Black History Month October 2015

Celebrating Ethnic Diversity at Leicester

A Story of Staff Experiences

Friday 16 October 2015, 11.00am to 1.00pm

Welcome: Professor Paul Boyle, President and Vice-Chancellor
Speaker: Dr Jane Esuantsiwa Goldsmith (Hon Doc of Laws)
Venue: Charles Wilson Building, Second Floor, Belvoir Park Lounge

www2.le.ac.uk/offices/equalities-unit
Today’s event has been organised to mark Black History Month by celebrating the achievements of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) staff at the University of Leicester and raising awareness of the historical and more recent events which shape some of the experiences of minority ethnic communities and individuals today. We invited staff to nominate inspirational BME colleagues at Leicester for an award that recognises their achievements and contributions. The five colleagues who have been included in the final gallery have been recognised as inspirational figures by their colleagues for many reasons, and for their invaluable contributions to our University.

Research makes clear that continued racial inequalities in higher education constrain and limit the contributions that minority ethnic individuals can make, which in turns means that our entire sector is not benefitting from their hard work and their talents. Our University is committed to recognising diversity and achieving equality in everything we do, in order to enable all of our staff and our students to be people who flourish. We are excited to announce that we will be participating in the Race Charter Mark from 2016. This will require cultural and systematic change that will make a real difference for minority ethnic staff and the institution more widely. As well as recognising the contributions of a number of minority ethnic colleagues, we hope that today’s event will inspire staff and students to think about how we can all make a difference in advancing and achieving equalities for all, by creating a culture of respect, inclusivity and success. If you would like to be more involved in making these changes please contact: equalities@le.ac.uk.

Mark Peel, Provost and Senior Lead for Equalities
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Inspirational BME Lifetime Achievement Award

“He is approachable, supportive and inspirational in many ways not least his phenomenal work ethic”

“His academic mission and integrity are inspirational”
Professor Neil Chakraborti  
(Department of Criminology)

Neil has dedicated the past 16 years to advancing criminological research and teaching at the University of Leicester. He has more than 40 peer-reviewed publications in the fields of hate crime and victimology and has been commissioned by a range of funding bodies to lead groundbreaking research on prejudice, diversity and targeted violence.

In 2012 Neil was appointed as a Commissioner on the first-ever nationwide review of sex inside prisons, and in the same year launched The Leicester Hate Crime Project, Britain’s biggest ever study of hate crime victimisation. In 2014 he set up the Leicester Centre for Hate Studies, the very first Centre of its kind to bridge the gap between academic scholarship and policy-making. Neil sits on the editorial boards of the British Journal of Criminology and Palgrave Communications, is Chair of Research at the Board of Trustees for the Howard League for Penal Reform, and is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Ontario.

“During my student days I was troubled by the almost total absence of black and minority ethnic senior managers, lecturers and research staff within my subject area. I am proud to work in a University and in a city that champions diversity but I believe that inspiring more black and minority ethnic students to pursue academic careers should be a key priority for all of us involved in the social sciences and HE more broadly.”
Inspirational BME Leadership Award

“He deserves to be recognised for his leadership and professional approach to managing the University’s reputation and for his dedication to his staff”
Ather Mirza  
(Division of External Relations)

Ather has been a journalist and media officer for 33 years and at the University for 22 years during which he has represented the University at international missions and also been involved in landmark projects including the Millennium bid for the National Space Centre and of course Richard III.

A former winner of a Commonwealth Press Union scholarship, which allowed him to travel and work in India and Pakistan, as well as a number of professional awards, Ather has also freelanced for national and international media.

He joined the External Relations Office at the University where he was former Head of Press and Alumni Relations and is now Director of the University’s News and Corporate Events office. The media work he led around communicating animal research is seen as a national exemplar and, as a result of this, he has contributed to national guidelines for universities to communicate biomedical research.

Ather spearheaded the media campaign around the discovery of King Richard III which was described by The Guardian newspaper as: “One of the most successful UK university media operations ever.”

“My race, ethnicity or faith has rarely – if ever – played a part in my job which makes this award somewhat of a surprise and honour. This event and award is a testament to the important efforts the University is making to recognise the collective contribution of BME staff on campus.”
Inspirational BME Rising Star Award

“She may still be towards the beginning of her career but the impact she has made is significant...she is proactive and constructive in everything she does...which creates a positive culture”
Cherese Lewis  
(Residential and Commercial Services)

Cherese became the first Marketing and Communications Assistant for Residential and Commercial Services and has made a sizable contribution to the success of the retail catering operation and the wider businesses within RACS.

Her passion for catering shines through in everything she does and this is reflected in the high quality of her work. Cherese’s drive and energy have played no small part in these achievements.

Cherese is playing an increasingly influential role in the development of RACS’ culture, having pioneered the use of communication boards, become an active member of the Women’s Forum and volunteered for projects outside her core role.

Her current projects include interior designing social study spaces for The Village Hub in Oadby Student Village. Cherese will continue to put her marketing and creative skills to excellent use in other social spaces throughout the rest of Oadby Student Village as well as continuing marketing our other businesses to a high standard within Residential and Commercial Services.

As a relatively recent graduate, Cherese has developed significantly and was a worthy winner of the RACS Caught in the Act Recognising Excellence Award.
Inspirational BME
Lifetime Achievement
Award

“She is an educational
leader, thinker and
community presence of
exceptional merit, quality
and inspiration”
Dr Saeeda Shah  
(School of Education)

Before joining the University of Leicester, Saeeda was Dean and Professor at the University of AJK, Pakistan. She was an educational leader and academic of outstanding merit and was awarded the Best University Teacher Millennium Award 2000 by the University Grants Commission, Pakistan for excellence in teaching.

Saeeda Shah is Reader in the School of Education. She is postgraduate tutor for PhD and teaches on educational leadership and professional development programs. Saeeda is also Chair of the Equal Diversity Committee for her college and member of the College International Strategy Forum. Saeeda holds many external positions as well including Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Derby, Visiting Professor at the Al-Farabi University, Kazakhstan, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA), Member of the editorial board of International Journal of Leadership and Policy in Schools and editorial review board of Leadership and Policy Quarterly and many more. She made presentations at the UN Human Rights Commission, Geneva for the rights of marginalized groups and communities, and is invited nationally and internationally to speak about diversity and equality issues.

Saeeda has published widely in highly prestigious academic journals and is recognized as an authority in her field of research and scholarship. She has brought new understanding of different educational concepts, explaining these from an Islamic perspective, thus enriching theory and informing practice.
Inspirational BME Woman in Science Award

“Her determination to tackle the roots of equality and diversity issues in science, and the considered way she approaches problems is inspirational”
Dr Harjinder Sembhi  
(Department of Physics and Astronomy)

Harjinder is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Earth Observation Science group. She uses measurements made by satellite instruments to determine the impact of greenhouse gases and pollutants on the Earth’s atmosphere. She has established strong links with the European and Japanese Space Agencies and has worked on several major European and Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) funded projects. Her work on aerosol detection from space has seen her lead collaborations internationally with scientists from NASA and the US Naval Research Laboratory.

She is passionate about raising the profile of Earth observation and space research by communicating science through public outreach and is inspired by the enthusiasm of her mentors and colleagues. In 2013, she persuaded the renowned Canadian astronaut Colonel Chris Hadfield to visit the University to inspire physics students and organised the “Space Research for Life” exhibition with the Late Professor George Fraser and colleagues, which showcased Leicester’s work in space research and its impact on society.

Outside of her research she regularly organises charity events and has participated in voluntary work through the University. She is a member of the Physics & Astronomy Department equality and diversity working group where she is motivated to assess issues such as cultural diversity and mental health awareness within the department. She is proud to support the University and their efforts to positively promote equality.
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A Story of Staff Experiences

Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Staff Forum

- A forum which provides an opportunity for all staff to discuss, champion and advance equalities for minority ethnic staff and students.
- To register your interest or for more information, please contact the Equalities Team, equalities@le.ac.uk

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