

vol132/issue33/editorials/lead1

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[News](#) | [Features](#) | [Editorials](#) | [A&E](#) | [Sports](#) | [Postscript](#) | [Supplement](#)


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You Are Here: [Journal Home](#) >> [Editorials](#) >> [Signed Editorial](#)

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## A challenge for change

**SIGNED EDITORIAL** - By Ian Babbitt


I sat in the front row when former AMS President Greg Frankson spoke Tuesday night to a small but involved crowd about race, diversity and his experience at Queen's.

I intended initially to stay for 10 or 20 minutes, listen to Frankson give his introduction, take a dozen pictures and then trot on over to Stauffer Library to study for my Thursday midterm. I ended up leaving two and a half hours later, not trotting over to Stauffer Library, not ever really studying for my midterm.

Frankson's introduction was not something one could just walk out of. Frankson, now a spoken-word artist whose stage name is Ritalin: The Cerebral Stimulant, and also a civil servant for the government, started his presentation by performing one of his poems evoking images of the oppression and perseverance of black people around the world.

His sincere, emotional, dramatic and nearly flawless delivery convinced me I had to stay and hear what he had to say.

To clarify, I am a photographer, and I end up going to many events, speakers, sports games, plays and concerts with the intent of staying only long enough to get a photo for this paper. It is a rare occasion that someone, in the first minute of their speech, can convince me to stay and listen, especially in a week saturated with midterms.

This made me think. After listening to Frankson's presentation for two and a half hours and then also contently sitting through his interview with the Journal, I thought about why I condemned myself to certain failure of my midterm, why a speech centering around, and mainly directed to, racial minorities convinced me—a white male from Maine—to stay.

I like to believe I am not a racist just because I am a white male with almost complete European heritage. I certainly have no racist intentions and I would never judge anyone just because they belong to a racial minority. At the same time, however, I am also not part of any anti-racist groups.

The Campaign for Ethnic and Racial Diversity is something I support, but have not actively done anything for.

I see tables in Mac-Corry nearly daily for ethnic-based student groups, but cannot recall a moment where I have donated my money or time to them. Does this make me indirectly or subconsciously racist because I am not doing anything to fight it?

When I asked Frankson what he thought was the most important social or racial issue at Queen's he said it was communication between different racial groups. While the cultural diversity at Queen's


is small, it is growing.

People are talking about race and racism, but it seems, according to Frankson, that the different groups are not talking to each other to actively change this community's face.

Frankson ended his presentation with another poem entitled "Challenge." The poem challenged people to bring about change. My challenge for the ethnic and racial groups on campus is to communicate with each other and to hopefully bring about change locally. My challenge for myself is to be a part of this change.

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