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Carl is a native of Modesto, California and graduated in June 2008 from Stanford University with a major in political science and a minor in history. He joined the *Stanford Review*, and ultimately served as Editor-in-Chief his senior year. Immediately following graduation, Carl chose a summer internship at the *Wall Street Journal* in New York. The pieces that earned him the Collegiate Breindel Award are titled “Diversity, Take Two” and “Our Gathering Storm.”

Editor’s Note: Diversity, Take Two

By: Carl J. Kelm

I wouldn't call myself conventional. I don't fit under any neat label. I'm a half-Hispanic and a protestant, a Californian and a conservative Republican. When I was a kid, I would always have to mark both “White, not of Hispanic origin” and “Hispanic, not of White origin” on standardized tests. My siblings, cousins, and I are the first generation on my mom's side to speak English as a first language. I often feel like a minority at Stanford.

But it has nothing to do with race or ancestry.

Rather, I often feel like the token conservative. In my freshman dorm, for example, there were other Hispanics beside myself, but I was the only open Republican. There were, of course, a handful of other right-leaning individuals, but they usually kept that part of their life a closely guarded secret (‘closet conservatives,’ they're called). I also remember a class I took where I was simultaneously shocked and thrilled to discover that, in a section of almost twenty people, there were five of us who held right-of-center beliefs. More often than not, though, I find myself the lone voice in lunchtime discussions; the ‘one’ in the thirteen-on-one classroom debates. There is something wrong with this.

The university is supposed to be a forum for the free exchange of ideas. At least in theory, colleges are supposed to do more than just force us to read textbooks and show up for finals. They are meant, rather, to make us wrestle with ideas and explore concepts, to help us refine our view of the world and understand our part in it. Yet, we usually only hear from a very limited range of viewpoints.

Undoubtedly, Stanford has a commitment to diversity, but only to the kind that goes skin-deep. I've met many people from ‘diverse’ backgrounds who all think exactly the same. What is truly lacking at Stanford—and, indeed, most college campuses—is ideological diversity.

This scale of this epidemic is considerable. A friend of mine from the Palo Alto area, who also writes for The Stanford Review, once told me that he had never met a pro-life girl until he went to an out-of-state conference held by the conservative Intercollegiate Studies Institute. There's something wrong with this.

We are a 50-50 nation, yet with 90-10 campuses. I assure you, the classroom discussions at my public high school in California's Central Valley were far more balanced than that. Now, this is not to say that campus liberals are vitriolic towards people like me (though it is not unheard of for stacks of The Stanford Review to be mysteriously found in trash bins). But in this type of environment, liberalism is not simply one of several competing worldviews, but is the nigh-untouchable orthodoxy.

The Stanford Review exists to combat this phenomenon. Since our founding in 1987, we have represented the conservative, libertarian, and moderate views that are too frequently ignored or dismissed on campus. We believe, as Phyllis Schlafly once put it, in "a choice, not an echo." And so if the marketplace of ideas is to truly reign supreme on the Stanford campus, it is our job to make sure the other half of the political spectrum is spoken for. We believe in expanding and enriching the campus dialogue, not resigning ourselves to an ideological vacuum.

I personally can testify to the benefits of such a dialogue. You see, I was not always a Republican.

Growing up, I always considered myself a conservative Democrat—staunchly pro-life and hawkish, to be sure, but with a firm faith in the munificent power of the welfare state and the inevitable success of good intentions. But by the time I was an upperclassman in high school, I started examining what the other side had to say. I began reading authors like Whittaker Chambers and Dinesh D'Souza; I put down the New York Times and picked up the National Review; I complemented Al Franken with Ann Coulter. And as I did this, I began to reconsider deep-seated beliefs like, 'of course Hispanics are supposed to vote for Democrats,' or 'Republicans are for the rich; Democrats are for the people.' And here I am now—the former President of the Stanford College Republicans and the current Editor-in-Chief of The Stanford Review.

During my tenure as Editor-in-Chief, I pledge that The Stanford Review will continue to exhibit the same intelligent discourse and respectful conduct it has for over two decades. From campus news and world events to investigative stories and op-eds, we will feature an array of formats offering a range of viewpoints—all unified by their rational, logical approach and high degree of professionalism.

And now I have a request for you. The next time you see a copy of The Stanford Review lying around, pick it up. See what the other side has to say. You can love us or hate us; you can share in our victories or rejoice in our defeats. But whatever you choose to do, at least understand why we fight, and try to keep an open mind. You might even learn something.

Best,
Carl