

# **Equality and Diversity Report**

**August 2007 - July 2008**

**Summary, May 2009**

## **Equality and Diversity Report 2007-08 (Summary)**

At South East Essex College, we have an unrivalled record of transforming the lives of learners regardless of their age, race, gender or background. We are very proud that Ofsted (2008) has graded the promotion of Equality of Opportunity at the College as 'Outstanding'. Inspectors also found that:

- Positive action challenges discrimination and preconceptions with the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons being good and in some areas exemplary.
- The College's response to legislative requirements is good with all schemes in place.
- Learner success is recognised and celebrated well.
- Additional Learning Support, academic support and pastoral support are highly effective with students who receive additional learning support having higher success rates than other students.
- Students are seen as receiving good guidance and support with support for students entering the college from school as very good.

### **What Equality and Diversity Means to the College**

From tutors and support staff right through to our Student Services team, everyone is committed to ensuring that all our students have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Equally, we are committed to raising awareness of, and exposure to, different cultures, faiths and beliefs. Together with a wide range of partners from the NHS, Police, Chaplaincy, Alcohol Misuse Team and other local agencies, we have worked to raise awareness of a diverse range of issues. All of the services, activities and opportunities for young people we offer are based on the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes incorporated into the Children's Act 2004:

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoying and Achieving
4. Making a positive contribution
5. Achieving economic well being

The College continues to be well resourced, has high quality facilities and promotes a healthy and safe learning environment where learners are treated as individuals in a way that best suits their learning styles, motivation and aspiration.

### **Student Feedback**

The impact of our services is evident in student feedback. A staggering 99% of students surveyed recently said they were happy with our support services. The record of achievement of our students with specific learning support needs is excellent with 100% of students with hearing/visual impairment achieving their qualification whilst 100% of students receiving support for dyslexia also achieved their qualifications.

We take an open and engaging approach to engaging students and supporting equality and diversity. The introduction of the student intranet forum for the Student Council was invaluable in capturing and responding to the learner voice. In an average month the Student Council Forum on SeeNet receives over 450 hits and since the beginning of the 07/08 academic year has hosted over 900 posts around 50 topics, 20 of which have been taken forward for discussion at Student and College Council meetings.

### **Approach to teaching and learning**

The College's approach to teaching and learning continues to be learner centred and focuses on meeting the needs of the individual whilst continually monitoring the

improvements in retention, achievement, success rates and progression. The continual development of equality and diversity practice is an integral component regarding College improvements and reflects the legislative requirements, inclusivity and cultural aims and aspirations.

### **Management of Equality and Diversity**

The Equality and Diversity Group continues to meet regularly and develops and implements the monitoring requirements for the equality and diversity strategies in line with legislative requirements. Work completed by the group in 2007/08 comprised:

- Updating the Race, Disability, and Gender Equality Schemes
- Further development of the Equality Impact Assessment model
- Project to further develop Race Equality throughout the College via Local Intervention Development Fund (LIDF)
- Project to further embed the Learner Voice throughout the College via LIDF.

The Equality and Diversity Group reports progress twice a year to the Academic Board and produces the annual Equality and Diversity Report in partnership with Quality, Human Resources, Marketing, Staff Development and Student Support Services.

The format and recommendations in the report reflect key priorities for Equality and Diversity and impacts on the whole College.

### **Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs)**

The College set its original EDIMs in agreement with the LSC in 2006. The success of meeting these targets has been variable across the years and work is being undertaken to re-evaluate the actual EDIMs and to set measurable criteria which can be monitored across the year and action planned accordingly.

The EDIMs achieved within the student category related to achievement and closing gaps between males and females and students with a declared disability or no disability. National issues regarding students not declaring their ethnicity also applies to the College. The EDIM related to this was achieved in 06/07 and was only just missed in 07/08. This could relate to the higher number of students enrolling in 07/08 at the College and practices during enrolment need to be reviewed.

The original EDIM targets set for staff, with hindsight, were over ambitious and will need to be revised but despite this there is still a three-year trend of improvement related to retention and promotion of BME staff.

Action to be taken to address all the above:

- Learners will be given an additional opportunity to declare their ethnicity. Data completion will be checked during Review Weeks.
- Ethnic minority groups who do not appear to be achieving their full potential will be monitored on a regular basis and actions taken to address issues.
- Focus groups will be developed with BME Groups of staff to identify any issues
- Staff will be encouraged to join a Staff BME Group to make recommendations to the College to improve working practices and to look at promotional opportunities within the College.

**Sue Coole**  
**Director of Student & Community Services**

**May 2009**