



Diversity Strategy to 2015

What diversity means to us:

Diversity is different from equality and is based on a positive view of difference and valuing individuals for what they bring to our College. We want our College to be a place where being true to our values means that we recognise and celebrate the positive advantages of individual differences.

There is a social, business and moral imperative for Bedford College to ensure diversity in its governance, management, staffing, advisers, and subcontractors etc. in order to understand, reach out and meet the demands of our community.

At present our student body broadly reflects our community. The balance of our wider governance, management and advisers currently do not, and our commitment is to change this.

The main strategic imperatives/opportunities for the college over the next 5 years are:

- Continuing to grow our 16-18 numbers
- Developing provision for those aged 11-16
- Growing apprenticeships
- Developing partnerships with employers and universities to improve the job prospects of our students
- Growing our work with students with learning difficulties/disabilities
- Growing commercial activity in all programme areas

These can be advanced by making sure our people (including advisers and subcontractors) have and convey a deeper understanding of:

- youth culture and young people
- potential barriers to recruitment
- minority groups and the issues that most affect them, through an ability to genuinely communicate and listen to every part of our community
- the needs of individuals to support them to succeed.

Over the five year period our commitment will therefore be:

- To strengthen our governing body by bringing onto it high quality individuals with an understanding of young people and their culture; more high quality female governors; at least one governor with expertise in disability issues, and more high quality governors whose ethnicity is more representative of the community
- To increase the number of BME managers we employ
- To ensure that no teaching area has exclusively one type of staff e.g. all male/all female. To avoid stereotyping we will ensure our teachers reflect the wider community
- To collect and review all links with minority groups and develop a plan to increase and strengthen those links to improve the curriculum we offer
- To ensure that, when appointing advisers, we actively test the extent to which they will be able to engage with all appropriate communities, as part of the appointment process
- To create a category “diversity” against which complaints, suggestions, comments can be recorded according to protected characteristics so that the college ensures it responds properly to the needs of any minority or under-represented group
- To encourage every part of the college to broaden its customer base and to report progress regularly via the Equality & Diversity Group.

January 2011

Also see:

Bedford College Single Equality Scheme available at www.bedford.ac.uk