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The attainment and experience of our LBU BAME students - what do colleagues and student perspectives tell us? (and what can we do about it?....)

NUCCAT
10.5.19
Professor Susan Smith, Leeds Beckett University
Proportion of BAME to Home Students

- 2015-16: BAME 17.1%, Home 77.6%
- 2016-17: BAME 17.4%, Home 77.7%
- 2017-18: BAME 18.1%, Home 77.2%

Differences:
- 59.1 difference (2017-18 vs 2015-16)
- 60.3 difference (2016-17 vs 2015-16)
- 60.5 difference (2017-18 vs 2016-17)
Student Attainment – Good Honours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>BAME%</th>
<th>White%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Differences:
- 2015-16 to 2016-17: 0.4 difference
- 2016-17 to 2017-18: 20.7 difference
- 2015-16 to 2017-18: 16.4 difference
Accommodation 2017-18

Breakdown is within accommodation type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LBU Maintained Property</th>
<th>Parental / Guardian Home</th>
<th>Own Residence</th>
<th>Other Rented Accommodation</th>
<th>Private Sector Halls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAME</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differential achievement – the bottom line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Firsts and 2.1s</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>BAME Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leeds Beckett University</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What prompted this project?

• BAME students arriving at the University with similar grades to white UK students leave with significant lower attainment

• Students from ethnic minority backgrounds obtain poorer degree results than white students even when controlling for prior attainment, age, gender and discipline (Broecke and Nicholls, 2008)
Key literature

• Greater levels of “cross-racial” interaction had positive effects on students’ openness to diversity, cognitive development and self confidence. (Chang et al, 2006).

• The importance of developing an inclusive curriculum supporting the retention and success of BME student cannot be understated. (Singh, 2011; Cotton et al 2010).
Approach

- Mixed methods: primarily qualitative,
- Review and critique of the literature identifying factors which impact on BME student achievement
- Analysis of activity audit, Race Equality Action Plan and Race Charter Mark data
- Analysis of achievement data and identification of 5 selected courses- (resit rates, living at home, retention rates, placement rates)
- Course document analysis
- Interview Course Directors and key others
- Semi structured student focus groups
- Action Plan
Emergent issues from review of course documentation

• Lack of clarity about assessment approaches. Lack of visibility of the inclusiveness element of the graduate attribute for global outlook
• Reading lists and resource lists
• Lack of explicit placement strategy- access, opportunity and diversity
• Lack of clarity over “sense of belonging”, expectations for all at first year, induction as transition etc.
Emergent issues from thematic analysis of interviews - (staff)

• Inclusive curricula- overly “white curricula”
  “let’s interrogate our curricula....” “dehumanises those left out....”
• Unconscious bias awareness
• The important role of induction as transition to learning @Level 4
• The proportion of BAME students on the course
• Opportunity to share values in a safe learning space – foster critical thinking to allow issues to be explored. The benefits of cross racial mixing.
• Facilitate integration, learning and social opportunities via the teaching and learning approach- collaborative learning
• Assessment: inclusive, formative, scaffolded
• Review anonymous marking
Emergent issues from thematic analysis of interviews - (students)

• Strongly influenced by family when choosing a degree programme
• Failure to distinguish between home BAME students and international students- making assumptions on the basis of appearance and name
• Inclusive assessment- formative assessment
• A curriculum that values the diverse backgrounds of students
• The critical mass and the student voice
• Placement opportunities for BAME students
• Feeling of marginalisation and lack of confidence- induction/social life
• Collaborative learning - group work
• Different help- seeking behaviours
• Anonymous marking where possible
Early priorities for action

• Integrated into Race Charter Action Plan
• The student voice
• Generating a curriculum working group
• Inclusive assessment working group
• Why is my curriculum white? (work with SU)
• Maximising placement opportunities for BAME students
• Establish unconscious bias training for staff
The future

- Practice sharing and dissemination
- BAME students success stories - especially the student experience, the curriculum, employment and placements. A black/ BAME student guide.
- Peer to peer support, buddying
- Working with the students to inform curricular change
- Explore progression to post graduate study
- Work with schools to facilitate better teacher understanding of black pupils’ academic self concept is developed
From our Alterline project....

• We need to be more skilled and systematic in coping with incidences of racism
• All students should be encouraged to make the university aware of caring and working responsibilities
• Look to the city “X is a city where everyone is welcome...”
• Schemes for PG study/ networks for black and BAME students? – pan University
• Review the recruitment of black staff
What might you do? Curriculum

• Help course teams interrogate their course data and their reading and resource lists
• Think about more inclusive course design - use different contexts for case studies
• Safe environments to ask questions - online?
• Encourage all students to seek support - design frequent, early, formative assessment opportunities
• Think about a more inclusive first year experience? Induction as transition for all to encourage early mixing and social integration
• How do you allocate groups and work in student groups? Think about if self selection is a good idea
• How are your colleagues enhancing a sense of belonging?
What might you do? Infrastructure

- Provide clear information and advice at application stage to ensure expectations are clear
- Pre approval mandatory checklist for inclusive practice
- Facilitate an easier course transfer process
- Find BAME student success stories for recruitment material
- BAME student ambassadors in courses (SU)
- Review products on offer in student shops
- Think about anonymous marking...
- Early embedded academic advisor meetings
- What about a “whiteness audit” by black students, of buildings and services in order to get a full picture?
- Make the black student attainment gap a KPI
- Signpost them to resources especially for academic integrity and plagiarism- skills self assessment
Commuting students: to do…

• Dwell space
• Timetabling for 1\textsuperscript{st} years and 3\textsuperscript{rd} years
• Storage
• Online resources
• Hand in of assessments
• Cultural capital/ alumni lectures/ events
• Group work
• Late comer expectations


