Screen shows white background with orange and black OSU-OKC and Diversi-FIVE logos. Two lines of black text below the logos read, “Student Portrait: Tamala Young.” Small video camera view of Emily and Tamala in the upper right-hand corner of the screen with each having their own video camera window stacked vertically on top of each other. White background is present throughout the video.

**EMILY:** Hey everyone this is Emily from OSU-OKC's Disability Services and Diversity Office. Welcome to our Diversi-FIVE Portraits series where we get to meet people from our vibrant campus community, to hear their story and learn what inspires them in five minutes or less. Today we've got one of our wonderful students with us, Tamala Young. Tamala, thank you for being here with us today.

**TAMALA:** You're welcome Emily.

**EMILY:** So tell us about yourself.

**TAMALA:** Well Emily, I'm a 52 year-old single mother of one son and grandmother of one granddaughter. And I worked, had a great career in child care, about 10 years of that. And then after that I went into corporate America and had a great career there. Then I lost my sight and didn't know what I was going to do with my life. Unfortunately I didn't have a lot of experience doing anything else but those two things. I didn't go to college out of high school because I didn't feel like I fit the mold of a college student and that just wasn't something that was instilled in me. I'm a first-generation college student. I grew up in low income apartments and a child of poverty. So I thought I had to go to work right after high school. And as a matter of fact I worked, I worked part time in the same position and went full time when I graduated high school. So I just felt like that's what I had to do, so part of me felt like I didn't have a choice. Part of me felt like I didn't fit in as a college student.

**EMILY:** And what inspires you?

**TAMALA:** Just the fact that throughout my life I've always had to push myself to do things and I've always had this "not to be defeated" attitude and to be honest, after I lost my sight I felt defeated. I lost my sight in 2009 and it was very difficult becoming disabled as an adult and losing one of your senses as an adult was so hard for me and I didn't know what I was going to do with my life. But again, just having the attitude that I always had in the past and that being different now was hard for me to live with. And then I have a two year-old granddaughter who I want to be a good role model for, so again I decided I've gotta push myself and come out of my little comfort zone of doing nothing, and it really wasn't comfortable because that's not what I was accustomed to. I've always been a hard worker. So I decided to figure out what to do with my life and thought school would help me do that. And going to school, it was a big step, it was scary. To be honest I wasn't really inspired, I didn't feel inspired at first, I just was going to school just because it was something to do. But going there and meeting the people that I've met at OSU, the students, the staff, the faculty, everybody has helped me to know that I can do it because they've told me I can do it. They've shown me I can do it. They pushed me and they expect me to do it. So that's my inspiration.

**EMILY:** That's awesome. So last but not least, how do you shape the culture of diversity and inclusion at OSU-OKC?

**TAMALA**: Well, being somebody who used pencil and paper in high school and not technology because it was so long ago, I'm not 18 years old, I am fifty-three. I'm a grandmother. I'm gray-haired. I don't think I look like the average college student. I think if somebody saw me just out in public they wouldn't look at me and point and say, "that there's a college student." If I had on a college an OSU t-shirt they probably would think it belonged to my child. But that doesn't matter at OSU. Everybody's included. I'm included. I feel like everybody has accepted me. Acceptance is inclusion. And so although I'm different, I am included. So I think I am one of the most pictures of diversity that OSU could probably have, but it doesn't stop anybody, it doesn't turn anybody away from me. In fact, I've been embraced by everybody there. So it helps me to know that I belong there. I'm a Poke. Go Pokes!

**EMILY**: Tamala, we love your strength and we love your confidence. And most of all we love having you as a student here.

(Screen changes and multiple lines of text read,“Want to be one of our Diversi-FIVE Portraits? Let’s Connect! Emily Cheng, Director of Disability Services and Diversity, Student Center, Room 136. (405) 945-3385. [emily.cheng@okstate.edu](mailto:emily.cheng@okstate.edu).” The word “Diversi-FIVE” is displayed as the same orange and black Diversi-FIVE logo.)

Okay everyone, here's the power question. Would you like to be one of our Diversi-FIVE Portraits? Let's connect. Reach out to me, we would love to hear from you. Until next time, be well.