BME Attainment and Success: Research and Beyond

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Educational Research Forum: Kingston Hill Business School - 15th June 2012 -
The structure of the session

- KU student voices
- Presentation of the research
- Putting the findings into action
- Faculty perspectives
- Student perspectives
Students were asked for their views on:

- Diversity
- Staff/student relationships
- Assessment and feedback
- Social life and work life balance
- Plagiarism
- Academic skills centres
- Technology
- Careers and employability
- Societies
Interviews with current students

Some issues raised (You Tube links removed):

- Advantages of studying in a diverse student population
- Feedback to support the best work
- The need to be proactive
- Student teacher relationship
Background to the project

• Attainment of non white ethnic groups, particularly in terms of degree classification, has been an ongoing issue for KU and across the HE sector.

• Sector wide research indicates that being from a minority ethnic group has a significant and negative effect on degree attainment even after controlling for contributory factors including prior attainment and deprivation (Broecke and Nicholls, 2007)

• KU data clearly shows white students outperforming those from ethnic minority background in terms of 1 & 2.1 degrees across subject areas over several years.

• ADC/HEPP project specification produced and put out to tender; IPSE commissioned to carry out the research in 2011 focusing on areas linked to LTAS goals.
KU first degree undergraduate qualifiers obtaining a first or upper second class honours degree by academic year and ethnic group

Source: KU student returns
Sector wide first degree undergraduate qualifiers obtaining a first or upper second class honours degree by academic year and ethnic group

Source: ECU Statistical Report  2011
Summary of the research method

- Analysis of student records – ethnic groups, module attainment and degree classification

- Analysis of second year student survey data – ethnic groups, satisfaction, module attainment

- Course directors interviewed from B&L and Science (to cover a range of programmes and assessment types) about their perceptions and L&T responses to BME students.

- Detailed findings reported to steering group
Summary of key findings (students)

- The attainment gap between home BME and white students is significant across all faculties.

- The gap between White and Black students is larger than that between White and Asian students.

- BME students are more disadvantaged by exam assessment than White students.

- Black students appeared to be most satisfied and Asian least satisfied with teaching and assessment & feedback.
Summary of key findings (staff)

• Teaching-staff appeared not to have straightforward access to data linking attainment to ethnicity – largely unaware of the issue

• Staff well aware of the diversity of the student population and challenges they faced.

• Academic writing/communication and student engagement considered the main issues by staff.

• Staff appeared to be more concerned about the attainment of Asian students compared to Black students.

• Most staff did not direct support specifically towards BME students.
Recommendations from the report

- Raise awareness amongst staff of the BME/attainment issue amongst home students.
- Enable teaching staff to easily monitor the attainment of students by ethnic group, separating out home students.
- Encourage debate on equality of student experience vs. equality of outcome.
- Explore assessment processes and BME attainment in more detail.
Some findings from HEA Summit 2012

- Staff drew attention to societal/structural barriers, such as poverty, and institutional barriers, such as perceived racism and/or political correctness.
- Most staff recognised the need to change institutional structures and LTA practices.
- Both staff and students felt that reducing the attainment gap required a greater diversity of approaches to LTA practices.
- Staff and students agreed that support should be available to all students not targeted specifically at BME groups.
Follow-up actions

- OFFA Access agreement now includes BME interventions to initiate activity in response to issues identified:
  - Extended Compact Scheme (1000 students – pre-course summer schools)
  - First Year Mentoring Scheme (1000 students – 200 2\textsuperscript{nd} year mentors)
  - ADSAP established (student advisory panel)
  - ADC/Faculty/student visit to Charlotte
  - Faculty specific follow up
Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing

- SEC faculty adopted an Academic Probation Programme that was based on various activities observed at UNC Charlotte.

- Students who have failed more than 30 credits (2 single modules) required to undergo academic probation.

- Required to follow a support programme developed to help improve academic performance.
Structure of Academic Probation Programme

• Complete an on-line Academic Self-Assessment and discuss it with Personal Tutor

• Students must make at least one visit to Academic Skills Centre S³

• Required to attend an Academic Success Workshop (ASW) :
Evaluation of APP

- 230 students out of 500 students attended Academic Success Workshop.

- Questionnaire distributed to participants; Focus groups planned.

- Data analysis to see if engagement has a positive impact
Discussion

Comment and questions
References

