Motion from Student Council to University of Aberdeen regarding Minority Voices Being Heard Campaign for Academic year 2018/19

**Proposers:** Faridah Olaifa (BAME Convenor), Isabel del Pilar Arce Zelada (BAME Liaison Officer), Radeen Moncrieffe (BAME Inclusions Officer)

**Seconders:** Precious Akinbileje (BAME General Officer), Roqayyah Sameh AbdelHakam (BAME General Officer), Robyn Chowdhury (Medical Science Convenor), Jasmine Lau (Societies’ Union)

**Council notes:**

1. The University did not attempt to engage with Black History Month, throw any University led events or promote this month on campus whatsoever, which gives the message that Black students on campus and their histories and well-being is not cared for by this university.
2. The African Caribbean Society recently had a run-in with an aggressive member of staff who treated them in a derogatory manner. When this was reported to the University, no disciplinary action was taken against the member of staff in question. Again, giving the message that their opinions, experiences and space at the university is not valued.
3. In October, there was an article released by the Gaudie written by student, Robyn Chowdhury, *Allegations of Racial Discrimination Within Aberdeen Medical School[[1]](#footnote-1)* detailing the fact that there is racial discrimination within the Aberdeen medical school, yet again proving to the ethnic minorities on campus that their spaces here is not valued. This same article went missing in physical copies in the medical institute which implies that the University want to bury their problems with race as opposed to do anything to change what’s happening and help BAME students/staff.
4. There was an incident in the academic year 17/18 whereby racially discriminatory graffiti and swastikas were found on the school grounds, and while the school publicised their outrage, no notable safeguards were introduced beyond flyers around campus to prevent this from happening in the future.
5. Statistics from The Independent show that “129 alleged incidences of racism were reported to UK universities in 2017, compared to 80 incidents in 2015 - a rise of 61 percent…And in just one year, the number of complaints about racism from university students and staff rose by nearly a quarter (23 percent), the figures show, with 105 incidents reported in 2016.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
6. According to The Guardian article *UK Universities Making Slow Progress On Equality, Data Shows[[3]](#footnote-3),* provides statistical evidence for the overwhelming lack of BAME professors, with “14,000 white men were recorded as professors while just 90 black men held positions of the same status.”
7. That in Dr Nakamoto’s redundancy repeal case which was a product of the ongoing "restructuring” process in School of Medicine, Medical Sciences & Nutrition (SMMSN), there are several detailed accounts of alleged racial discrimination towards students and members of staff. Several experienced members of staff also criticised the restructuring process and co-opted Dr Nakamoto’s at an IMS staff meeting, alleging that the process had unfairly targeted East Asians. However, they were instructed by the deputy director to retract their “inappropriate” statements. Additionally, during the appeal, the allegations of racial discrimination made my Dr. Nakamoto were completely ignored.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Council believes:**

1. The University have not tried hard enough to engage with events that promote the well being and histories of BAME students.
2. There should be a year long campaign dedicated to helping BAME students, involving initiatives for BAME students/staff to be encouraged to apply to Aberdeen University as well as initiatives that involve the financial support of BAME students at the university, ie. A scholarship/bursary system.
3. There should be stricter policies put in place that deal with abusive/aggressive staff and students such as tangible disciplinary action towards racial aggression (both micro and macro) exhibited in staff but also within the student body.

**Council resolves:**

1. For the executive committee to work with the University to create a campaign that is dedicated to helping BAME students and Staff, involving initiatives for BAME students/staff to be encouraged to apply to Aberdeen University as well as initiatives that involve the financial support of BAME students at the university, i.e. a scholarship/bursary system.
2. To make the repercussions of racial abuse clearer with disciplinary action taken, initiating policy reform specifically in relation to the handling of racial discrimination complaints, with the repercussions being suspension and expulsion.
3. For BAME student/staff related events to be vocalised more and prioritised through active engagement and a review of current complaint procedure.

**Secondary References**

1. [**https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/11-01-2018/sfr247-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers**](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/11-01-2018/sfr247-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers)
2. **Attached PDF of Nakamoto’s Representations January 2018**
1. <https://www.thegaudie.com/articles/allegations-of-racial-discrimination-within-aberdeen-medical-school> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education-news/racism-uk-university-students-campus-nus-incidents-a8390241.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/07/uk-university-professors-black-minority-ethnic> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.thegaudie.com/articles/allegations-of-racial-discrimination-within-aberdeen-medical-school> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)