

Global Ethnic Majority Motion

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This Union Notes:

1. The term 'BME' (Black and Minority Ethnic) has been criticised for over-emphasising certain ethnic groups while excluding others, whilst also portraying these groups as minorities in relation to whiteness, leading to an imbalanced representation of diverse communities.
2. In March 2021, the UK GOV's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended the discontinuation of the terms 'BME' and 'BAME,' in recognition of the many ethnic groups that fall under this category.
3. Research by the Race Disparity Unit revealed that ethnic communities are three times more likely to agree that the term 'BAME' is unhelpful and contributes to misrepresentation.
4. Many organisations are adopting the term 'Global Ethnic Majority' to reflect the fact that people of African, Asian, Indigenous, and Latin descent make up 85% of the world's population, and the UK government's official guidelines encourage the use of 'ethnicity' rather than 'race' in writing and avoid terms like 'non-white,' which perpetuates the view that all other groups are defined in relation to whiteness.
5. The proposed revision of marginalising language is not meant to imply that white ethnic groups are inferior or less important; and instead, this proposal seeks to recognise and uplift all ethnic groups without perpetuating a system that defines some as minorities in relation to others. When ethnic groups are no longer categorised as minority based on colonial hierarchies, it creates space for true equality and shared solidarity.

The Union Believes:

1. Decolonising our systems and institutions requires us to move beyond the racial categories that have been established through colonialism and eugenics, which sought to impose racial hierarchies and categorised people based on perceived biological differences; and it is these categorisations that continue to marginalise ethnic groups by defining them as minorities against a white European norm.

2. Adopting the term 'Global Ethnic Majority' (GEM) is essential in reframing how we see ethnic diversity, as shifting from 'BAME' or 'BME' language will allow for more inclusive representation, dismantling colonial narratives that portray cultural communities as inferior minorities.
3. Referring to ethnic groups individually, as recommended by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, will avoid grouping together distinct cultures to allow for a diverse approach to representation. The usage of BME places a large emphasis on Blackness as a universal term, which then promotes the ideology of 'Political Blackness' and does not allow for students to grow their own cultural communities outside of this identity. Whilst Political Blackness was historically used to create a sense of community amongst ethnic minority groups who engaged in civil rights activism, this perspective in the modern sense overlooks the specific needs and challenges of African and African-Caribbean communities, and forces ethnic students to navigate a space where their identities are misinterpreted into a broader, and sometimes inaccurate, racial categorisation.
4. The current use of 'BME' also allows institutions to misrepresent the specific challenges faced by some communities, creating an illusion of progress and diversity; so by adopting a new structure, the union can ensure genuinely organic representation for all ethnic groups on campus.

The Union Resolves

1. To change the naming of the BME Officer role to the 'Global Ethnic Majority Officer', with the intention to develop the areas of concern that the GEM Officer can be working towards - this is including, but not limited to: working with the Welfare and Liberation Officer on the inclusion, welfare, and representation of students from all Global Majority backgrounds (including, but not limited to, African, Middle Eastern, South Asian, East Asian, Indigenous, Latin, South American, Romani and Traveller - and all other GEM groups who are present on campus.).
2. The Global Ethnic Majority Officer should seek to gather feedback from student representatives who are culturally competent to speak on issues that affect Global Ethnic Majority Communities, with an emphasis on the lived experiences of individuals.
3. To phase out the use of 'BAME' and 'BME' in all official union communications and structures, replacing them with 'Global Ethnic Majority', which reflects the global majority status of the ethnic groups present on campus.

4. To actively engage in the process of decolonising the union's language, policies, and initiatives by dismantling the grouping of racial categories, ensuring all ethnic identities are celebrated on their own terms and not minoritised in relation to whiteness - without excluding or demonising white communities from marginalised and disadvantaged backgrounds.
5. To communicate with both Goldsmiths staff and students about the historical construction of race, and how it continues to affect systems of power today to empower the Goldsmiths Community to challenge these structures and promote inclusivity and equity within institutional frameworks.