and allowed me to explore the beauty of the world we live in.

Let us not be the same!
Be unique, be different!

Dr Martha Pasai
Post-doctoral Research Fellow in Women’s Health
To me, diversity and inclusion is far more than just meeting statutory requirements in ensuring equality of opportunity within organisational policies and practices it is about:

- welcoming individuals from all backgrounds and circumstances to our University;
- enabling all individuals to fulfil their potential and thrive;
- providing a supportive and respectful environment where our people feel valued and safe;
- recognising and valuing the contribution and achievements of individuals within our community; and,
- celebrating our diversity.

Whilst the challenges in achieving a truly equal society – worldwide, nationally and locally, may seem forever out of reach – I am proud of the small steps we have taken, and continue to take, that make a difference: increasing awareness, changing attitudes, promoting an inclusive culture, achieving goals and continuing aspirations that support the University's commitment to equality and diversity.

Julia Davy
Head of Staff
Wellbeing & Support
I am proud to be in a job where I get to celebrate diversity every day and rather than allow those differences to divide us, instead we use them to unite us. As a gay man, I understand how difficult it can be facing adversity when you are seen as something different but I am proud of who I am and I want others to be proud of themselves too. We are stronger together and we are a much stronger University community when we can be ourselves and feel empowered to celebrate our diversity.

Diversity isn’t something that can be achieved through ticking a box or showing a token effort; we have to constantly question our privileges, listen to other voices and embrace new ways of thinking. Sometimes this can be uncomfortable as we challenge what we take for granted but we must keep fighting to ensure we can all be proud of who we are. The fight for equality is far from over.
Our Commitment

Our increasingly diverse community of staff and students is part of what makes our University so special. Valuing the different contributions that each of us brings and respecting each other sits at the heart of our commitment to the talented people who visit, work and study with us.

We’re fully committed to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination for our staff and students, applicants and visitors. This means that as an integral part of the way we work, we seek to ensure that people are treated equitably regardless of their:

- age
- disability
- ethnicity (including race, colour and nationality)
- gender
- gender reassignment
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy or maternity.

The Board of Governors, through the Vice-Chancellor, has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that our equality policies are fully implemented. Each manager is accountable for delivering the equality commitments in their areas of responsibility. All staff are required to ensure that they apply the University’s equality and diversity policies and this is enshrined in our job descriptions. But there is a broader expectation that as well as our staff teams, all of our students, partners, and those carrying out work or providing services on our behalf will comply with our policies and ensure that their behaviour and/or actions do not amount to conscious or unconscious discrimination or bullying and harassment in any way.

On a day-to-day basis the head of resourcing, diversity and inclusion and the equality and diversity team, alongside our committees and other forums support us in guiding, implementing, and meeting our annual reporting responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Forum for Race Equality and Diversity Awareness (FREDA):

- Is an open access network of people across the South West who have an interest in practice learning and development in the promotion of race equality, social justice and human rights
- Is committed to active and continual learning
- Designs and facilitates open learning events
- Develops resources to support practice development underpinned by the values and standards of FREDA
- Works in partnership with the University of Plymouth

FREDA activities are organised by a small working party of local practitioners, academics, students, service users and practice educators. We are currently a group of eight and meet about every six weeks on the University of Plymouth campus.

If you would like to come along to any of the working party meetings please leave your contact details with freda@plymouth.ac.uk and one of us will get back to you with information about the next meeting or event. You would be very welcome.

Athena SWAN

The University of Plymouth has been a member of ECU and the Athena SWAN charter since 2009 and all of our Faculties/Schools have developed plans to have submitted or have achieved an Athena SWAN charter at least at a bronze level by November 2019. This requires us to review equality data to enable us to review how our women and men are represented across our grades and able to progress through the University, including the identification of possible barriers within the working environment. We are also looking at intersectionality, including for example, the representation of female BME staff.

You can find out more about our Athena SWAN work by visiting www.plymouth.ac.uk

ECU GENDER CHARTER

We are committed to promoting a positive work and study environment, free from unlawful discrimination for our employees and students on the grounds of disability. Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, and can mean different things to different people.

We offer a range of guidance and support and ensure that we consult with employees or students to determine and make reasonable adjustments as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

A dedicated team in Disability Assist Services provide advice and support for current and prospective disabled students. For details of how to visit us, go to www.plymouth.ac.uk/travel
We live in an amazing part of the world and work in a University that we can rightly be proud of; for many reasons, one of which is its diversity. Within the Faculty of Health and Human sciences, it is important that equality and diversity are at the heart of what we do. Our colleagues and our students are individual people and therefore, it is important that we should always strive to ensure that their diverse needs are met. We also need to ensure that we promote and foster everybody’s right to be different, to hold individual beliefs and values, to be free from discrimination, valued as an individual, and have choice and dignity.

Our University is made all the more interesting by its diversity and so, for me, it’s really important that we truly recognise, respect and value people’s differences because we all contribute so much in different ways. I’m strongly committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and I am proud to work in a Faculty that champions these principles as part of its approach to every aspect of its work.

The Diversity Calendar offers week-by-week highlights of cultural and religious events that are important to staff across the institution. It is a really good reminder of the diversity that exists here in the University and the value we attach to an environment where all colleagues and students are respected regardless of their values or beliefs.

It has been my pleasure to have been chair of University EDIC for just over a year, and to add my own modest contribution to those from right across the University championing equality, diversity and inclusion. Challenges that are generations in the making are difficult to address, but by acknowledging them and working on them together I know we can make a difference.

As a literary historian of the eighteenth century I spend a lot of time thinking about how similar and at the same time how different the past is, and also how reality has been obscured by subsequent generations. Recovering the voices of marginalised groups, and those whose experiences have been erased from history, is a major preoccupation of research in my field. For example, you might know that the ‘invention’ of the novel was the great literary achievement of the eighteenth century, but did you know that it was the achievement of mainly women writers, not the ‘big name’ male writers you might have heard of? Of course it is easy to look back on the past, with its troubling legacies of exploitation and marginalisation (in terms of race, gender and class to name but three), and congratulate ourselves on how far we have come. How great it is to have Jane Austen on our £10, we think, perhaps forgetting the misogynist death threats issued to those who had campaigned for her inclusion. As William Faulkner said, “the past is never dead, it isn’t even the past.”

I look forward to continuing to contribute to our collective efforts to ensure that all members of our university community are able to thrive, to contribute, and through their efforts to enrich our institution now and in the future.

Professor Bridie Kent
Interim Executive Dean of Faculty of Health & Human Sciences

Professor Dafydd Moore
Executive Dean of Faculty of Arts & Humanities