

1634 Equality in Higher Education

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Proposer: Holly Staynor (Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer)

Seconded: Connor Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer)

Union Notes:

- 1) That the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) works to further and support equality and diversity for staff and students in higher education institutions across the UK.
- 2) That every year it publishes national equality data on the age, disability, ethnicity and gender of staff and students in Higher Education.
- 3) That the data reveals that younger students are more likely to qualify; UK-domiciled full-time first degree entrants aged 21 and under had both the highest rates of qualifying or continuing in their studies (92.0%) and rates of transfer (2.0%) among the age groups.
- 4) That a higher proportion of full-time first degree qualifiers aged 21 and under achieved a first/2:1 than first degree qualifiers in older age groups.
- 5) That six months after qualifying, 10.8% of black and minority ethnic students were unemployed, compared with 5.2% of white graduates.
- 6) That there continue to be low proportions of women studying engineering and technology, despite initiatives to increase numbers in these subjects. Only 15.8% of engineering and technology students were women.
- 7) That at UEA, 3% of white students leave UEA with a third class degree. For Chinese students, the figure is 11%.
- 8) That 13% of white students receive a first class degree, but only 3% of black students.
- 9) That UEA's Athena SWAN bronze application reported that in 2011, 78% of Heads of School were men. Three years later, this has risen to 81%. The gender gap amongst the University's senior positions is in sharp contrast to the student population, of which 58% are women.

Union Believes:

- 1) That institutions like UEA need to focus on supporting the retention and achievement of older students, for example how they support students with multiple commitments or those whose courses have high levels of distance learning.
- 2) That it is unacceptable that some black and minority ethnic students are more likely to leave before the end of their course, are receiving lower degrees, and have lower rates of employment after qualifying.
- 3) That the gender gap in HE needs to be closed. Now.
- 4) That the figures are a stark reminder of how far we need to go on equality both at UEA and in Higher Education general
- 5) That UEA should be a leader in tackling inequality amongst staff and students but too often looks and sound behind the curve

Union Resolves:

- 1) To mandate the Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer to lobby for more resource to drive E&D change at UEA
- 2) To mandate the Union Officers to ensure that the forthcoming University Corporate plan has a dedicated section on E&D
- 3) To seek detailed figures on attainment gaps, discuss these at union liberation caucuses and ensure the University responds with clear action to close those gaps