

## UUK Closing Ethnicity Awarding Gaps Conference

### Key Insights

- **Largest awarding gap (AG)** across UK universities continues to be between **white and Black home students** – currently 18.4% down from 23.5% in 2017/18.
- Awarding **gap has widened** for awarding of **1st class degrees for Black students** – concern to focus on.
- **Co-production with students** is important in working towards closing the AG. Emphasis on **compensating**/renumerating for time and providing **support/community care**.
- **Recruitment of evaluation expertise** across institutions is **key to understand what works** and ensure initiatives are achieving the goals of reducing and removing awarding gaps.

### Introduction to Conference

1. Introduction from Sally Mapstone (VC, St Andrews) and Valerie Amos (Master, University College Oxford).
2. Key themes for the conference include **staff-student partnership, co-production**, and the **importance of accountability** and monitoring progress on commitments made to tackle AG.

### Speaker from NUS

3. Speaker: Hillary Gybebi-Ababio (VP Higher Education, NUS). Key points summarised:
4. Good practice of **students being empowered** to do work on AG e.g. Birmingham Guild's Black Voices campaign;
5. Students need to be **renumerated for their work** and **supported by staff** – important that it is not only Black or BAME students taking on work related to race, **avoid the uneven burden of emotional and physical labour**;
6. Minority students would **likely benefit from community care** and support systems in the package of student engagement.

### De Montford University – Progress on Awarding Gaps

7. Speaker: Kaushika Patel (Deputy PVC for EDI, DMU). Key points summarised:
8. UUK reviewed progress. Ran AG online survey and 57 universities responded – found **continuing AG between white and Black home students**. Focus groups also conducted with SU and staff reps;
9. Universities need to provide strong leadership – **share AG data with students**, improve co-creation and translate commitment to reducing AG from the top down;

10. Developing spaces for staff to practice talking about race can be useful to **encourage allyship and learning**;
11. 100% of universities surveyed are **reviewing their recruitment practices**, some are also reviewing curriculum and assessment methods;
12. Some universities have **KPIs for tackling AGs** – could be a way to embed commitment;
13. **Transparency with students** is important – tell them what you're doing to remove AGs;
14. Need **stronger evaluation** and resource evaluation and data expertise appropriately.

## Using and disaggregating data effectively

15. Speakers: Becky Price (Director of Graduate Success, University of East Anglia) & Dave Russell (PVC Student Experience, Leeds Art University). Key points summarised:
16. Need to look at **different levels of data aggregation** to understand what is happening e.g. detailed ethnicity splits, school and course splits, engagement, resits;
17. **Lived experience through qualitative data** is important to understand barriers;
18. Data dashboards are useful for research and evaluation, allows for **deeper dives into stats**;
19. Leeds Art University now looking into library footfall, stage marks, formative assessments and other **student journey activities which could predict attainment** and AGs.

## Genuine co-production with students

20. Speakers: Denise Morrison (LMUSU President), Zainab Khan (PVC Teaching & Learning, London Metropolitan University), Martin Stringer (PVC Education, Swansea University), Liza Leibowitz (Welfare Officer, Swansea SU). Key points summarised:
21. Building a **relationship of trust** with students is important, first step before fixing AG;
22. **Avoid over reliance on surveys and focus groups**, can feel intrusive for students – need to be clear how their voices will be used in decision-making;
23. **Reciprocal mentorship** helps create an equal learning environment, can build students' confidence and ability to express themselves, and **guide conversations with staff**;
24. Swansea created **Race Inclusion Student Advisory Committee** so student members voices can **feed directly into university committees**.

## Co-production with students' workshop

25. Speakers: Adwoa Darko (Inclusive Communities Manager), Chrystalle Margallo (Project Administrator), Wilko Luebsen (Evaluation and Insights Lead, Owen Beacock (Head of Fair Outcomes) – all Centre for Equity and Inclusion, London Metropolitan University. Key points summarised:
26. **Academic misconduct linked with staff bias** – Black students experience more academic misconduct in some schools and courses. Reviewed systems and processes and found **lack of understanding** and differentiating on poor academic

- practice to academic misconduct, so developed academic integrity campaigns also embedded into induction & unconscious bias training for staff;
27. Challenge of communicating current state of AGs without making students feel less than other students – **training on explaining AG** and understanding data important for staff;
  28. Present **disaggregated and intersectional data** to staff to help tell the story of AGs;
  29. **Accountability is an iterative process** – London Met reduced their AG by 10% in past 2 years, through accountability at school, department and course level. Importance of **aligning strategic objectives** and budget to REC and targets to reduce AGs.

## Evaluation of interventions

30. Speakers: Jo Macdowell (University of Brighton), Graham Gee (Professor of Public Law, Sheffield University). Key points summarised:
31. **Iterative process of evaluation** for AG (using **Theory of Change**) supported by resources (e.g. TASO evaluation planning pack/NERUPI framework);
32. Sheffield's REC action plan is **data-informed** and measures effectiveness of range of initiatives;
33. **Disaggregated data** means courses can take better ownership of AG.

## Strengthening the academic pipeline

34. Speakers: Ada Adeghe (Associate Dean for Inclusivity) & Tanya Mpofu (PGR), both University of Wolverhampton. Key points summarised:
35. **Academic coaches** can support students in journey to PGRs, ensure there is a **diverse staff cohort** to support diverse students;
36. Focus on Wolverhampton's [That's Me project](#);
37. **Decolonising PGR processes** could support **more BAME students to apply** and participate.

## University culture and the role of leadership

38. Speakers: Josette Bushell-Mingo (Principal, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), Amaya Jain (BAME Officer, St Andrews) & Sal Jarvis (DVC Education, University of Westminster). Key points summarised:
39. Need **more action to understand AG** and cultivate **better structures** and cultures;
40. Important to build **strong relationships between students and university leadership**, avoiding extractive photo opportunities and student testimonies etc;
41. Westminster investing in an Evaluation Impact Officer to support evaluation and train evaluation skills to other staff;
42. Range of barriers for students accessing support – **involve students in planning** strategies, policies and actions to break down barriers.

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