Our University is really keen to make sure that each student maximises their potential by achieving as high a grade as possible. However, like many universities across the HE sector, we are aware that there is a differential level of attainment between some groups, with White students often performing better than Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students. Keen to address this, a number of initiatives are being introduced which will collectively contribute to a reduction in the attainment gap between White and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. These are part of the action plan from our BAME Strategy document which was approved by Academic Board in July this year. Indeed, this is one of our top priorities and we want to proactively work together to improve what we do. Our belief is that everyone can do something. We are always looking for new ideas and so please don’t hesitate to contact either Marj Spiller or myself, or other members of the ADU’s senior management team.

Here is a snapshot of a few of the initiatives that are currently underway:

BAME advocates
The following members of staff are now our BAME advocates. There is one in each Faculty and one in Information Services:

Portia Bentley    Beverley Maynard    Sara Buckley    Mani Das Gupta    Louis Martin

All these staff are the ‘go to’ person for BAME students in their areas, and will work closely with lecturers, personal tutors, student guidance advisors, study skills advisors.
Learning conversations- it’s good to talk!

So what will these BAME advocates be doing? At the start of this academic year, the air will be filled with really meaningful ‘learning conversations’ between these advocates and BAME students. Such conversations will, in fact, be echoed across the University by personal tutors and their tutees, trying to find out what their expectations are, what would really help them learn and what they must do in order to succeed. Listen out and join in the big learning conversation across the University!

BAME Focus Group Meeting dates

And our talking with BAME students continues... Really keen to keep the conversation going, we’ll be meeting with students as part of a schedule of BAME Focus Groups on the following dates:

- 30 September 9.00-11.00
- 30 November 9.00-11.00
- 16 February 9.00-11.00
- 27 April 9.00-11.00

The conversations in these Focus groups will be action-oriented, designed to question our practice, stimulate our thinking and make things happen.

BAME Steering Group

Led by Rosy Crehan, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), we also have a cross-University BAME Steering Group which has been introduced to spearhead all BAME developments and initiatives. The first meeting has already taken place and the next ones are scheduled for:

- 8 October 9.00-10.30
- 10 December 9.00-10.30
- 4 February 9.00-10.30
- 13 April 9.00-10.30

With representation from all key areas of the University, this group is the powerhouse to make sure that all BAME projects run on time, are communicated effectively through the various committees and groups, overcome any barriers and, importantly, disseminate good practice, suggestions and ideas.

Unconscious bias training

We are really keen to avoid unconscious bias in everything we do here at the University and so to make us more aware of this, we are introducing a series of staff-development events. The first of these will take place in November and will be focussed on staff in leadership roles. This will then be followed by a series of other workshops for specific groups, including those staff involved in recruitment and also all lecturing staff.

Race Equality Charter Mark

As a University we have recently been awarded a Bronze Award under the Equality Challenge Unit’s new Charter Mark around race equality. One of only 8 universities to do so! Thank you to all staff who helped pull this together. Our work around Leading Excellence in Attainment and Positive Action will support the work we will be doing to achieve the actions proposed as part of our application for the Bronze Award.

Inclusive Practice Toolkit

Watch out for our new ‘toolkit’ aimed at enriching learning, teaching and assessment. You will be able to download the Inclusive Practice Toolkit as a whole or in sections depending on the support you need. The Toolkit, via the link below is designed to give you background information and then help you reflect on your current practice.

www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/equality/curriculum/