INTRODUCTION

1. This **fourth** Annual Report covers the period July 2006 to July 2007 and its purpose is to:

   a. **Section 1** Highlight the major activities which have been undertaken during the period;

   b. **Section 2** Assess where significant improvements are required;

   c. **Section 3** Identify our future priorities.

SECTION 1
HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES

2. Section 1 addresses the six equality strands, namely: age, disability, gender, race, religious belief and sexual orientation. Clearly, however, these strands are linked because inequalities tend to be clustered. Additionally, this Section covers general equality and diversity activity.

AGE EQUALITY

3. In late 2005, we established our Working Group on Age in order to prepare for the legislation that came into effect in October 2006. A comprehensive communications campaign was devised to get the message across to staff and students about the implications of the legislation and its day-to-day effects. A series of lunchtime “Age Information Points” were held at all campuses, whereby staff and students had the opportunity to get clarification on any aspect of the legislation and also to be briefed on what changes the College was making. Staff were invited to attend discussion groups to explore if they had experienced age discrimination at Imperial or age-related issues had affected their work. The feedback helped to ensure that the Working Group was addressing the most important processes and procedures (concerns focused on recruitment and gender for older staff and progression and promotion for younger staff).

4. We worked with the “owners” of College policies and procedures to examine them in detail to ensure that they did not contain age bias, that they were demonstrably age neutral and that they did not portray old or young stereotypes. Our staff development courses were changed where necessary – for example, on recruitment and selection and use of language workshops, and an entirely new Retirement Procedure was introduced.
DISABILITY EQUALITY

5. Ensuring access, and equality of opportunity and treatment for those with disabilities are the fundamental principles underlying our Disability Equality Scheme and associated Action Plan (published in December 2006 in line with legislative requirements). https://www.imperial.ac.uk/spectrum/hr/hr_info/equality/disability/

6. In order to minimise and eradicate negative experiences that disabled staff and students might encounter, activity has concentrated upon staff training (e.g. practical guidance on dyslexia, autism etc., disability equality briefings), the learning and teaching environment, web accessibility, staffing matters, sport and leisure services and buildings and design.

7. Of particular note is the extensive estate-related activity whereby access issues are a major priority for refurbishments and new build projects on all campuses. One example is Southside Residential Halls which has a significant number of specially adapted rooms for students with mobility and other impairments. This accommodation will be attractive to all visitors, including those with disabilities, who can use these facilities during vacations.

8. Coordinated from the centre by the Disabilities Officer, the Departmental Disability Liaison Officers continue to play a vital role in helping to embed positive, local support for students with disabilities. They also provide a valuable source of information so that we are able to learn from, and build upon, their experiences.

GENDER EQUALITY

9. The Equality Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on the College to have a Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and associated Action Plan and ours was published, as required, in April 2007. https://www.imperial.ac.uk/spectrum/hr/hr_info/equality/gender/ The aim of our GES is to continue to build gender equality into all relevant aspects and functions of our work, and our Action Plan for 2007-2010 concentrates upon our priority areas of employment and educational provision. Our objectives for these two areas were formulated taking into account the College’s Strategic Objectives, major findings from qualitative and quantitative data and feedback from consultation.

10. Our GES contains a detailed resume of recent activity in relation to promoting an increasingly positive and inclusive working and studying environment. Highlights include:

a. a significant investment in our Early Years Education Centre, which has resulted in doubling the number of places and thus has benefited male and female parents who are either staff or students; the decision to expand was also a key plank of our attraction strategy for female academics because of the importance they place upon work-based childcare;

b. activities under the auspices of the Academic Opportunities Committee which included: information sessions for both men and women on all aspects of the academic promotions process; the establishment of Faculty Ambassadors for Women – senior female academics who act as a conduit and contact for information in order to provide local support; centenary-related events to celebrate the achievements of female scientists; actions at departmental and
divisional level that build upon the recognition given to the College through the 2006 Athena Silver Scientific Women’s Academic Network (SWAN) Award; simplifying the Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Awards and extending the benefit to all female academic staff who return from maternity leave so that they may concentrate on their research for twelve months (previously six);

**c.** activities targeted at research staff and postgraduates whereby the Pro Rector for Postgraduate and International Affairs works with the Graduate Schools, the Roberts’ Project and the Inspire Project to provide innovative professional and career development programmes and mentoring, coaching, career counselling; some events have been designed specifically for females where it has proved positive to have single gender activities;

**d.** particularly high gender segregation in science and engineering predominantly affects students, academics and research staff but we are keenly aware that we must promote gender equality amongst staff in Support and Academic Services – actions include equal pay reviews, monitoring the results of promotions, being responsive to requests for flexible working from both men and women, promoting “no tolerance” to bullying or harassment, providing comprehensive personal development opportunities;

**e.** networking events for female students and female support staff have called upon internal and alumni role models to share their experiences and inspire self-confidence and high achievement.

**RACE EQUALITY**

11. Imperial as One, the College’s black and minority ethnic (BME) advisory group, had its second anniversary in July 2007. This event celebrated key achievements over the past year and photographs were on display.
12. Supported by HR, Imperial as One spearheaded many events and activities during the period covered by this Report and particular highlights were as follows:

- **a.** the introduction of *Creative Futures – Achieving Your Potential*; as a contribution to our widening participation work, this interactive learning day was designed to encourage BME schoolchildren to aim high, and to enthuse them about science, engineering and higher education (the initiative has continued with two further days being held in October 2007);

- **b.** the above, held in October 2006, was part of our Black History Month activities; two other events also promoted good practice in race relations and equality, showcasing BME talents and forging links with local communities and organisations – a Sharing Knowledge and Good Practice Symposium and an evening of music and drama paying tribute to Mary Seacole (Diwali is being celebrated this year);

- **c.** Imperial as One organised a Student Forum *Marketing Yourself Creatively*, held in January 2007 and aimed at BME students – the session provided practical CV writing advice, guidance from top city recruiters and participants benefited from hearing Imperial academic staff discuss their links with business and industry;

- **d.** social events, aimed at celebrating diversity and bringing people together, such as celebrating Chinese New Year in February 2007 and dancing and comedy at SPLASH in March 2007.

13. Imperial as One members continued to act as mentors and guest speakers so as to encourage others. The structured mentoring programme, and attendance at personal development courses, have also been beneficial. A Research Group has been established with a remit to gather evidence and make recommendations for influencing and progressing race equality in College.

14. The College’s Director of Access continues to lead and develop our admissions strategy. This includes the Outreach Programme, which aims to increase educational aspirations in boys and girls, and the areas with which the College works includes many with high BME populations. Approximately 100 schools are visited annually and over 27,000 pupils and about 5,000 parents have been involved over the past five years. Our widening participation projects e.g. INSPIRE, METRIC, Pimlico Connection, Student Shadowing and e-mentoring schemes are designed to encourage pupils to fulfil their potential through access to higher education.

**RELIGIOUS BELIEF EQUALITY**

15. While recognising that the College is a secular organisation, in line with legislation and our aim to promote equality and diversity, we are committed to respecting the different faiths that are held by our students and staff. For example:

- **a.** the College Chaplain liaises and works with other faith leaders in the community and these links are advertised to staff, students and new Personal Tutors; the Chaplain and Pro Rector Educational Quality also considered and responded to the issues raised in the Siddiqui Report to the government “Islam at Universities in England”, April 2007;

- **b.** case studies are used in a wide range of formal training sessions and these underpin information on the law, what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, and
raise awareness and expertise in recognising discrimination and harassment on the grounds of religious belief;

c. information about faith issues in the workplace are presented to new staff at corporate inductions e.g. scenarios are used to trigger discussion and reflection and expert commentary is provided from a legal and best-practice perspective.

16. Ensuring fair and equal treatment is vital during the allocation of accommodation to students. Following student feedback in the 2006 Pastoral Survey, our Residences Services identified that it needed to recognise religious belief more fully and, for example, responded positively to requests from female Muslim students to be accommodated together and to have sole use of bathroom and kitchen facilities.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION EQUALITY

17. Our LGB Advisory Group has been formed and members meet regularly. Membership has grown rapidly and close links have been formed with the Students’ Union IQ group.

18. As a Stonewall Diversity Champion, the College participated in the 2007 Workplace Equality Index for the first time. We gained a score of 54, with a requirement to reach 63 to be in the top 100 employers. In order to increase our score, we need to have more public examples of support for gay staff and students, include sexual orientation more obviously in our policies and procedures and include monitoring. The latter has been achieved partially via the Recruitment Monitoring form (which also now asks applicants to disclose their religion if they wish). We are waiting for technological changes to go-live in order to invite current employees to disclose this information if they wish.

GENERAL ACTIVITY

Staff Development Access

19. In the 05-06 year, 21% of attendees on College-organised staff development workshops were from a BME background (77.7% declared their ethnicity as White and 1.3% were unknown). This is approximately equivalent to the overall staff profile for that year whereby 19.1% of those who have declared their ethnic origin are BME (75.1% White and 5.8% unknown). There was no significant percentage difference between all of the ethnic groups in relation to uptake e.g. 50% of Chinese staff, 56.2% of Black staff, 46.9% of White staff were attendees. In relation to gender, 41.9% of staff were female in that year and they accounted for 56.2% of attendees. This gender discrepancy needs to be examined to identify if there an access problem for some men, or whether more women than men are in roles where updating is required, or more women than men value development.

Communications, Public Relations and Consultation

20. Activity has been extensive. Highlights in addition to those already mentioned include:

- the third Annual Diversity Lecture, given in February 2007 by Trevor Phillips, who asked whether we are a nation at ease with diversity; he called upon scientists to help provide and analyse data to measure the causes of bias in order to address inequalities;
• the May 2007 Athena Lecture was given by Professor Dame Julia Higgins, then Principal of the Faculty of Engineering, who gave a resume of her career and the achievements of the Academic Opportunities Committee, which she chaired and was a founding member;

• discussion groups have helped to inform the questions that will be asked in the College’s staff survey and focus groups of men and women were run to inform our Gender Equality Scheme;

• our advisory groups e.g. Imperial as One, LGB and Disability groups have provided us with ideas for future activities, information on their experiences of being staff or students at Imperial and have contributed to setting priorities;

• articles about equality and diversity activity in the Reporter and our revamped equality pages on Spectrum;

• the Tanaka Business School hosted Diversity in Leadership and Diversity and Gender events.

Working with the Local Community

21. The Volunteer Centre has continued to ensure that many local community projects address equality issues. Four notable projects were established in the last year: the Science Club Project which focuses upon providing educational activity for BME women; the Independent Monitoring Board Project (connected to the Home Office) where volunteers monitor detention conditions and the treatment of detainees; the African Group Project, run by Look Ahead Housing Association; the English Language Support Project which provides language sessions for overseas students and research staff and also fosters cultural interaction between people from different backgrounds.

22. These are successful examples of corporate social responsibility which promote equal opportunities and help to eliminate discrimination. The College allows staff time away from work to attend, activities are developmental for those who participate and the College’s profile is enhanced within the local community. The latest volunteer profile (1,082 people at 1 June 2007) has not changed much from last year - 60% female, 10% staff, 63% undergraduates, 20% PhD students, 3% alumni or family members (4% undisclosed). Of those students, by fee status, 47% were home, 44% were overseas and 9% were EU.

Harassment and Bullying

23. The Harassment and Bullying Policy has been revised, taking into account the experiences of those who have complained of harassment and those who provide guidance and support e.g. the unions, HR and the Harassment Support Contacts (HSC). The HSC booklet was updated in September 2006 to include the details and photographs of newly-trained Contacts, some of whom are managers.
SECTION 2
ASSESSING WHAT IMPROVEMENTS ARE REQUIRED

Monitoring

24. We continue to monitor an extremely wide range of data sets to analyse trends and this monitoring activity is undertaken predominantly by HR and Registry. Monitoring improvements are required to:

• identify whether there are patterns of inequality e.g. data is collected but, sometimes, there is insufficient analysis so that it is not possible to feed the results into our decision and policy making processes;

• disaggregate more of our current data so that we can identify if there are clusters of inequality; for example, analyse the impact of a particular procedure on BME, male, disabled students rather than just considering data that looks at one or two aspects;

• provide Heads with constructive data so that they can be more proactive locally.

Representation

25. Our student population is ethnically diverse. For those students who have disclosed their ethnic origin, 44.2% of the 06-07 intake (43.7% in 05-06) represent 13 separate BME groups. Of these, the largest groups are Indian and Chinese, with 11.1% and 10.9% of the total known student population respectively, and with Black students making up 5%. While the number of BME students is increasing, however, we are not making much progress with one of our workforce composition targets, namely whereby the ethnic diversity of academic and research staff better reflects that of our students. Even recognising that this is an ambitious target, BME academic and research staff accounted for 19.7% of the total in 05-06. We will continue to aim to meet this target by focusing upon recruitment, development and retention strategies.

26. The number of female students is increasing e.g. 4,553 (05-06) and 4,814 (06-07) but the percentage of female to male students has remained static at 37%. There are also considerably more male than female students in the Engineering and Natural Sciences faculties. We will continue to tackle this by our widening participation activities, and assessing programme content and teaching methods to break down stereotyping so that both female and male students report that course content is stimulating, and that both continue to be encouraged to consider engineering or science as a career.

27. The Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee agreed specific race equality targets for the period March 07 – March 08. One target was to increase the representation of BME staff across all job families by 1% on the November 2006 figure (20.5%) and to increase BME representation in the more senior roles (1%) - the figures for both have been static for two years. Another target focused upon increasing the uptake of BME staff on recorded College staff development activities by 1% on the 05-06 figure and, importantly, with BME staff reporting to us that they have been able to put their learning into practical use. Attendance figures are as follows: in 04-05, 18.4% of those with a declared ethnic origin had a BME background; in 05-06, this figure had increased to 21%.
28. Analysis of our workforce composition shows that there is also poor representation of women in senior management and these figures have not improved in the last year. As part of our equal pay review, we will be conducting a recruitment and selection study to identify, for example, if we are attracting female and BME applicants for the more senior roles and, if we are, why they are not being appointed. This activity will take place alongside our regular monitoring of promotions, which is another factor which can affect progression and turnover significantly.

Local Responsibility

29. We have not succeeded in achieving one of the Management Board’s recommendations from its consideration of last year’s Annual Report i.e. to have a nominated person in each department/division who is responsible for moving the equality agenda forward. We have found that staff are more responsive to being responsible for a specific equality strand e.g. disability or academic women etc. This results in a lack of coordinated impact across College, and Heads are not able to focus actions upon one individual, but it might be more effective in practice. This will need to be kept under review.

Impact Assessments

30. We have not achieved cross-College mainstreaming of impact assessment at the policy formulation or revision stage. We need to provide user-friendly guidance and devise more watertight documentary mechanisms to give us evidence that impact assessments have been undertaken, and that action is being undertaken to deal with any adverse effects that may have been identified during the analysis.

Responding to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC - now the Equality and Human Rights Commission – EHRC)

31. Following a complaint to the DRC by a former disabled student, the College has been required to review its procedures and practices in relation to disabled students. Specifically, we were asked to review the accessibility of the website and to examine how our policies and procedures reinforce, or breach, data protection, confidentiality and dissemination of information.

32. We commissioned an expert on disability issues, who is an ex-academic, to undertake the review. The first part of the review, relating to the website, has been completed and an in-depth “strengths and weaknesses” analysis has been conducted in conjunction with disabled students and key staff. Seven recommendations have been proposed to the new Pro Rector Education. In short, while those individuals responsible for disabled students take their duties extremely seriously, some procedures need updating and made more explicit in order to ensure better coordination. The EHRC experts have been supportive throughout and we will continue to work closely with them to ensure that the necessary actions are implemented. Part 2 of the review will be conducted in the latter part of this year.

33. In addition to the review for the EHRC, the retiring Disabilities Officer has also identified a need for enhanced coordination by the centre for both staff and students in relation to the sites situated away from South Kensington. More proactive local action is required to ensure compliance with the College’s policies and procedures, particularly in laboratory settings. Initially, the new Disabilities Officer will work with HR and Departmental Disability Liaison Officers to plan how these gaps can be addressed.
SECTION 3
FUTURE PRIORITIES

34. Our priorities in the coming year are to:

   a. address the areas that require improvement outlined in Section 2 above;
   
   b. implement the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan;
   
   c. implement the Gender Equality Scheme Action Plan;
   
   d. implement positive action initiatives to address under representation and promote greater retention;
   
   e. increase the number of equality and diversity activities designed for senior staff to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities;
   
   f. work with a particular faculty on setting specific equality targets and support follow-up action.

Management Board Consideration

35. The Management Board is asked to:

   a. note the major activities that have been undertaken and the areas which have been identified as still requiring improvement;

   b. highlight any issues that members consider to be of particular importance and make recommendations.

Professor David Begg, Chair of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee
October 2007