



Inside:

*Page 1

Welcome
Equality and Diversity Group
Equality and Diversity Handbooks
International Partnerships

— — —

*Page 2

Coming Out - A Student's Experience
Kathakali
Student Successes

— — —

*Page 3

Student Successes
Legislation
Equality Monitoring Survey
Events
Future Events
Get Involved

Welcome

Welcome to Yeovil College's fourth Equality and Diversity Newsletter. We aim to keep everyone informed of how the college is responding to equality and diversity issues, the events that have taken place and successes we wish to celebrate.

Equality and Diversity Group

The Group, chaired by James Hampton, the Principal, continues to meet on a regular basis. Members include staff representatives from across the college as well as a student representative. We are delighted that a member of the Somerset Racial Equality Council has also joined the Group. We are currently looking to recruit at least one more student representative to the Group. If you are interested, please contact Angela Coward (angela.coward@yeovil.ac.uk).

Equality and Diversity Handbooks

The college has produced a series of handbooks entitled 'All different, all equal' to provide information for staff and students. The three produced to date focus on 'Disability', 'Race and Belief' and 'Sexual Orientation and Transgender'. Further handbooks are planned to cover the remainder of the nine protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010. The handbooks are available on Moodle and the staff portal, or in hard copy from Sophie Robinson (sophie.robinson@yeovil.co.uk).

International Partnerships

In July 2011 Yeovil College welcomed 23 students and teachers from China for a stay of two weeks. The students undertook classes in English and visited London, Bath, Bristol and places of interest in Somerset. The visitors stayed with local host families to experience the English way of life. We hope to welcome more students from China and other countries, such as India, over the next year.

Coming Out - A Student's Experience

I first came out when I was 16; this was a really hard time for me. Not only did I have to tell my friends, but I had to tell my family.

When I told my friends they took it well, all apart from one. She didn't feel comfortable with it and chose to avoid me throughout the rest of school. This really upset me and I found it a struggle that one of my friends had basically "disowned me". All that was going through my mind was "if my best friend is acting like this, what's my Mum going to say".

I decided to tell my Mum on a normal Saturday night out. She was pretty drunk and I was hoping in a way she wouldn't remember me telling her. A bit like a test run to see how she would take it - but she did remember. When I told her, her exact words were: "I wanted you to grow up and be a geography teacher and have kids". At the time I was upset and we didn't talk for the rest of the night, but after thinking about it I realised that I could still have kids. I could still be a geography teacher.

So is she okay with it? Now she seems fine. She still hints at me to be with a lad, but she gets on well with my partner and has realised I'm happy.

The rest of my family also seem okay with it. I think my Nan took it the worse, but then again she probably gets on better with my partner than anyone else.

My friend from school, and I now talk and are planning to get a place together when my partner goes to University, so in the long run it all turned out okay.

It's just getting there that's the struggle. I didn't have any support. I chose to keep myself to myself. However there are plenty of groups out there that can help you.

Kathakali

In October 2011, the college experienced performances of Kathakali, by an internationally renowned group who were visiting Somerset. The Group uses ancient language and religion to perform dramas based on Hindu stories. The performances incorporate regional drama, dancing, music and literature. Rather like the original British theatre, Kathakali female characters are played by men. The demonstration was led by Vijaya, who is considered to be one of the world's leading exponents of this characterization. An evening event commenced with an Indian meal, in the newly refurbished Renaissance Restaurant, with food prepared by Luthfur Rahman, Managing Director of the Viceroy Restaurant, and his expert team, who specialise in South Indian dishes.



Student Successes

Three sports stars from Yeovil College won a total of nine medals at the Nationwide Junior Disability Athletics Championships in July 2011. In all, Alex Cossins, Jordan Muir-Gamble and Tom Minchington won five gold, two silver and two bronze medals as part of the South West team. The team, made up of the best disabled athletes from all areas of the region, also won the overall competition by a massive 200 points. In all, more than 300 British athletes took part in the championships at the UCLan Sports Arena .

Yeovil College's Faculty of Arts, Media & Publishing raised nearly £1500 for charity at its annual Arts show. This year's event, entitled 'MADE' highlighted the creative talents of the College's top Art, Design, Media, Music and Performing Arts students and was attended by record numbers of friends, family and special guests. As well as the Arts exhibition, the students presented a diverse night of musical and theatrical

entertainment for the grand opening, including extracts from the 2011 smash hit production of 'Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street' and Shakespeare's Henry V.

A group of BND Business students presented cheques to Yeovil College's Children's Centre and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Trust following a number of fundraising projects. This is the seventh year that the students have used the 'Business Event' module of their course to raise money for charity. The students arranged a number of events, giving them the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom and gain hands-on experience of event planning, management and many other business skills.

Legislation

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The Act places a duty on all public bodies to ensure that they consider the needs of all individuals in their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

As required, by the Act, the College has produced its first Equality Duty which is available on the college website. The Equality Duty describes how the College will fulfill its statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and actively value diversity within its community. We wish to provide a working and learning environment that acknowledges the richness of diversity as well as valuing and managing each individual's equality of opportunity within the College. We will oppose all forms of discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The Duty will be effective from July 2011 until July 2014. The College is also required to produce and publish clear equality objectives by April 2012.

Equality Monitoring Survey

The Equality Act introduced the nine protected characteristics of disability, age, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership. Currently the college only collects information about the age, gender and ethnicity of staff. In order to meet our duty, under the Act, we need to have information about the other protected characteristics (religion/belief, sexual orientation and disability). We have therefore designed an equality monitoring survey which has been approved by the Trade Unions and Corporation. The survey will be completely anonymous and confidential and the information will be published only in statistical form. A similar survey will also be sent to students. We will use the information to set key Equality Objectives.

Events

A diary of events to promote national/international days are now embedded within the College calendar and are being proactively celebrated in a variety of ways (e.g. Holocaust Memorial Day, World Aids Day, World Mental Health Day, Anti-bullying Week etc.)

Future Events

1 December 2011 – World Aids Day

9 December Yeovil College Carol Service

10 December 2011 - Human Rights Day

For further information contact (angela.coward@yeovil.ac.uk or ruth.morgan@yeovil.ac.uk)

Get Involved

If you want to get involved with E and D at Yeovil College, contact either Angela Coward (angela.coward@yeovil.ac.uk) or student representative Ben Adams (birdhouse274@hotmail.co.uk).