# Lecture 7 Notes

# EDI Initiatives in Academia and Industry

## Wayne Mitchell – Associate Provost for EDI

Starts off asking the students to define EDI, response is “Equality, Diversity and Inclusion”

Shows the video “Eyes on the Prize” which talks about desegregation (end of racial segregation in the United States of America). So what prize are we looking at?

For Wayne this is designing and delivering and anti-racist pedagogies. This is a story/pedagogy of belonging, one example being the Imperial anti-racist portrait gallery.

“the only way to undo racism is to consistently identify it and describe it and then actively dismantle it”

Objective: Imperial Learning and Teaching Strategy aims to foster an inclusive and diverse community where different backgrounds and cultures in staff and students are cherished and celebrated…” [full statement on the slides] – but what is the college trying to achieve with this statement?

Student responses:

* EDI
* Trying to be everything to everyone all at one
* Wide ranging but not specific

Wayne’s perspective:

* It aims to have an inclusive and diverse community
* Celebrating and cherishing difference
* Doesn’t matter where you’re from or what your identity is, we will accept you

But does this really happen at Imperial? Do all students feel included? Which students are least likely to feel included? This resulted in the research question “What impact does being a ‘minority’ have on a Black British student’s sense of identity, belonging, and ability to achieve at Imperial College?”

Wayne then conducted research on being a Black British student at Imperial College. These interviews with students looked at “belongingness”, “social identity” (i.e. in-groups and out-groups of those who are accepted vs those who are othered), “student retention”, and “how identity is developed”.

Areas of interest during the study:

* Educational history
* Admissions
* Friends and Family

### Findings:

1. Sense of identity; the current system has the effect of magnifying the minority status of the students and requires them to conform to the predominant culture, for whom it was designed
2. High concentration and calibre of students to some extent stripped away part of their identity (i.e. their ID based on their academic achievement), often only replaced with their sense of isolation (being in the visible minority) as a Black British individual
3. Current inequality in the admission of black students exacerbates the minority status of black students [see graph of offer rates on slides], in 2013 a white student had a 29% greater change of being made an offer than a black student with the same entry grades
4. Under-representation of BME staff is one reason students may not have a sense of belonging
5. They felt the need to show the acceptable face of ‘Blackness’ as the system was design to cater for the needs of the white majority
6. Students felt they could only be their authentic selves in places where there were people of their own cultural heritage (e.g. Afro Caribbean Society)
	1. Read Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria
7. Students demonstrated resilience and recognise that hard work was needed to survive at Imperial. Unfortunately for some the experience was more about surviving than thriving.
	1. Read The Privileged Poor (Anthony Abraham Jack)

### Conclusions:

Sense of belonging and identify is external to Imperial or in ‘safe’ places, institutional barriers prevent students from gaining full recognition of their potential despite students’ recognition of the need to work harder than their peers. This results in the awarding gap; there is approximately a 40% in outcomes for a black student than a white student with the same grades.

NB: Attainment gap puts the emphasis on the students, but awarding gap buts the emphasis on the institution. Suggested read: Bridging the Gap by Baroness Amos

Black British students develop resilience and perseverance founded on the recognition that a bicultural competence enables them to navigate the obstacles which they encounter throughout the British education system.

“Bicultural competencies” – being able to function in more than one culture and switch modes (code switching) depending on the environment you’re in.

### Antiracism in the academy: So how do we fix this?

The systemic racism is very ingrained, and therefore there are many places and systems which need to change. So a framework/methodology is needed:

* Acknowledge, Attitudes, Actions – What is the history and what current attitudes are there?
* Norms – What are the cultural norms?
* Task and Talent – who is setting the tasks and who determines what is recognised as talent?
* Identity, Individual and Institutional beliefs/behaviour/demography – What is the current status?
* Recognition, Roots, Representation, Reparation – What needs to change, and how?
* Acceptable aspiration – do we have the same aspirations for everyone?
* Curriculum content that builds on and includes different Cultures and Communities
* Investments in Initiatives, promoting;
* Specific Systemic Structural Change
* Trauma in Timely Targeted manner that can be trusted and enables societal impact.

Wayne’s definition of the 21st Century Student:

* Confident, Connected, Global Citizens
* Environmental and Political Awareness
* Nimble and Innovative
* Technology literacy
* Urgency
* Responsive and reactive
* CuriositY

Image shown on screen is every black student in Cambridge in 2018 (few enough to fit in one photo!)

As a result of the student experience, Wayne started the Belonging project where he interviews someone from a BAME background, sharing experiences and sense of identity. The lecturers across college are very predominantly white and the Belonging project challenges that perspectives.

The protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) are broader than race, though this is what Wayne has focused on in today’s lecture. In his role as EDI Provost he has found that the same issues occur for people of different protected characteristics. Put yourself into the shoes of others and think about things from their perspectives.

Difference between Equality and Equity is highlighted; that we should be aiming for equity not equality. Equity identifies differences in people’s needs.

Imperial College Values are discussed; position yourself in the centre of these (collaboration, integrity, innovation, excellence, respect) because are we applying these to EDI? Are we respecting everyone? Are we collaborating to create innovative solutions to create equity? This is how we will achieve a diverse community.

## Kieran Valentine

Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Hoare Lea (140 year old company in the built environment, e.g. heating, ventilation, acoustics etc.)

Has worked for a range of companies including Imperial, Amnesty International, and now Hoare Lea. MSc in Inequality and Society, Member Chartered Institute of People and Development, Founding member of Building Equality and on the CIBSE Inclusivity Committee.

The difference between equality and equity is once again highlighted. Also the Hoare Lea definition of “inclusion” is shared [see slides for text].

Many companies now have EDI action plans, but how impactful are these? Finding ways to tackle the knowledge and cultures as well as the systems within companies is very challenging.

An EDI survey at Hoare Lea in 2021 showed that 23% of people have felt excluded whilst working at Hoare Lea. But what does this mean? Is this a high or low number? How long have they felt excluded for? What form did that exclusion take?

Hoare Lea is an old organisation, thus for employees over the age of 30 it is very heavily white male. A demographic survey was carried out [full findings are available on the slides], and the number of staff who were neurodivergent was much lower than the UK average (7% rather than ~15%), as was the number of women (29% rather than 51% in UK), this pattern continues across the other demographics.

### So how can DEI improve business outcomes?:

1. People from different walks of life will think of different solutions and approaches: enables innovative and diverse problem solving.
2. Cohesion with diverse clients
3. Recognition and greater profits from high quality work which comes from point 1

### Status Quo:

* 16.4% of UK engineers are women
* 43% of UK population are white men (yet boardrooms are overwhelmingly white male)
* 9% UK engineers are from BME backgrounds (vs 19% of the general population)
* 73% of female engineers have experienced discrimination, harassment or victimisation at work
* 57% of women drop off the roster of professional engineers by the time they reach age 45 (vs only 17% of men)
* 42% of LGBT engineers hide their sexuality from their colleagues

Video shown “The Basics – But we’re not biased here”, this is children in primary school drawing people from different careers; fire fighter, jet pilot and surgeon. Almost all the children refer to the people they’ve drawn as being male (61 male pictures vs 5 female). What is the significance of forming biases in early years to an EDI professional in industry? It is a huge challenge to address this, the biases are ingrained, and cultural change is slow. It is challenging for us all to examine our own biases and see that not all our actions have been ‘good’ but this is necessary for change to occur.

Another example of bias;

* 14% of US men are over 6ft tall
* 58% of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are over 6ft tall
* 3.9% of US men are over 6 ft 2 inches
* Over a third of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies are 6ft 2 or taller

Why is this? How does it relate to confidence and masculinity?

“We do not see things are they are, we see them as we are” – Anais Nin. This affects how we allocate work, how we recognise talent, what we consider to be true and right, etc.

Intersectionality; EDI work often requires people to “choose their group” (e.g. via picking networks) or we look at the challenges facing one group (e.g. women or POC) and do not realise these issues may be impacting far more people. Therefore connecting up networks and groups and connecting them with management etc. is an essential enabler in EDI work.

Hoare Lea has staff networks for Neurodiversity, Gender Balance, Families, LGBTQ+, Ethnicity and Culture. These provide peer to peer support, raising awareness and keeping the company accountable for change.

Questions to ask management/yourself/others….what do you know about the everyday experiences of:

* The neurodivergent
* Asian/British Asian communities
* Menopausal Women
* LGBT people
* Disabled people
* People living in poverty

If we don’t understand people’s lived experiences how can we design for them, work with them, support them, etc.

Inclusive Leadership is necessary for change, as people who have been successful are very difficult to change. Hence Kieran created a 12 month leadership training programme.

External connections and benchmarks are needed (examples of both external bodies and external speakers are shown on the slides)

Lots of example initiatives are also listed on the slides, as are suggested books from the Hoare Lea EDI library. Kieran’s top two recommendations were the Authority Gap and the Promises of Giants.

Transparency is important in order to commit to something tangible and measurable.

How is culture defined and measured? This is very challenging to do, but one means is to define it by the worst behaviour tolerated.

