

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER**RACE EQUALITY GROUP**

A meeting of the Race Equality Group was held on 19 January 2004 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room A, Northcote House

PRESENT:	Paul Webley (DVC – School of Psychology) (Chair)	PW
	Sylvia Wakeham (Personnel & Staff Development) (EO Officer)	SW
	Helen Chapman (secretary)	HC
	Angelique Richardson (School of English)	AR
	Karl Woodgett (School of Classics, Ancient History & Theology)	KW
	Kate Piddington (Guild of Students)	KP
	Nick Birbeck (LaTiS)	NB
	Nick Givens (School of Education & Life Long Learning) (EO Representative)	NG
	Pirkko Markula (School of Sport & Health Sciences)	PM
	Linda Shand ((International Student Advisor)	LS
	Liz Murphy (Education Liaison Office)	LM
	Russell Hiscox (Deputy Domestic Services Manager)	RH
	Fiona Kugele (Academic Division)	FK

04.01 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Tony Simoes da Silva (School of English) and Nicky Hudson (Peninsula Medical School).

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming members back after the Christmas break and introduced three new members to the Group: Linda Shand, Liz Murphy and Russell Hiscox.

04.02 **Minutes of the last meeting – 6 October 2003**

After the addition of Fiona Kugele in attendance at the meeting, the Minutes of the last meeting of the REG dated 6 October 2003 were approved and signed by the Chair as a true copy.

Matters arising:

03.02 Additional Funding:

Avenues for additional funding were discussed. SW advised the Group of possible funding and implementing additional posts. There was nothing further to report.

03.03 Calendar:

PW informed the group that it had been agreed that the neutral term names, autumn, spring, summer would be introduced from the start of the next academic year.

03.05 Monitoring and Information:

Nick Wright is responsible for Widening Participation targets, data gathering and reporting. He referred to the 2003/04 entry report issued by the Schools for WP students. The report does not include BME students specifically as HEFCE do not identify BME students as a target group. NW pointed out that there was no reason why BME targets should not be included, however this would require some data collection changes in SITS.

With regard to support mechanisms for BME students, NW had nothing to report as the Schools Liaison Office is not involved with issues specially relating to supporting BME students.

The importance of providing support for under-represented BME and other under-represented groups of students is recognised as being key to the retention and success of students

It was **AGREED** that REG would wish to see BME targets and that there should be support for BME students.

04.03 **Report on Race Equality Conference (Angelique Richardson)**

AR attended the Race Equality Conference and made the following points:

- 1 She found the event personally useful particularly as she was probably the only academic present.
- 2 The conference helped to reinforce the point that race equality is a national concern across the sector.
- 3 Other institutions were working towards ensuring that equal opportunities should be all embracing and mainstreaming was emphasised throughout the day
- 4 A consultation process is currently underway to bring the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Disabilities Rights Commission under one equality group, one suggestion has been for this one government support group to be called "Human Rights Commission". SW will keep the group informed of further developments.

Ways to raise awareness of race equality were discussed and it was suggested that bringing in a guest speaker, such as a representative from the CRE to an event, run on similar lines to the marketing forum with invitations to staff/students outside the REG Group might attract additional interest. NG to confirm name of education related CRE member and SW to follow up this proposal.

04.04 **Nominations for Honorary Degrees**

The Chair advised the Group that in August of each year the Vice-Chancellor writes to members of Senate, Council Professorial staff and Principals of Marjon and St Loye's, requesting nominations for honorary graduates.

The Chair invited the Group to consider whether REG could nominate a suitable person from a Black or minority ethnic group, or someone who has contributed to the promotion of racial equality, but who will also meet the usual academic criteria to submit to the Honorary Degrees Committee. All members were asked to report back with suggestions at the next meeting together with supporting information as to why they should be nominated.

04.05 **Report on REG Work Programme**

The on-going Work Programme was tabled (REG/03/03) was discussed by the Group. The publicity leaflet on the Race Equality Policy has a revised date of end of February 2004 and the end of March for a report back on the Implications of legislation on Religion or belief in the workplace. SW reported back on the BME composition of the University committee members. The exercise has highlighted the need for accurate information, particularly on the members of Council. SW will report back at the next meeting. It was recognised that University needs to develop the relationships with BME groups in the local community of all its campuses and that all members of REG should consider and discuss with their colleagues ways in which this can be progressed. One suggestion is to take the opportunity to promote race equality in Black History Month in October. KW has agreed to report back with an outline plan for the next meeting.

Since the last meeting of REG a working group had been formed to discuss ways in which 'atmospheric' changes may be made to make the University of Exeter attractive to BME staff and students. This working group has joined with the EOG members of the Focus Group working group. A meeting had taken place on 16 January with a group of staff and a few students to discuss in an open forum with the Vice Chancellor ways in which the University might make changes. Notes of that meeting are attached. NB is to set up a website to encourage the continuation of the dialogue. The Atmospheric Changes group agreed to meet to plan future events and developments and report at the next REG meeting.

04.06 **Action Plan**

The Race Equality Action Plan has been revised in the light of the recommendations made by the Equality Challenge Unit. The Chair reminded the Group of the Action Plan's objectives. Concerns were raised as to whether the outcomes sought are really measurable and whether progress can be evidenced with information that is readily available across the University. There was also a discussion as to whether those identified as taking 'lead responsibility' were correct. Decisions need to be made about those activities that are for compliance or those that are priorities because we choose them to be. The question was also raised about allocating budgetary resources for EO/Race initiatives. PW and SW agreed to consider further the audit and review of the action plan and to report at the next meeting. Meanwhile, all REG members were asked to consider the success indicators.

It was **AGREED** that the Group consider how the Action Plan could be made to work more efficiently.

04.07 **Publicity**

Publicity was discussed by the Group. It needed to be more than just raising awareness and needs to be a way in which there is a planned and structured approach to publicising the policies and procedures, but more importantly the activities that promote race equality across the University. It was agreed that the Guild Communications Officer should be included in the 'publicity' discussions, LM would join that group and that Ann Pollard, the University Publications Officer should be co-opted into this working group. It was also agreed that it would be helpful to invite the Marketing Officer to the next meeting to discuss ways in which race equality issues can be incorporated into the marketing activities.

04.08 **Annual Report**

All Heads of Schools and Divisions have been asked to provide information about the equal opportunities, particularly the race equality, activities that have taken place in their

Schools/Divisions. The Group **CONSIDERED** some of the examples of good practice submitted and completed by the Heads of Schools.

The following findings were discussed:

- 1 Domestic Services increasing their awareness.
- 2 Setting up race equality related activities.
- 3 Successful grant bids for research in EO areas – eg in Performance Arts .

04.08 Any Other Business

NG advised the Group that he had carried out research in SELL to ascertain the experiences of undergraduates from ethnic minorities in and around the university.

The Group **RECEIVED** a confidential document “In Lieu of a Focus Group” for their review and consideration. A further discussion would take place at the next meeting. It was **AGREED** that, at this stage, the document should not be circulated beyond the Race Equality Group although a copy should be passed to the Vice-Chancellor by the Chair.

LM advised the Group that through Outreach work they are working with schools and colleges within the Region to identify breaking down the barriers within the ethnic community and improving communications.

04.10 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next REG meeting will be 2pm to 4pm on 5 May 2004.

The venue to be confirmed.