Academic Leaders Forum

Wednesday 25th May 2016
12.30-2.30
Cadman Conference Room

Understanding and Addressing Black and Minority Ethnic Attainment in HE

Presenter: Dr Gurnam Singh. Principal Lecturer in Social Work, Coventry University and Visiting Professor of Social Work at Chester University

Format: Mixture of interactive presentations and small group discussion

If you are interested in attending, please contact Ellen Lockett (e.lockett@staffs.ac.uk) ext. 4127
What this session will cover: From being a relatively marginal issue 20 years ago, mirroring the expansion and diversification of HE issue of race and racism has come to occupy centre stage. Over the past decade there have been a number of reliable studies highlighting racial disparities in relation to student attainment, eurocentric pedagogical practices, and underrepresentation of BME staff in leadership roles. In terms of degree attainment, students from BME groups are significantly (between 15-25%) less likely to achieve a ‘good degree’ (1st or 2:1). In relation to staff all the evidence suggests that BME groups are underrepresented at senior levels, over-represented in the lower pay ranks and they report ongoing experiences of discrimination, bullying and exclusion. Recent research by the University and College Union (UCU) identified, for example, that 90% of BME staff reported facing barriers to promotion. This research also highlighted that out of 159 Higher Education Institutions in the UK, there are just three black Vice Chancellors (https://www.ucu.org.uk/action-against-workplace-racism). Against this backdrop, this workshop seeks to engage in a critical examination the issue of disparities BME attainment and potential strategies for addressing these.

Brief background about the presenter: Gurnam has considerable experience in higher educational teaching, research and development and he has an international reputation for his work on equality and diversity in higher education; he is currently part of a 'Social Mobility Academic Reference Group' which has been established by the Government to advise on the proposed changes to higher education identified in the Green Paper, following on from the Prime Minister’s 2020 goals to diversify HE. Prior to entering academia in 1993, he worked as a professional social worker and community activist. He completed his PhD from the University of Warwick in 2004 on anti-racist social work. In 2009 in recognition of his contribution to Higher Education he was awarded a prestigious National Teaching Fellowship from the UK Higher Education Academy. Over the past 20 years he has secured research projects in excess of £500,000 from bodies such as the Higher Education Academy, National Lottery and Leadership Foundation for HE. He has presented over 100 papers at national and international conferences, many as an invited keynote speaker. He also has an extensive media profile.

A selection of Gurnam Singh’s recent publications:

Singh, G and Cowden, S (2016)Intellectuality, student attainment and the contemporary higher education system, in, G., Steventon, D.,Cureton and L., Clouder (eds), Student Attainment in Higher Education. Abington, Taylor & Francis/Routledge


