WHY IS EVERYONE TALKING ABOUT

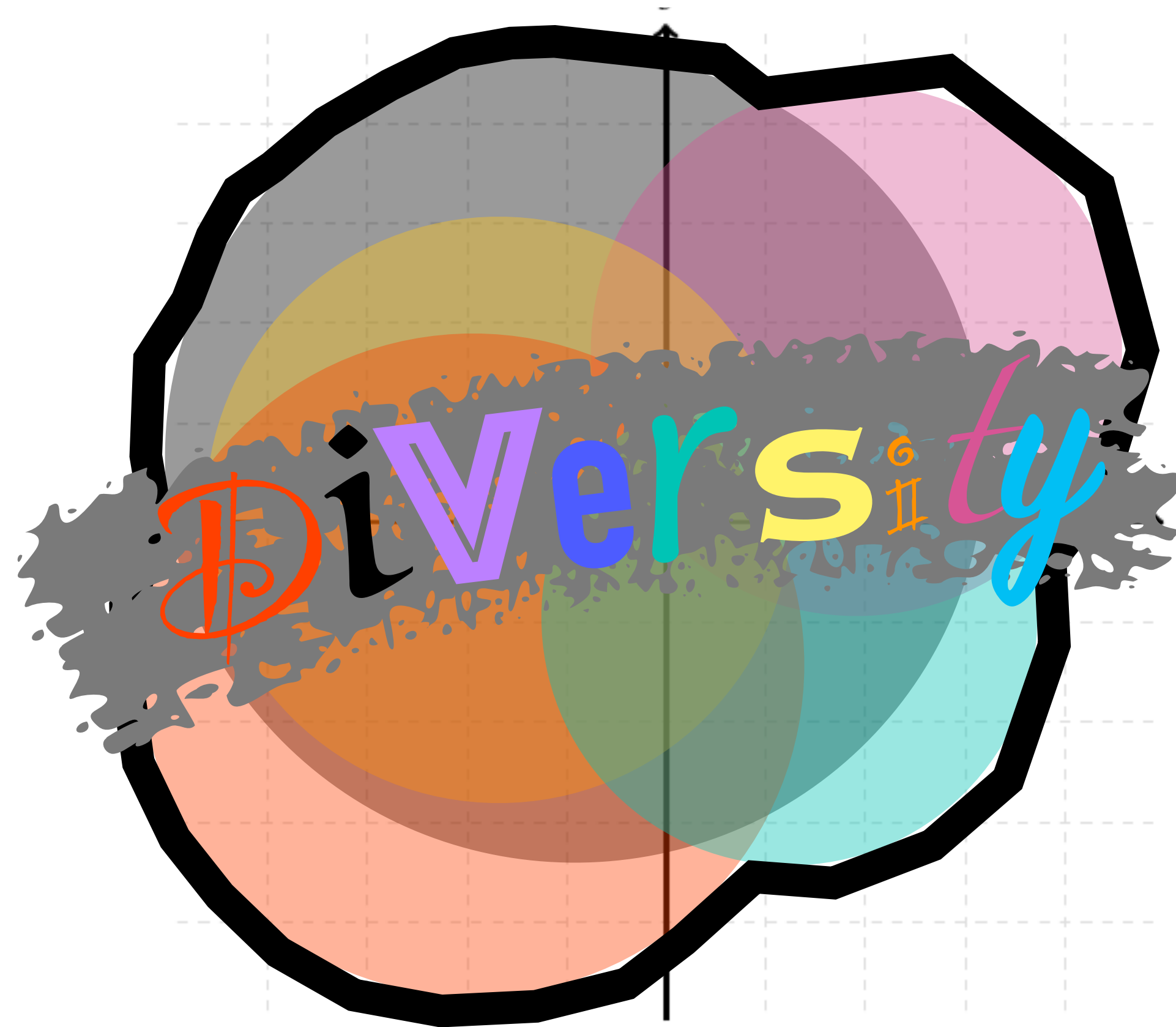University of Glasgow

TALK OUTLINE

- Reintroduce myself

- What is "Diversity"
  - Adopting Diversities
  - Modern Identity and Curating an identity

- Diversity in Higher education
  - Why is it important
  - Reimagining how people interact with Institutions via Diversity

- Creating Lasting Change
  - Outreach and Visibilty
  - Inreach and Stability

- The JMS scholarship - a view to what can be done?
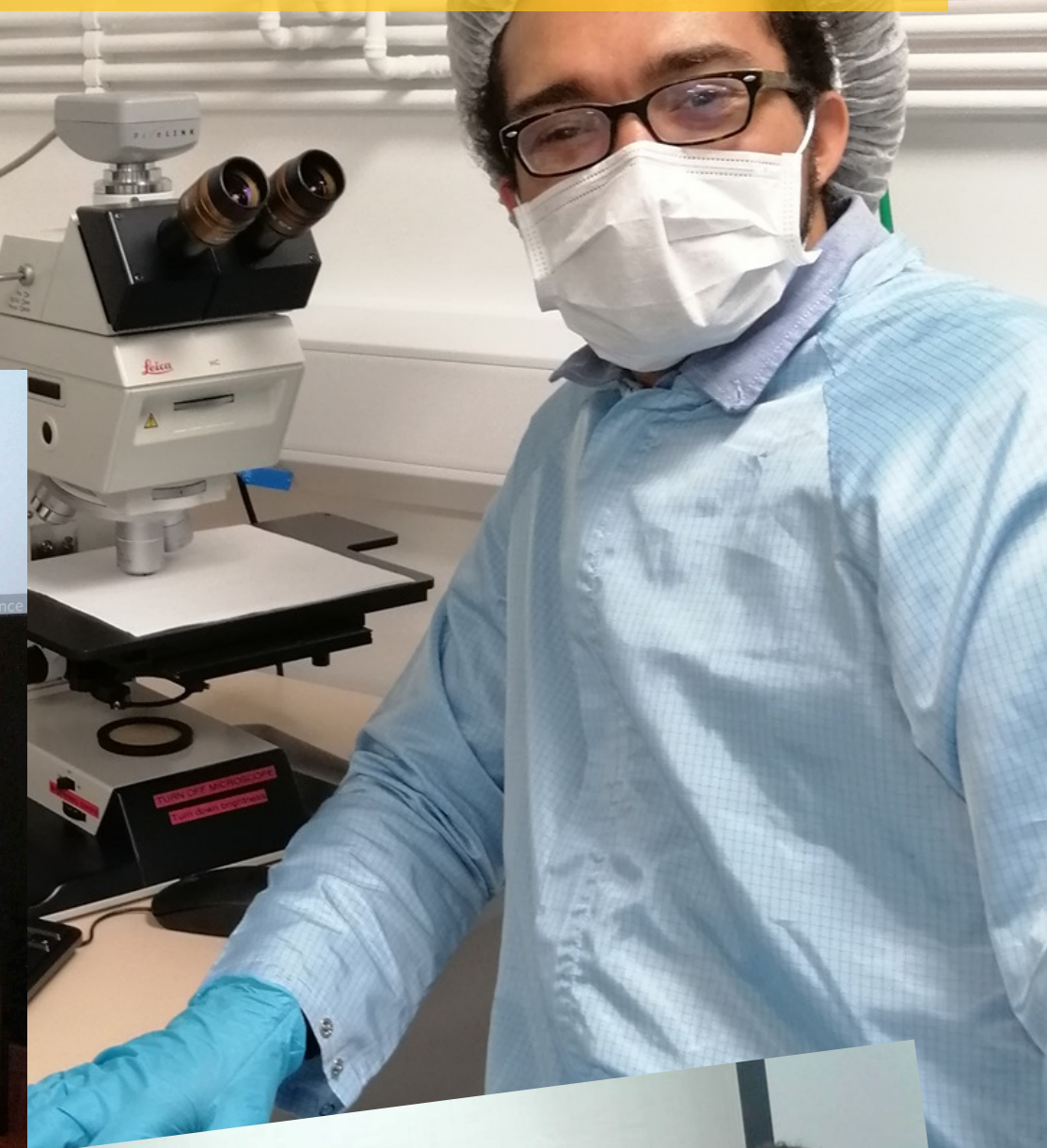
WHY AM I TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY?

I realise that I've been doing some sort of scientific outreach for most of my life.

I was at the STFC HEP Summer school 8 years ago.

A lot of you in this room, are about to be (if you aren't already) experts in your field. Forewarned is forearmed.

I want to use my Higher Education experience as a lens to examine Diversity and it's importance.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DIVERSITY

Diversity is usually thought of as the inclusion of people from a range of different backgrounds and identities.
Social and ethnic backgrounds, race, gender, sexual orientation, variably abled etc…

I call this Personal Diversity.

Personally I think this a surface-level definition, and to explore what diversity should be, means and it's importance to higher education, I want to imagine that this is just but one type of diversity.

ONE SLIDE SUMMARY OF ME

- **This is just one way of looking at things, I'm setting the scene to encourage you to think about these things at a more fundamental level**

- **Scientist**
  - Particle Physicist
  - Sustainability Researcher
- **Male**
- **Racialised as Black**
  - Mixed White and Black British
    - French and Jamaican Heritage
- **Extroverted**
- **British (especially when abroad)**
  - English (only when I'm in the UK)
  - Scottish?
  - European??
- **Working Class ➡ Middle Class**
- **"Neuroatypical?" (As opposed to Neurodivergent)**
- **Queer**
  - Prefer not to say?

More obvious to less obvious?

Could every adjective you use to describe yourself conflate to an identity?

DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE - PERSONAL DIVERSITY

What kinds of people do you associate yourself with?

The backgrounds that people use to define themselves are forever changing. Categories often morph, expand and/or splinter.

What we consider race today (for example) is a recent thing, possibly only as recent as the Victorian era, and the sudden societal urge to categorise the natural world Angela Saini (Superior: Return of Race Science) notes that skin colour was solely dependent on geography: hot places had people with darker skins, but if those people moved to colder places their skin would get lighter in response.

I think personal diversity should be viewed as not what box you tick, but how you identify yourself - Identity really here is the key.

ACCEPTED, ASSUMED AND PRACTISED DIVERSITY

By widening the definition of diversity to be multifaceted (Diversity of People, Thought, Places, Spaces and Expression), we can investigate the types of diversity that occur at institutions already.

I will categorise them into three types. Those done by default and are not challenged (Accepted), those where a concerted effort is required (Practised), and those that are generally not prioritised (Assumed).

Accepted - Geographical, Expression*?
Practiced - Personal, Spacial
Assumed - Mental?

DIVERSITY OF PLACES - GEOGRAPHICAL DIVERSITY

Where do you go? – "Travel broadens the mind".

It's is accepted and it's assumed that every student will venture to some kind of space outside the university. Different physical spaces for:
- **Studies Abroad**
- **Collaborations with different Institutions**
- **Grant Funding Proposals**
- **Industry Placements**
- **Job-funded Research**
- **e.t.c**

DIVERSITY OF SPACES - SPACIAL DIVERSITY

What spaces are available for subsets of people?

Spacial diversity covers abstract spaces where groups of people come together. Its good practise to try and let people create their own groups according to their needs.
- Women-only spaces
- Transgender safe spaces
- Weekly Group Meetings
- Journal Clubs
- Sports teams
- Prayer Groups

Dr Francesca Sobande
Author and Senior Lecturer in Digital Media Studies at Cardiff

(interiority and exteriority)

Defining spaces w.r.t the structure of how they interact with those inside and outside said spaces.

DIVERSITY OF EXPRESSION - EXPRESSIVE DIVERSITY

How are you directed to share your ideas with others?

Different people are able to parse information in different ways, it's accepted that if you create work you should present it where you can, but the ways you do so are limited in respective fields. It's often assumed that anything else is a waste of time - outreach?

- **Posters**
- **Internal Presentations**
- **Conference Talks**
- **Papers**
- **Seminars**

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT - MENTAL DIVERSITY

What and whose ideas are accepted - what collaborations are formed?

Universities are assumed to be a place where thoughts can be expressed freely, that ideas can come from anywhere.

I disagree. I find myself often agreeing with many commentators that say that universities are echo chambers. Ideas come from the few and are accepted by the many. Often there are no real fora to meaningfully discuss ideas.

Ideas are tied to success, as only successes are rewarded.

HIERARCHY OF DIVERSITY?

Universities are places with different kind of diversities, they are not completely independent of one another so some are more fundamental than others.

Surprise, surprise it's about the people. Bring in the right people and the diversity looks after itself. How do you identify who are the right people?

Identity is currently fashionable, it's always been important but it seems more prevalent now more than ever? Why is that so?

HISTORY OF IDENTITY

Profilicity

Identity is communicated and broadcasted and then socially validated.

Post-modern era (today)

Authenticity

Build a sense of self from the pursuit of reality and reject socially imposed roles.

Modernity

Sincerity

Build a sense of self by committing to certain traditional social roles.

Pre-modern era

Critique: It's hard to separate yourself from the roles you define - rejecting socially imposed roles IS a socially imposed role - you can never be truly "authentic" [ONION]

Critique: As more choices are available sincere commitment to roles is conformity - be or become authentic [PEACH]

(societal roles for example being via family, profession, religion or marriage)

13

THE AGE OF PROFILICITY

Nicolas Lumen argued that we undergo what's known as Second-order observation - we don't look at issues directly, but judge how their adoption will be or is perceived by others.
Example: Judge a restaurant or hotel by other peoples reviews of it.

Expedited by the advent of social media - If other people will positively receive your stance, you are likely to take it. You have to experiment with different positions and gauge reactions, barter and trade favour to be accepted - A "marketplace" of desirability.

Too many to do at once, all the time, your online/public presence has snippets of yourself that should represent the whole - VIRTUE SIGNALS!!

With virtue signalling becoming essential to navigate social circles - experiences seen to be having approval for a mass audience translate to in marketplace desirability.

"Need to invest in the identity presented to the general peer" - Jared Bauer. Society is constant work. The aim of society/ individuals is to be educated and socially conscious => Inclusion in the group of those with profiles you deem to be desirable.

WHY IS DIVERSITY IMPORTANT AT UNIVERSITIES

1 An institution that's rigid and solid forms the basis of how research starts and therefore informs the research it can do, and the types of things it calls valid research.

2 Universities are themselves in the social marketplace of desirability, and as such are subject to these market forces. Universities have a pivotal role in shaping identity politics.

"Need to invest in the identity presented to the general peer" - Jared Bauer. If universities are to continue to try to appeal to people as a place of inclusive learning, it needs to be included in groups of institutions those with profiles you deem to be desirable -> Diverse profiles.

It needs to try schemes and advertise people to see if it's doing better. These things become VIRTUE SIGNALS!

Are these virtue signals representative of the university as a whole, or the direction it wants to go towards?

WHAT DOES DIVERSITY LOOK LIKE

We're physicists, of course we try to plot everything.

So imagine all the different types of diversity in the remit of the uni to be a collection of circles (read:shapes), and the grid to be every type of person.

Each circle is it's own variable.

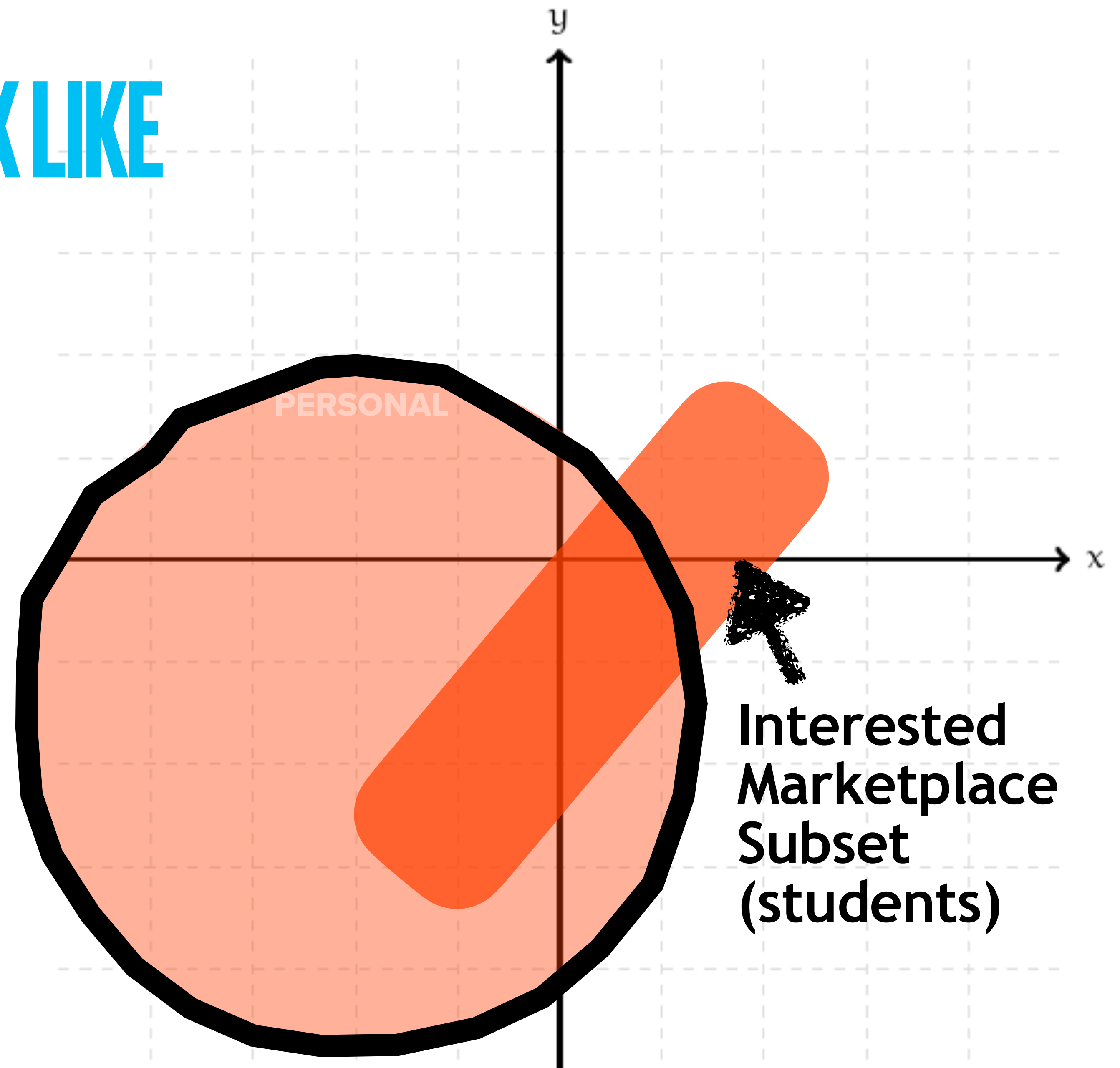

The University

The Marketplace

16
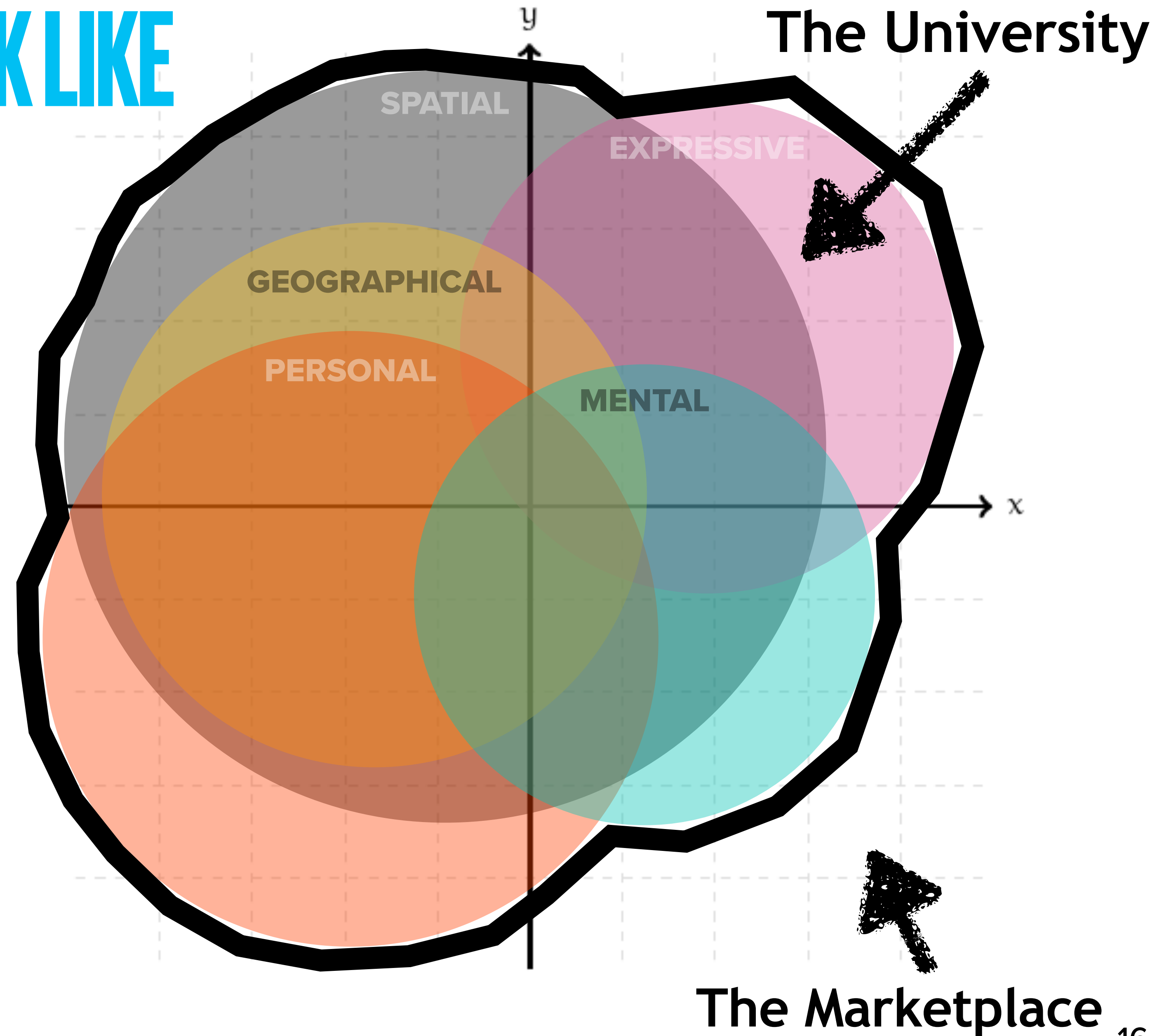
WHAT DOES DIVERSITY LOOK LIKE

Take Personal Diversity for example.

Does the shape the uni covers encompass it's target audience?

Will the people who want to join the university feel catered to by the tenets of the university?

PERSONAL

Interested Marketplace Subset (students)

GOOD DIVERSITY

Good diversity means that the methods and identities that are defined by applicants, staff are accepted in the university.

In this diagram it means that the target audience fits inside the perimeters of the university, for most if not all the types of diversity.

You can also imagine that an event hosted by the university carves out a portion of this space as well.
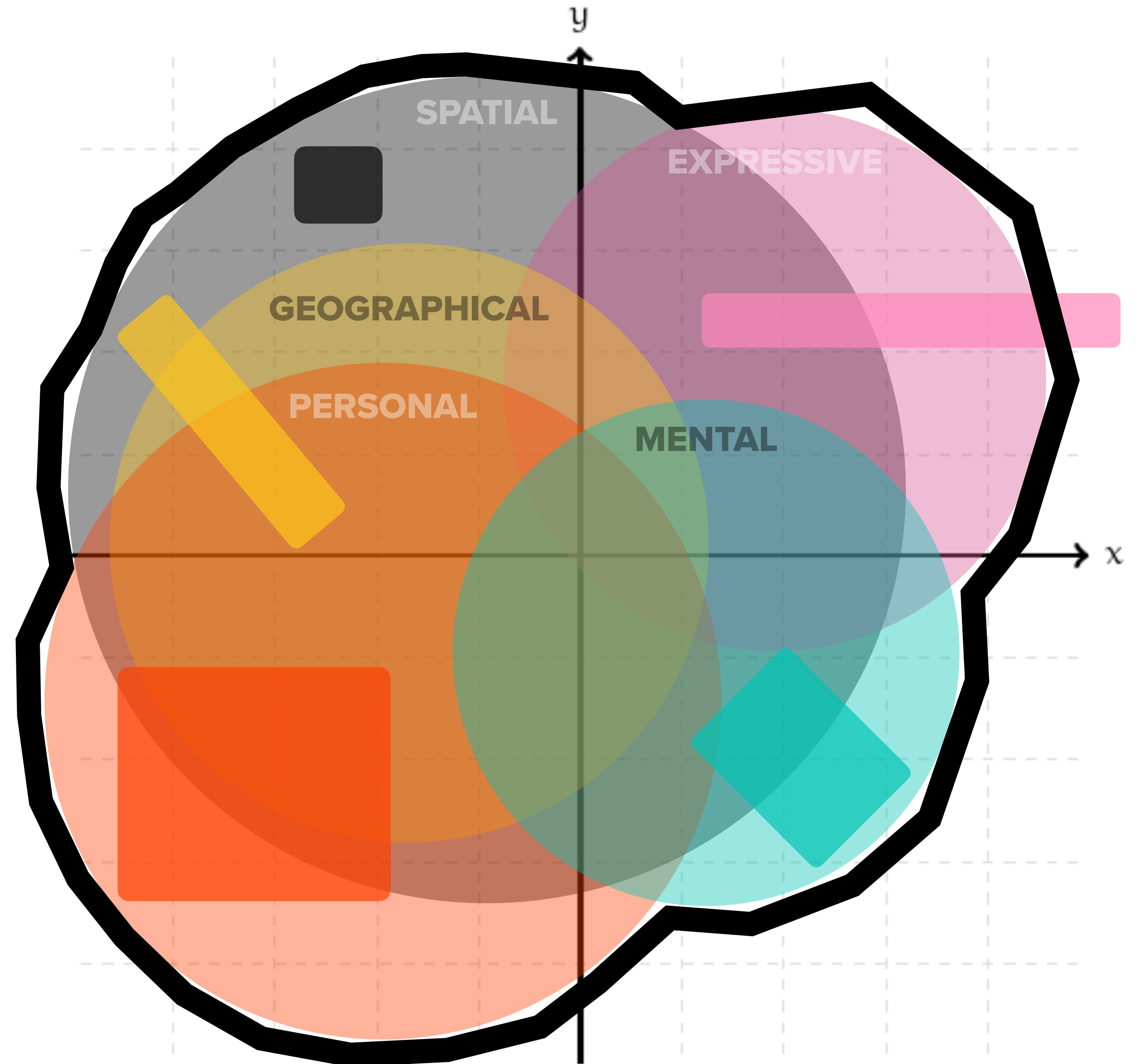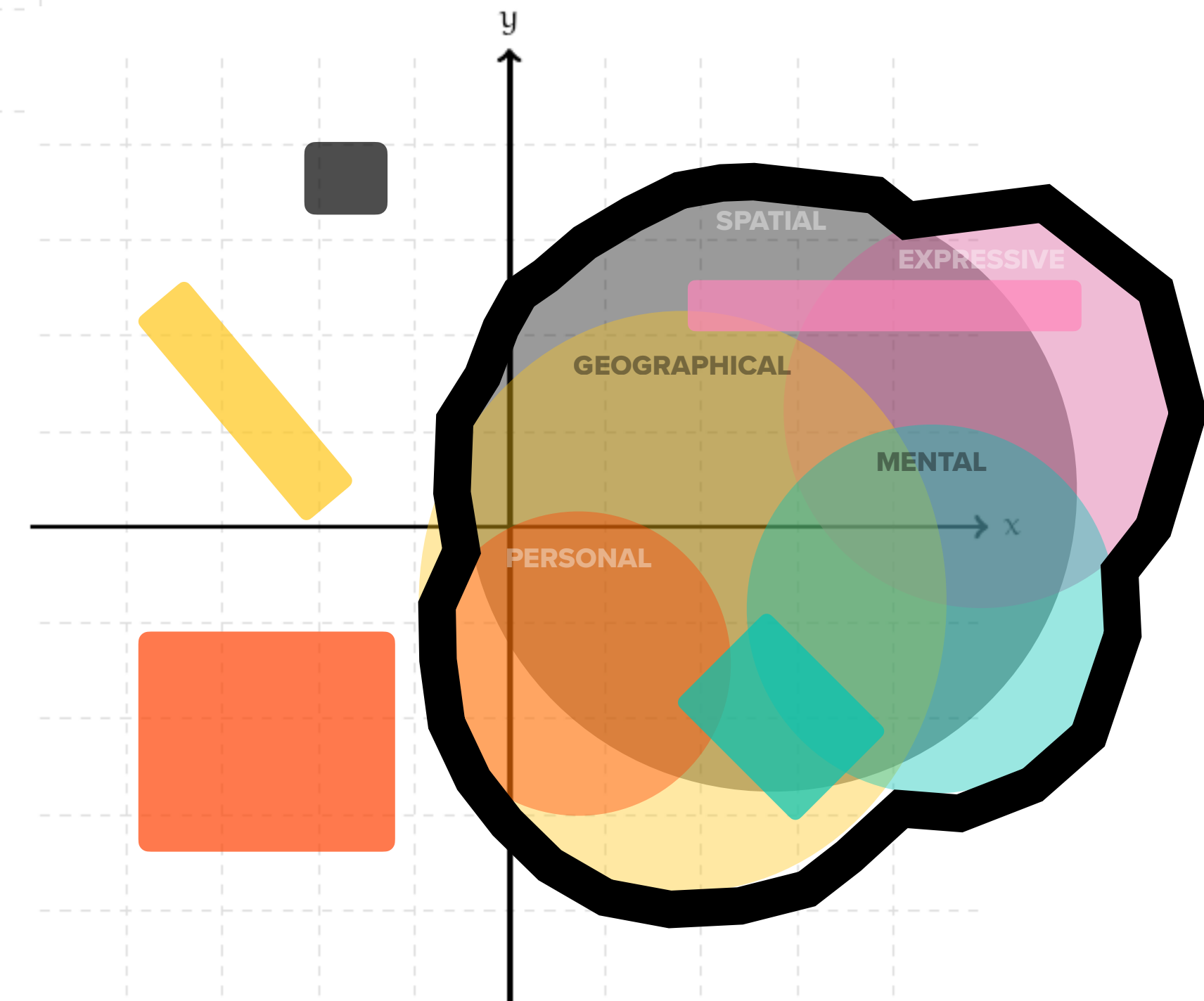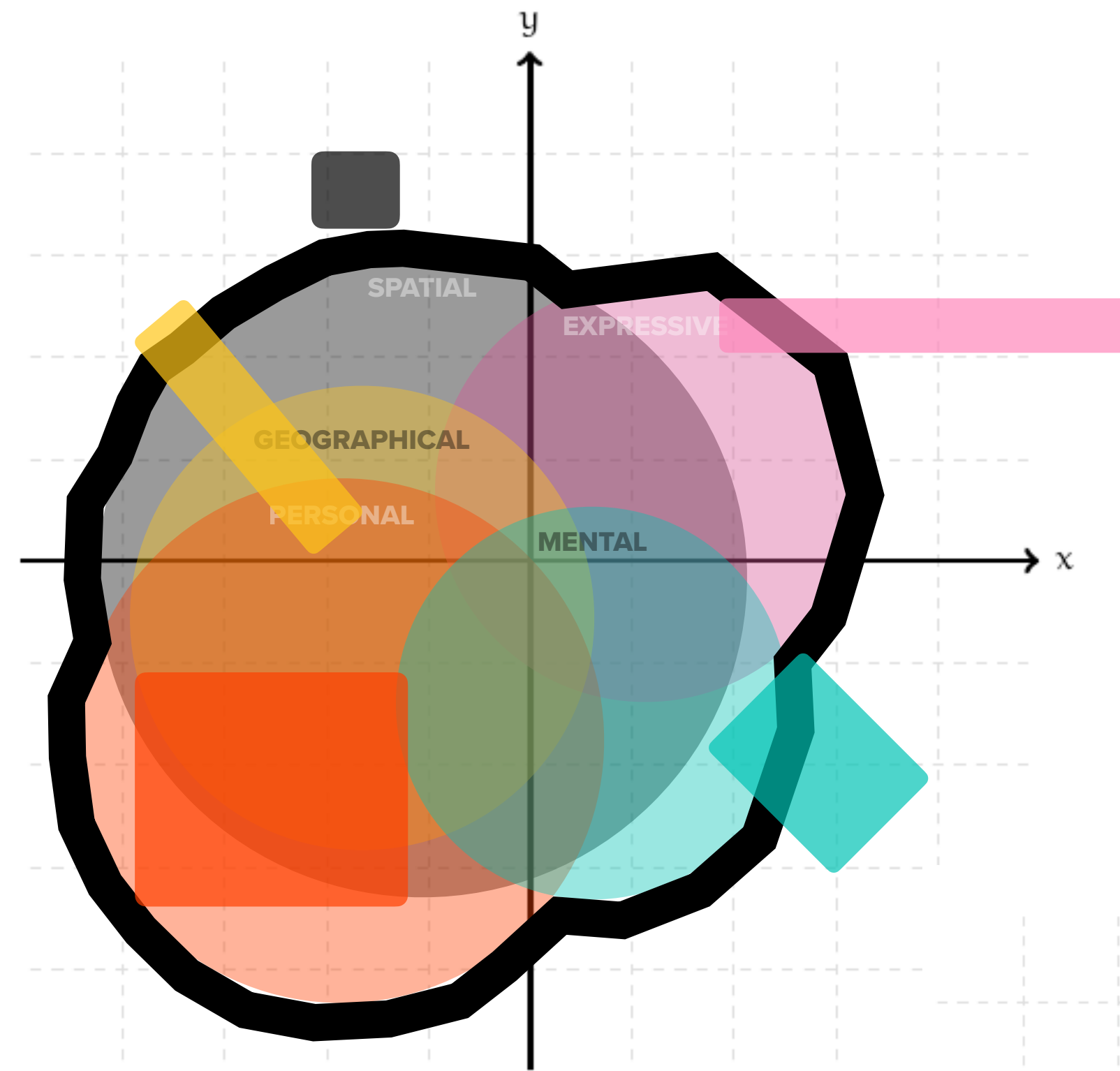
BAD DIVERSITY

Bad diversity can fail people by not only excluding them from your space, but also not giving them the space to be themselves and to succeed.

Institutions, generally, outlast those that formed and make it up, so are generally slow to change, and it's regulations can create a dogma that is rigid and inflexible that excludes viable candidates out of it's future roster.

But exclusion may not be the worst thing, - is it justified? Interiority of the university space is important as well.

EXPANDING HORIZONS!

Intersectionality! Think about increasing diversity as expending energy into changing the circles.

Innovative thinking/practices that are accepted expands the space the university occupies, making it more diverse.

A more diverse space can encourage (new) people to think in different ways, form new connections between spaces => innovation.

Some expansions will be temporary that is fine. Every new venture draws a new shape

Diversity can shift the circle and alienate those already inside

20
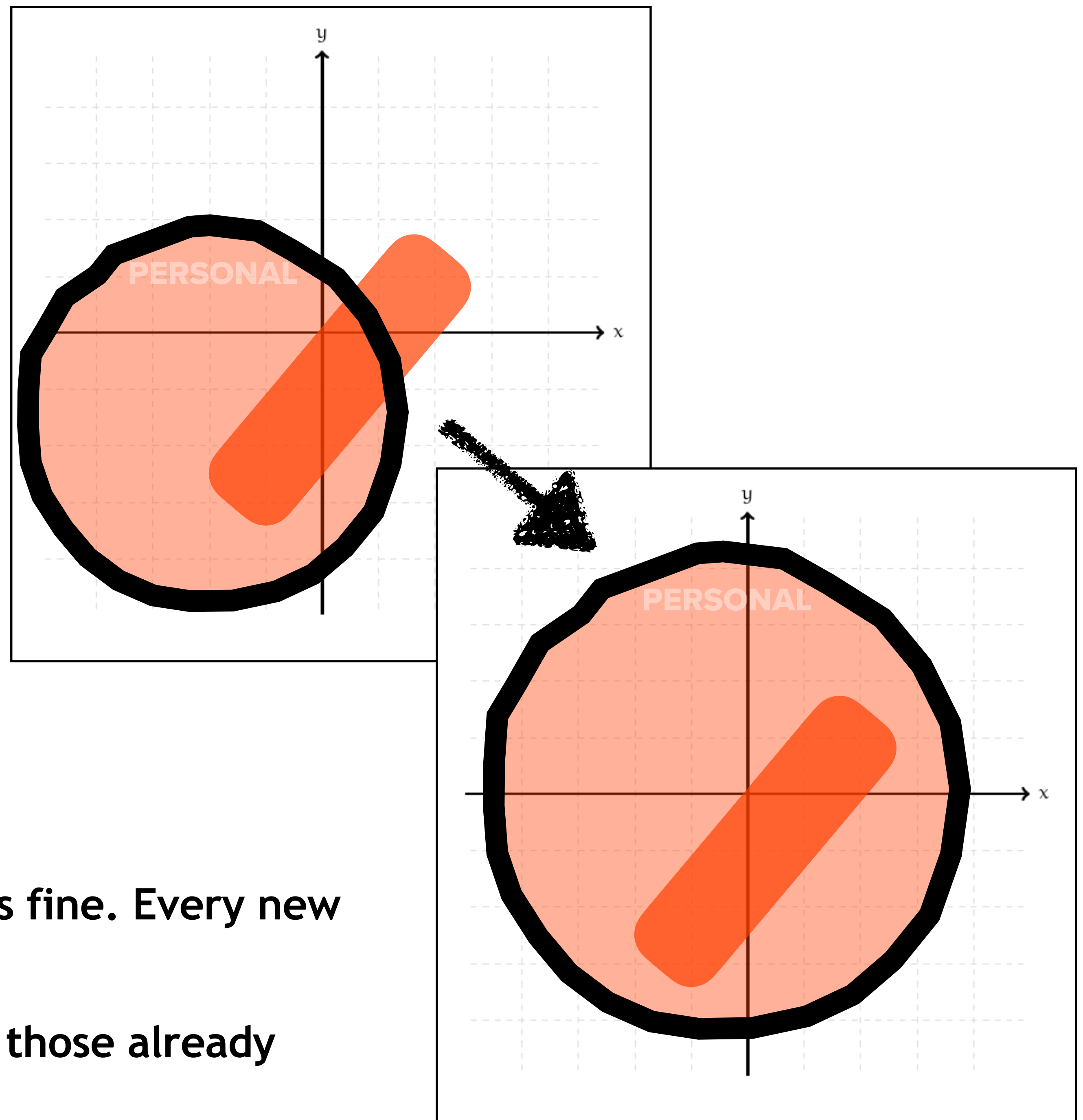
HOW CAN WE CREATE LASTING CHANGE?

People are required to push the university into adopting new ways of thinking, to hold it to account on it's promises.

Demographics, can and do change. People come and go. How can you ensure your community doesn't dissipate if a few key people (virtue signals) have moved on to different things?

Infrastructural diversity - I'm just creating terms now - Create and edit infrastructures that support the people that need to be supported. Ensure as much as the organisation vertically is involved. Form regulations that outlast the people.

DIVERSITY THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

EXTERIORITY	INTERIORITY

APPROACH

SUPPORT

PROMOTION

REGULATION

HOW YOU IDENTIFY AND INTRODUCE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

HOW YOU ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION ARE LOOKED AFTER

HOW YOU CHANGE THE MAKE UP OF THE ORGANISATION, AND INTEGRATE PEOPLE INTO THE INSTITUTION

CREATING AND ENFORCING RULES THAT DEFINE THE ORGANISATION AND ITS OPERATION

EASY ────────────────────────→ HARD

All 4 are important and are related, but the timescale of action for each of these is different.

22

DIVERSITY THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

OUTREACH	"INREACH"		
APPROACH	**SUPPORT**	**PROMOTION**	**REGULATION**
HOW YOU IDENTIFY AND INTRODUCE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE	HOW YOU ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION ARE LOOKED AFTER	HOW YOU CHANGE THE MAKE UP OF THE ORGANISATION, AND INTEGRATE PEOPLE INTO THE INSTITUTION	CREATING AND ENFORCING RULES THAT DEFINE THE ORGANISATION AND ITS OPERATION

EASY ———————————————————————→ HARD

If you want diversity where you don't have it, you need to change your approach.

CHANGING THE APPROACH - EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

WHO - What people represent your body to a wider audience?

WHEN - At what stage do you approach people?

WHERE - Where do you showcase what you offer?

WHAT - How do you inspire them?

OUTREACH
APPROACH
HOW YOU IDENTIFY AND INTRODUCE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

24

WHAT IS OUTREACH (IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT)

I would say outreach is defined as introducing a career or way of life to any group of people that might not otherwise have knowledge of, or access to that way of life. The ultimate goal being to find people that will follow this career/way of life in the future.

A key component of outreach is that the group providing it is not rigid, but flexible; in other words, it involves identifying the background and situation a group is in, alternating your message according to those situations, and meeting those people in the location best suited to that message.

Outreach is the first line of "attack" in the way you shape an organisation.

OUTREACH AND VISIBILITY

People are inspired by those around them, one of the best ways that people feel connected to a community is to that they feel they belong there.

More than saying or doing anything, you can fundamentally communicate this feeling of belonging by simply being.

If you think you come from an underrepresented group especially, and you think that you would have benefitted from seeing someone like you doing what you do now, then good news, you are that person.

VISIBILITY AND YOU

There are general events not really aimed at everyone, but other outreach activities can stoke larger interest in these from those in minority groups.

If you want things to change, then it's no good sitting around waiting for someone else to do it.

Be the change that you want to see!

INVISIBILITY

There are some parts of yourself that you don't want visible in certain contexts.

Part of diversity is tolerance and safety. Some people will become visible if they feel safe to do so.

Visibility isn't just about being seen, it's about accessibility and openness. You don't have to be the face to get involved. There are plenty of needs for event facilitators, website designers, tech specialists, grant applications that play an important role in the facilitation of outreach without the spotlight.

Being visible exerts some pressure, and some people are not ready for that, and those people also interact with the system.

"INFRASTRUCTURAL" DIVERSITY

OUTREACH	"INREACH"		
APPROACH	**SUPPORT**	**PROMOTION**	**REGULATION**
HOW YOU IDENTIFY AND INTRODUCE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO TO YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE	HOW YOU ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION ARE LOOKED AFTER	HOW YOU CHANGE THE MAKE UP OF THE ORGANISATION, AND INTEGRATE PEOPLE INTO THE INSTITUTION	CREATING AND ENFORCING RULES THAT DEFINE THE ORGANISATION AND ITS OPERATION

In-reaching diversity is hard, takes longer to organise, and is not freely able to be joined by disjointed labour. Moving a circle from the inside is hard.

Do we draw a new shape outside the old one?

JAMES MCCUNE SMITH (JMS) PHD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**More information can be found at** https://www.gla.ac.uk/scholarships/mccune-smith/

At Glasgow university it was identified from demographic data taken in 2017 and 2019 that there was a chronic lack of UK-domiciled black students taking study at PhD level.

The JMS scheme was created to promote UK-domiciled Black students to undertake PhD-level study. The project was in the works from 2019.

The university's Understanding Racism, Transforming University Cultures Report - 2021 (https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/humanresources/equalitydiversity/understandingracism) and subsequent action plan demonstrate the imperative of taking decisive action to ensure equality and racial justice for all. The JMS scholarship represents efforts to take precisely that decisive action.

The reports gave the scheme the political capital it needed to get the support it needs to launch in 2021 (fashionable) and stay swimming.

THE JMS SCHEME - THE BLUEPRINT FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION?

JMS?

SPATIAL

EXPRESSIVE

GEOGRAPHICAL

PERSONAL

MENTAL
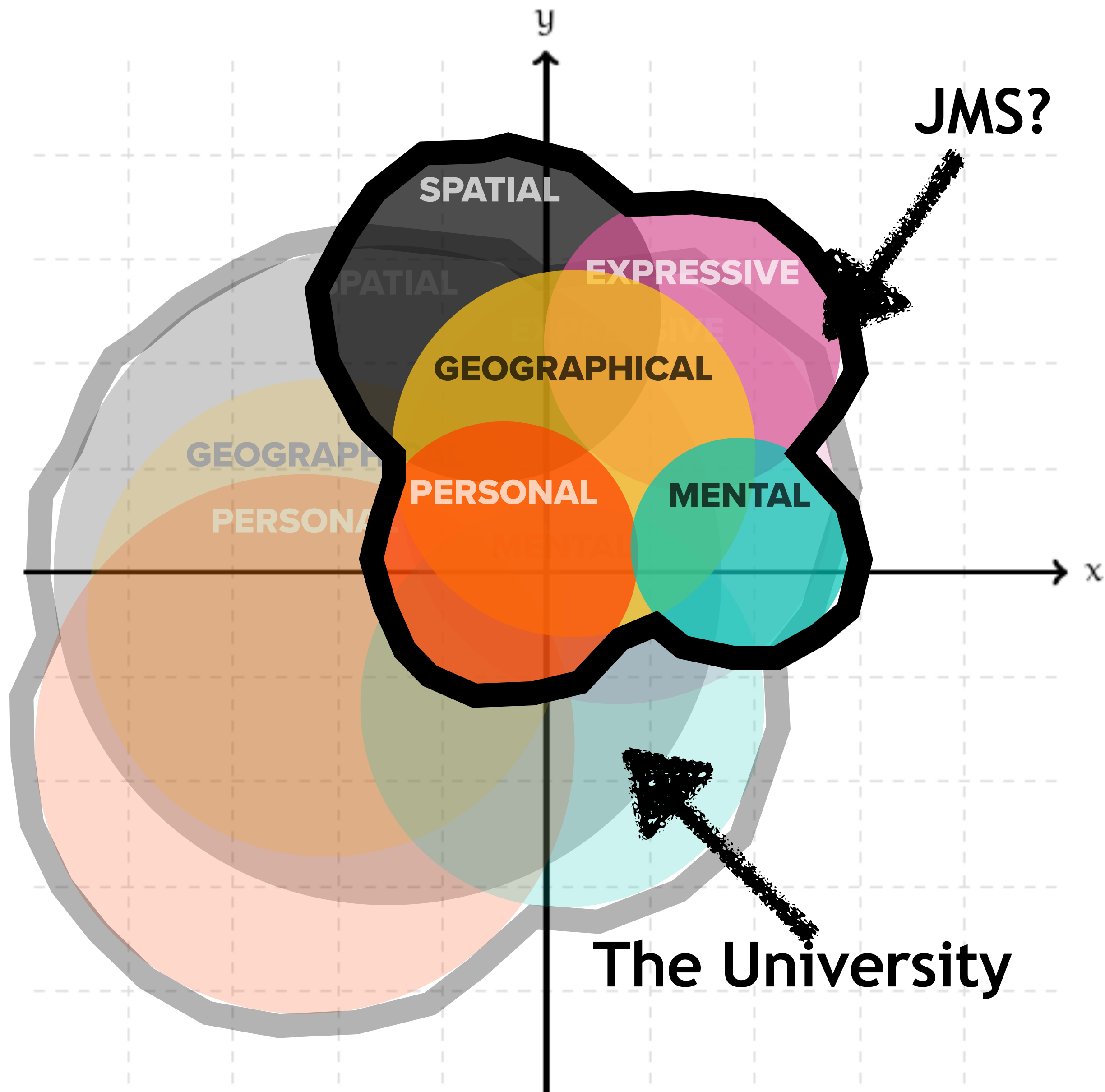
The University

It is given support and funding from the university, but given enough autonomy to expand it's horizons outwith the university

A new shape, but both inside and outside the old one. Closely backed by members of senior management, but also works closely with stakeholders in little to no relation to the university.

JAMES MCCUNE SMITH (JMS) PHD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The JMS scheme has currently finished recruiting it's third cohort of students and now stand at 51 scholars across a variety of disciplines all the colleges at the university.

In addition to the PhD stipend the JMS programme has
- Mentorship outside academia 🟥🟩
- A training Grant (~3k pa) ⬛🟪
- Community-driven events ⬛🟨
- Six-month placements 🟨
- The JMS Network 🟥
- Student-run JMS Annual Conferences 🟪🟩

SPATIAL

EXPRESSIVE

GEOGRAPHICAL

PERSONAL

MENTAL
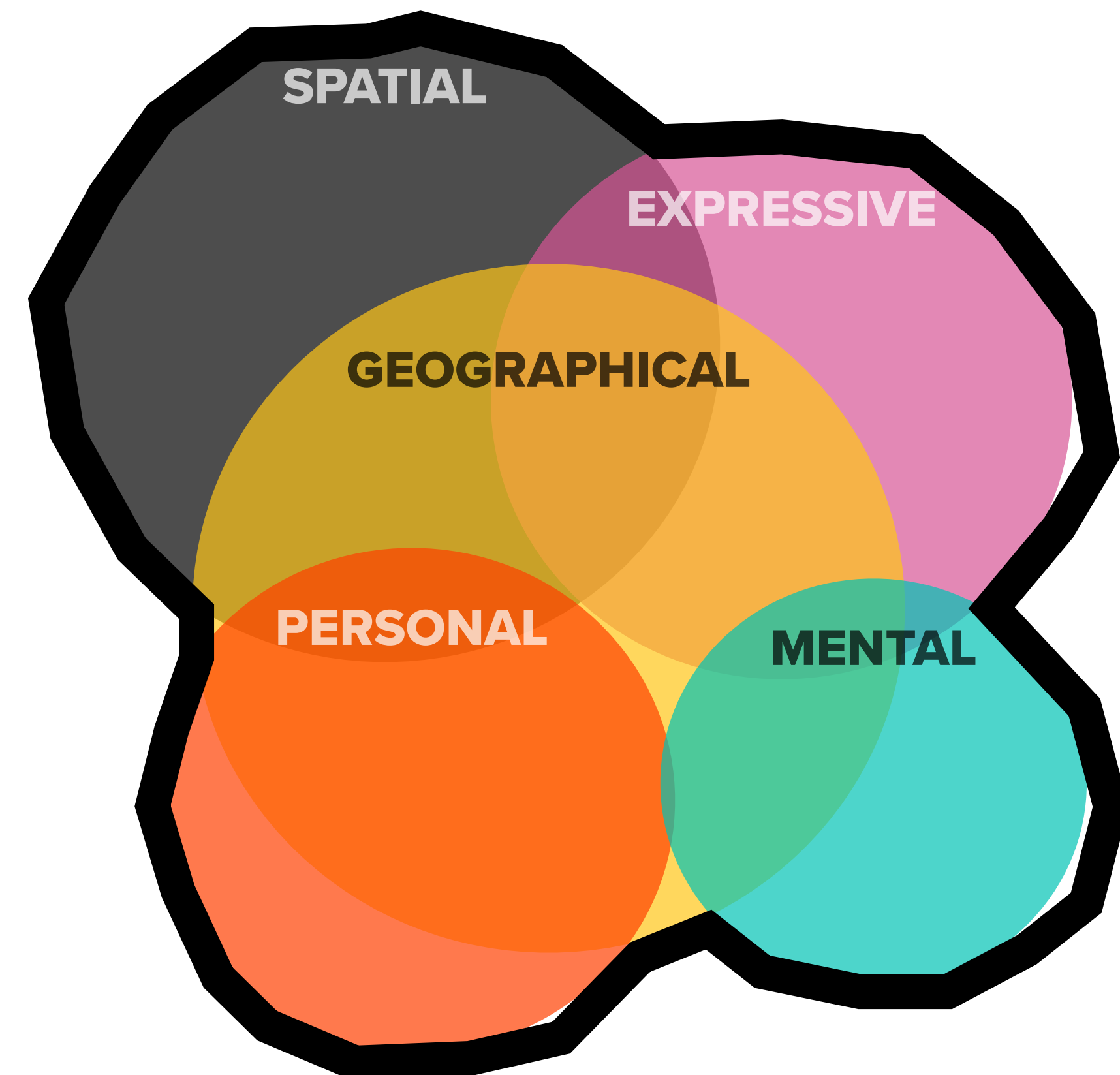
JAMES MCCUNE SMITH (JMS) PHD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

REPHRASING THE SOLUTION

Diversity is complicated, and oftentimes it's only thought of one-dimensionally when in reality several types of diversity have to change at the same time in order to enact lasting and meaningful change.

Takes many types of people to do this

SPATIAL

EXPRESSIVE

GEOGRAPHICAL

PERSONAL

MENTAL
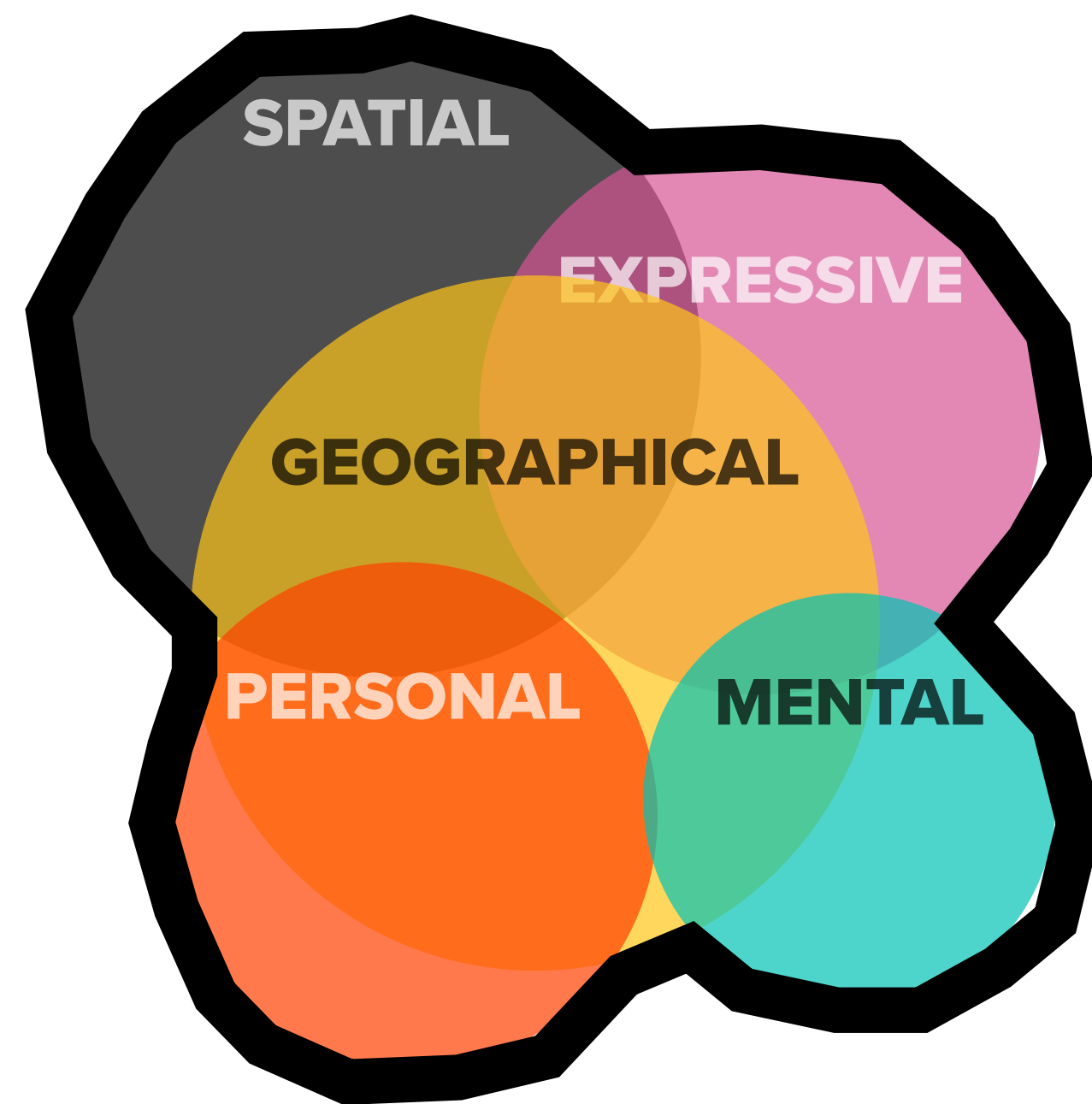
Shifters - move the circles
Drawers - draw circles (create events)
Connectors - create bridges between shapes
Expanders - make Circles wider

Takes many types of people to do this working in tandem.

34

CONCLUSION 1/2

Universities realise that they do not fit in with modern modes of thinking about identity. Accountability and Reflectiveness is in fashion - a part of so-called "woke" culture, so now is the best time to work with universities to enact change.

Diversity is not just a tool to change the face of the university (or any institution), or to appease some mob of "others", it's fundamental to it's survival as an institution in this post-modern era of identity.

Institutions can be slow to change, and even if you feel like the actions of one person are not important or not impactful. I'm here to tell you that you are wrong. If you are visible and passionate then you can make positive change.

The problem of diversity is hard, and to overturn centuries of indentures tradition will take time, money, personpower….

CONCLUSION 2/2

…outreach is a start but only one strand of the tapestry of academia, it's important that in addition to this we try to enact change on an internal level as well. You personally, yes you! Can be the change that is needed.

If you want your institution to survive into the future, it will need to be ready to embrace the workforce of the future, and it is becoming increasingly reflective and aware of bad practices/discrimination.

Broaden your horizons and diversity often looks after itself. Widen your mind to what is possible and you will be more inclusive.

Work to understand the barriers to entry and work to either dismantle them or help people overcome them.