Advance HE EDI Conference 2021

Courageous conversations and adventurous approaches: Creative thinking in tackling inequality

16 March 2021

Live session abstracts

For ease of reference to the session abstracts, simply click on the title of the session you wish to view and you will be automatically taken to the abstract in this document.

Parallel session 1 (16 March 2021: 11.00 – 12.00)		
Positive action	**Breaking the taboo**	**Breaking the taboo**
1.1 Panel session	1.2 Interactive breakout	1.3 Panel session
Positive action: Addressing underrepresentation and inequality through targeted initiatives Professor Ruth Falconer, Abertay University Dr Ross Woods,Higher Education Authority Dr Angie Pears, University of Leicester	**Spilling the T on my degree: The student experience through a race lens** Sherry Iqbal and Ahmed Ali, Leeds Beckett Students' Union	**Keeping gender on the agenda** Emma Ritch, Engender Scotland Talat Yaqoob, independent consultant, Formerly Equate Scotland Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University of Edinburgh Caroline Gauchotte-Lindsay, Senior Lecturer, James Watt School of Engineering, University of Glasgow
Ignite session (16 March 2020: 13.10 – 13.55)		
IG1a - Associate student project: Facilitating computing students' transition to higher education, Dr Ella Taylor-Smith, Dr Khristin Fabian and Debbie Meharg, Edinburgh Napier University **IG1b - Intersectionality: Targeting men from deprived areas in Scotland,** Anne Farquharson, The Open University in Scotland **IG1c - Intersectionality: Targeting women with caring responsibilities,** Anne Farquharson, The Open University in Scotland **IG1d - Study smarter with technology for all,** Portia Bentley, Staffordshire University **IG1e - Advocacy in action: How a university shared reading project reaches homeless readers in Scotland,** Avril Gray, Edinburgh Napier University		
Parallel session 2 (16 March 2021: 14.05 – 15.05)		
Breaking the taboo	**Positive action**	**Leading change**
2.1 Panel session	2.2 Interactive breakout	2.3 Interactive breakout
Hidden gender inequalities Melissa Highton, University of Edinburgh, Ruth Cochrane, Edinburgh Napier University, Andrea Cameron, Abertay University, Dr Emma Watson and Victoria Murphy, Imperial College London	**Using positive action to bring about a step change in race equality** Aloma Onyemah, University Hospitals of Leicester	**Tackling racism on campus project** Dr Nighet Riaz, Programmes Adviser, Advance HE, Sukhi Kainth, Knowledge, Innovation and Delivery Adviser, Advance HE Khadija Mohammed, Senior Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland and Chair of the Tackling Racism on Campus Steering Group Sharan Virdee, Equality and Diversity Partner, Herriot Watt University Monica Medina, EDI, Forth Valley College, Falkirk

Panel session (16 March 2021: 15.15 – 16.15)
How do you navigate hierarchies of inequalities in the context of restricted resources and political pressures?
Matt Crilly, NUS Scotland
Dr Jim McGeorge, University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, University of Dundee
Professor Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal Education, University of Aberdeen and Deputy Chair of QAAS/Advance HE
Anti-racist Curriculum Group
Naira Dar, EDI Manager at City of Glasgow College and Chair of Scottish Minority Ethnic Women's Network

Session 1.1: Positive action: Addressing underrepresentation and inequality through targeted initiatives

Professor Ruth Falconer, University Abertay Dundee, Marie-Claire Isaaman, Women in Games, Dr Ross Woods, Higher Education Authority, Dr Angie Pears, University of Leicester

Postive Action

Panel session

This panel session will give a brief overview of some recent initiatives where positive action has succeeded in addressing underrepresentation and inequality followed by a Q&A session from the audience and a wider discussion on positive action. It will include: how the not-for-profit organisation Women in Games, partnering with industry and HEIs across the UK and abroad, has raised the profile of women in the heavily male-dominated area of games programmes; how the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI) launched in Ireland aims to accelerate gender balance at senior levels of Irish HEIs; and how the University of Leicester have implemented a Positive Action in Recruitment initiative to address the unequal ratio of BAME staff to students.

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Session 1.2: Spilling the T on my degree: The student experience through a race lens

Sherry Iqbal and Ahmed Ali, Leeds Beckett Students' Union

Breaking the taboo

Interactive Breakout session

Through open, honest conversation with BAME students, we aim to take participants on a journey through the real, lived experience of BAME students in higher education. The objectives of this session will be to highlight and draw attention to the struggles faced by BAME students at university, identify ways in which universities can improve the student experience and seek commitment from higher education colleagues to shoulder some of the emotional labour experienced daily by BAME students.

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Session 1.3: Keeping gender on the agenda

Emma Ritch, Engender Scotland, Talat Yaqoob, independent consultant, formerly Equate Scotland and Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University of Edinburgh, Caroline Gauchotte-Lindsay, University of Glasgow

Breaking the taboo

Panel session

In a year where higher education providers have been forced to rapidly adjust their practices to accommodate virtual delivery and home-working because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and where the continued prevalence of racial injustice has been demonstrated by the brutal killing of George Floyd, is there still time and resources available to ensure that initiatives addressing inequalities within other protected characteristics are not left by the wayside? This panel session will seek to ensure that gender inequality remains high on the institutional agenda. Drawing together experts in the field, this session will review good practice initiatives, consider the impact of COVID-19 on existing inequalities and discuss how we can continue to work together to eradicate inequality ensuring positive progress in gender equality is maintained and built upon.

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Session 2.1: Hidden gender inequalities

Melissa Highton, University of Edinburgh, Ruth Cochrane, Edinburgh Napier University, Andrea Cameron, Abertay University, Dr Emma Watson and Victoria Murphy, Imperial College London

Breaking the taboo

Panel session

This panel session aims to break taboos around the hidden gender inequalities of maternity, breastfeeding, period poverty and menopause, with a summary of current initiatives in this area followed by Q&A and a wider discussion on the subject. It will include details of: a collaboration between Hey Girls, Wire Media and Edinburgh Napier University that responded to the Scottish Government initiative to provide free, accessible sanitary products for all girls and women in Schools, Colleges and Universities; how the University of Edinburgh and Imperial College London are attempting to promote menopause-friendly workplaces and address the impact this has on women staff; and how university policy at practice at Abertay around student pregnancy has been informed by the narratives that emerged when investigating the student experience of the perinatal period.

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Session 2.2: Using positive action to bring about a step change in race equality

Aloma Onyemah, University Hospitals of Leicester (formerly Sheffield Hallam University)

Postive Action

Interactive Breakout session

This session is essential for HEI and FE college delegates who would like to implement innovative, high-impact positive action interventions to address racial disparities in their workforce. The objectives of the session are: to identify how positive action can enhance your workforce race equality

objectives; to explore the legal measures which underpin positive action; and to evaluate case study examples of positive action interventions and their application to your own institutional context.
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Session 2.3: Tackling racism on campus project
Dr Nighet Riaz, Programmes Adviser, Advance HE
Sukhi Kainth, Knowledge, Innovation and Delivery Adviser, Advance HE
Khadija Mohammed, Senior Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland and Chair of the Tackling Racism on Campus Steering Group
Sharan Virdee, Equality and Diversity Partner, Herriot Watt University
Monica Medina, EDI, Forth Valley College, Falkirk
Leading change
Interactive Breakout session
This session will offer some background to the SFC-funded Tackling Racism on Campus Project and the work that has been completed over the past year. Led by an expert international steering group, this project has resulted in the production of a number of resources to raise awareness about racism on campus, along with a blended learning toolkit that supports staff and students to have confident conversations about race and racism. This session will offer the opportunity to explore these resources and discuss how they can assist you and your institution in tackling racism and racial harassment on campus.
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Panel session: How do you navigate hierarchies of inequalities in the context of restricted resources and political pressures?
Matt Crilly, NUS Scotland, Dr Jim McGeorge, University of Dundee, Professor Ruth Taylor, University of Aberdeen, Naira Dar, City of Glasgow College
Panel session
This panel brings together senior leaders and EDI specialists to consider the strategic decisions we need to make in HE to formulate policies and procedures to address inequalities – but how can these decisions be made when external pressures and headline news can often dictate the directions that we must follow? Join our panellists, Matt Crilly, President of NUS Scotland, Dr Jim McGeorge, Chief Operating Officer at the University of Dundee, Naira Dar, EDI Manager at City of Glasgow College and Professor Ruth Taylor, Vice-Principal of the University of Aberdeen as they discuss the thought processes they follow to decide on which areas to focus the staff and time resources within their own organisations, how they ensure institutional priorities are agile enough to respond to external pressures while maintaining the right focus for their institutional needs and how intersectionality can enable focus on all protected characteristics.
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Session IG1a: Associate Student Project: Facilitating computing students' transition to higher education
Dr Ella Taylor-Smith, Dr Khristin Fabian and Debbie Meharg, Edinburgh Napier University
Ignite session
The Associate Student (ASP) project supports Computing students who study two years at a Further Education college (achieving an HND) then transfer directly into third year, studying for two more years to complete an honours degree (BSc or BEng). Students have access to university facilities throughout the four years (online and offline), plus workshops, lectures, and events to get them ready for university, and through their degree. The first associate students started in 2014 and we can now present quantitative and qualitative results that indicate the success of the project, including degree outcomes, students' perceptions, and graduates' experience.
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Session IG1b: Intersectionality: Targeting men from deprived areas in Scotland
Anne Farquharson, The Open University in Scotland
Ignite session
Analysis of our student data indicated a significant proportion of men from the most deprived areas in Scotland have an interest in computing courses. We developed a marketing campaign to target this audience using paid social media.
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Session IG1c: Intersectionality: Targeting women with caring responsibilities
Anne Farquharson, The Open University in Scotland
Ignite session
The Open University in Scotland (OU in Scotland) created a campaign to increase the number of students recruited onto degree programmes directly from Further Education colleges in Scotland. Many of these students are women with caring responsibilities, who are unable or unwilling to travel due to these commitments. By increasing our recruitment of these students, we would help the OU in Scotland meet its Outcome Agreement targets for widening access both in relation to articulation (students utilising the credit from their HND/C) and recruitment of students from SIMD20/40 (most and second most deprived areas).
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Session IG1d: Study Smarter with Technology for All
Portia Bentley, Staffordshire University
Ignite session
Study Smarter with Technology is an online resource available to all students and staff at Staffordshire University. It provides information about useful digital tools that enable the individual to use technology to study more effectively. Information relating to a range of existing institutional digital tools is provided together with guidance on how to maximise their use. All recommended software is available on Student PCs, as a free download or as a mobile phone app. Free access is available here: http://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/studysmarter
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Session IG1e: Advocacy in Action: How a university shared reading project reaches homeless readers in Scotland
Avril Gray, Edinburgh Napier University
Ignite session
This paper provides genuine insight into the rationale for an approach to inclusivity that penetrates to the very edges of society. It underpins the need to find better methods to reach readers beyond the boundaries, for whom "books are more important than food". Working with 28 organisations supporting homeless people, and connecting with charitable trusts, community projects, government bodies, and industry, this paper explores how a university shared reading initiative moved beyond the campus onto the streets to make a concentrated commitment to diversity and inclusion with some of society's most vulnerable, yet challenging, human beings. The initiative has attracted institutional partners across Scotland and as far afield as Australia.
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