**The Race & Ethnic Minority New Deal:**

**Lancaster University Students’ Union Anti-Racist Long-Term Policy**

**Report from**

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**Racial & Ethnic Minorities Students’ Officer**

**Purpose of Report**

Paper for resolution

This paper is public.

**Recommendations**

**That the Committee approve the following:**

1. **The Principles as outlined in section 2**
2. **The Aims as outlined in Section 3**
3. **The Practices outlined in Section 4**
4. **The Practices outlined in Section 5**

**Report**

1. **Introduction**

The year 2020 revealed to the general population that discrimination and racist institutional barriers are still present within higher education. Lancaster University and the Lancaster Students’ Union has in the past had a turbulent relationship with the BAME community and has struggled to truly represent them in the best way possible.

Reports have detailed this turbulent relationship. Most notably, in the Built-in Barriers Report by the Why is My Curriculum White Campaign by AQSA AHMED AND DARAYUS BHARUCHA1, their report recommendations have been implemented variously throughout the student community and within the university.

In my time in office as the Lancaster SU Racial & Ethnic Minority Students Officer, it has become quite clear that there seems to be a lack of committed strategic planning to improve racial equality amongst both organisations. This is quite noticeable in the Students’ Union's annual report of 2020, where race wasn’t mentioned once. While the university's strategic EDI plan stated that they should obtain an award by the Race Equality Charter by 2020, but they still have not. Only after the national attention of the Black Lives Matter protests did the University finally commit to a timeline to sign up to the Race Equality Charter.

Thus, showcasing the vital importance of this Students’ Union to ensure that the University is not only committed but leading the way, with a bold and ambitious racial equality plan to show its dedication.

1. **Principles**
   1. The Union is and must be an Anti-Racist Organisation, committed to the elimination of racist practices and beliefs in our University Community and beyond.
   2. The union is and must be dedicated to tackling any forms of institutional forms of barriers that are placed upon any race and or ethnic members of the community.
   3. As a union, it must hold itself and the university account and that their commitment to anti-racism is unwavering.
2. **Aims**
   1. Decolonisation of the Curriculum
   2. Reducing Awarding Gap
   3. Mental Health Support
   4. Higher levels of engagement and representation
   5. Ensuring that relevant staff and student leaders are trained in various forms of anti-racism.
   6. Holding both the university and union account in their unwavering support to be an anti-racist institution.
3. **University-aimed practices**

This section details the recommended collaborative and lobbying efforts between the union and the university.

1. Any Future papers relating to the decolonising of the curriculum that either originated from the union or university be shared publicly to ensure complete transparency and accessibility.
2. Lobbying the university to ensure that more academic resources are allocated for students to ensure that is breaking language barriers and easier integration into their degree.
3. The union must lobby the University to track the progress of decolonisation efforts and the union must also track its own decolonisation efforts.
4. The union should lobby and collaborate with the university to ensure that more investment and allocation of resources into:

* Improving the mental health and well-being of all race and ethnic minorities
* Preventing hate crime within the university community
* Providing support to victims of any racial harassment and incidents

1. The Union must review its EDI policies within its own operational framework and should lobby the university to do the same

1. During Black History Month both University and the Union should collaborate to promote the month throughout the university, and it no longer be seen as the responsibility of the Student Union and students to organise but a collective effort.
2. The union must lobby the university, pressuring them to publish details on their plans on how they would decolonisation of the curriculum.
3. The union should lobby and collaborate whether current methods to report racial harassments and incidents on campus are accessible, transparent, and effective.
4. To improve communication and highlighting of the issues throughout the community, the term BAME should not be used as it marginalises ethnic groups and oversimply the complex the issue faces. The union must hold itself and the university accountable to this.
5. **Union-based practices**

This section lays out the recommended actions that the union should undertake to fulfil its commitment to be an anti-racist organisation.

1. A task force created by the Racial & Ethnic Minority Officer. Its responsibilities include:

* Assisting the union and university in the development of this policy
* Tracking the decolonisation efforts undertaken by the union and the university.
* Holding the union to account regarding that the history of the Sugarhouse Nightclub is present within the union
* Developing initiatives to increase engagement and representation from the community
* Update the union executive committee on a termly basis of the direction of this resolution

Membership of this task force will be open to the race and ethnic community and must be diverse in representation of its ethnic minorities and be approved by the Racial & Ethnic Minority officer and the VP of Welfare.

1. The union should educate and communicate to all members about institutional and societal barriers affecting different communities.
2. A sustainable form of anti-racist and inclusivity training should be delivered to all union staff, Full Time Officers, Liberation & Campaigns Officers, JCRs and any relevant members at the discretion of the union.
3. The union must work with relevant societies and communities to:

* Celebrate all faith and cultural events in a calendar format and support in assisting in these events
* Promote and highlight their issues towards all membership and the university community
* Assist in enhancing their sustainability and presence within the university community
* Lower appropriate barriers for any faith & cultural groups to be affiliated within the union
* Introduction of welcome guide for International Students and race & ethnic minorities students. In addition, add points of interests for faith & cultural groups, and emergency contact information.

1. The union should introduce a decolonise of the curriculum action plan and publish how not only how students can get involved but how the union will be held accountable.
2. **Conclusion**

This policy strategy should reinforce this union’s commitment to being an anti-racist institution and that this union is dedicated to:

* Decolonisation of the curriculum
* Reducing the awarding gap
* Providing sufficient mental health and well-being support to all race and ethnic minorities students
* Providing better opportunities and reducing any barriers to representation and engagement
* Ensuring that there is training for all students and staff for the distinct levels of racial micro-aggressions and racism that is still present within our community and in higher education.
* Holding the university management, our student officers, and this student Union to account in ensuring that this commitment to be anti-racist is unwavering.

Hence the students' union must approve and implement the Race and Ethnic Minority New Deal. This is an opportunity for the students' union to be an anti-racist institution and lobby the university to be the same.