

# Masala: Diversity on Campus

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You know it isn't too often I'm able to sit in the Pit and relax during the week. That only happens when I make an effort to do so. When I did so on a beautiful Tuesday before Thanksgiving, I did so hoping to stumble upon divine inspiration for this editorial. I ate my lunch and commenced to simply "people-watch." I saw people: people walking, people talking, people walking and talking. Only for the distinct purpose of this article did I take interest in several groups of people. Sitting outside of the Ram Café of Lenoir were four South or West Asians at one table. I'm not certain whether they were from India or a Middle Eastern country. An African-American woman and Caucasian man were sitting at another table. In a corner of the Pit, I saw a group of Eastern Asians while a different table at the Café seated two Caucasian women and an African-American man. I took note of other groups, but I soon began to ask myself if this is a truly diverse campus. I believe it all depends on how you define "diversity."

At one time, I would have defined diversity as a large

assortment of different objects, and in this case, people. For instance, I wouldn't say that my old high school in my hometown was the most diverse place with its strictly black and white population. When I went to a different high school in Durham, I began to see the world in terms of black, white, Hispanic, South Asian, East Asian, and whatever else there may have been. To explore my interest, I even took courses in African Studies and Asian Studies. However, those I hung around with should truly answer the question of my diversity. Anyone that went where I did can attest to the cafeteria situation where all the blacks sat out of sight in the back of the cafeteria. There was nothing to complain about since we chose to sit there and other people were free to sit there if they wanted to. However, I began to realize that this location was only segregating us from everyone else (and it was a further trip for more food). I decided to stop following the black crowd and just sit with the first set of friends I saw, who were usually other guys on my hall and anyone else who joined us. I definitely believe that

personality diversity outweighed the white/Asian/black/Hispanic diversity present. After graduation, I came here and began to expand on my conception of "diversity." I became a part of UNITAS, a living and learning housing program with people of various cultural, ethnic, and sexual backgrounds, and Masala, the multicultural umbrella organization on campus. In both activities, I met even more people of a wider range of backgrounds. To this day, I'm still involved in Masala and still keep in touch with some of my fellow UNITASians. I was joined by three of those people during my personal "Pit Sit."

Getting back to the question at hand, I do see people going along as I had in my recollection. I see people with others of differing backgrounds and I see others with people of similar backgrounds. This includes the two Asian groups I mentioned earlier, and the African-Americans sitting around the Undergraduate

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