Dear all,

Happy new year! We hope you all had a lovely break, and the year is off to a bright start!

Ask for ‘Grace & Green’ campaign – RLB added as an additional collection point. Since the 8th of November, the university has provided free organic menstrual products for our students, which has been named the Grace and Green campaign, to find out more please click here. Originally there were three collection points, however, the RLB reception is now an additional collection point for students.

Launch of the Faculty EDI Webpage - upcoming
We have been working towards having a dedicated EDI page for our Faculty over the last few months, which we hope to launch this month. The page will promote EDI news, articles, blogs/reflections, successes and relevant projects, which will help raise awareness of EDI issues, raise the profile of authors and highlight our commitment to the University's EDI agenda.

Taking the time to pause and reflect
Dr. Kate Strudwick, Dean of Lincoln Academy of Learning and Teaching (LALT), shares her reflections on preparing and planning for meeting challenges within teaching and learning and student experiences.

‘Say my name’
In her blog, ‘Say my name’, Dr. Jane Bryan, a Reader in the Warwick Law School and Lead of the University of Warwick Community Values Education Programme (CVEP), highlights the importance of names in building inclusive institutions.

“Our names are key to our identity yet are rarely respected in the same way as other elements of our identity. University cultures normalise some international students adopting ‘English’ names to ease interactions and jokes and comments about names, for example, are all too often dismissed as harmless with no acknowledgement of the damage they can cause to an individual’s sense of identity or belonging, or that they can amount to instances of microaggression or
harassment, as in the case of cricketer Azeem Rafiq’s misnaming as ‘Steve’ at Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

In a diverse learning community, we will all encounter names with which we are unfamiliar but there is little honest dialogue about how to navigate this uncertainty and limited understanding of the impact on individuals of having a university experience with a name that is routinely mispronounced, or adapted or changed to ease interactions with others...

**Celebration of Life Month**

**Sheila Benedis – poet and artist. A Celebration of Life**

The below is presented by Russell Evans, Associate Lecturer from the School of Society and Culture:

Sheila Benedis is an artist and poet living in Westchester, New York. Sheila was born in the midst of the Great Depression in the early 1930s to a middle class home in New York, a quiet and observant child. But she knew she was different growing up. She found noisy environments difficult and making friends impossible. She tells how she struggled with people, how to relate to them, in her ‘archive of miscommunication.’

Sheila studied mathematics and art in the mid 1950s in Massachusetts and soon found her own language in colour, shape, and sculpture and became a successful artist, specialising in making her own paper for richly colourful artist’s books. But throughout the decades Sheila struggled with interpersonal relations and some sensory issues, and simply believed there was something wrong with her. But this changed when she was diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome much later in life. Everything started to make sense and she joined other newly-diagnosed adults to share their experiences. Sheila now celebrates her own unique approach to life as an older person with Asperger’s – creating work in art and poetry which leaves her mark on the world in her own way. She truly found her voice.

In the two poems here she describes her life. The first is about her childhood, written in a Japanese form known as **haibun**, which uses a short piece of prose text followed by a haiku-style section; the second is a poem about her Asperger’s. See her work here: [https://bluedoorartcenter.org/portfolios/sheila-benedis](https://bluedoorartcenter.org/portfolios/sheila-benedis)
Needlepoint  
Sheila Benedis  
My family led a comfortable life materially. My father was a lawyer and my mother a teacher; however they lacked cultural interests. They were consumed with making a living and did not introduce me to art or music. They had a different set of values. I deeply felt the lack of culture. I was not allowed to go to concerts. There was no opportunity for creative expression. I felt tension in the marriage. I hardly knew my father. He was there, but not for me. My mother wanted a social butterfly for a child, but I had Aspergers. She couldn’t understand my being a top student and lacking social skills, which she felt was much easier. I felt rejection, a lack of love. I felt it very deeply. It affected my whole life. I had difficulty forming friendships. Those I made; inevitably I lost. I didn’t have art or poetry to relieve the stress. There was no balance in my life. Aspergers took over before I came out of the darkness into the light. Loneliness resonated throughout my life.

My mother was from a poor immigrant family. They Struggled. They bought a building in Hicksville, Long Island on the main street and ran a dry goods store. Above the store was their simple apartment. Her father died young, leaving his uneducated wife to fulfil his dream. Grandma was left to run the dry goods store and sent the three children to college. They would have professions, so they could step up in the world. Her brothers became a dentist and a lawyer. They opened their offices in the front rooms of the apartment and made a lot of money in real estate. My mother, the eldest, graduated Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa. She majored in mathematics and became a teacher. She was desperate to get married and she finally found an attorney to marry in Connecticut. She dreaded having to leave her beloved mother, but aspired to a better life. My father bought a house, where my family lived. She detested it since it was too close to the street, a sign of lower prestige. Her grandfather gave her sterling silver flatware. She furnished the unwanted house with Louis XIV furniture and eggplant carpeting to add to the prestige; however she never read a book in this new life. The only person she ever truly loved was her mother. She produced a solitary needlepoint for this new life, a supposed sign of culture. It hung on the wall forever, never mentioned. No sign of art or culture ever appeared in my life. The needlepoint led a lonely existence. I became the needlepoint.
Needlepoint hanging on the wall,
Passed by, but
Never noticed,
Never mentioned,
Led a lonely existence

Asperger’s
(Erasure poem from ‘Letting the Emptiness Become My Government’ by Marcus Jackson)

A slow April rain
Blurring and nurturing a landscape
For Decades I’ve been pipe-dreaming
of finding a life
while compiling
An archive of miscommunication
Many disgraces
Promises to evict the misgivings
Emptiness became my friend
Eventually my hopeful face survived

Sanctuary Scholarships
(Open for applications until Monday 28 February)
The University’s Sanctuary Scholarships programme is now open for applications. The scheme, organised by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team, offers three fee-waivers for asylum seekers living in the UK per year plus an annual contribution toward study costs. See more about the scheme and how scholars can apply.

Looking after yourself while working from home
The staff development team has a dedicated page that focuses on taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing whilst working from home. It offers links, connects to staff networks, and supports those working from home, which can be viewed here. Please also refer to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing page.
**EventBrite**

EventBrite is offering various wellbeing sessions online for free:
- **Laughter and Yoga for women and girls** (Wednesday 12th January 5 PM)
- **Healing: Mind Body and Soul** (Saturday 15th January 12 PM)
- **Yoga: Stretch, Breath and Connect** (Sunday 9th January 11 AM)

**Sexual Offences Support and Advice Drop-in**

Confidential sexual assault support and advice is available through one-to-one discussion with Anni Parr, Sexual Offences Liaison Officer from Devon and Cornwall Police.

All sessions are between 18:00 and 20:00 via MS Teams - to register for a one-to-one discussion with Anni, please email her at 11875@dc.police.uk and she will then contact you to set up the meeting. This is available for staff and students.

**Pastoral and spiritual support events**

The Pastoral and Spiritual Support team offers support for the whole University community, whether you think of yourself as spiritual, religious, a person of faith, or of no faith at all.

They are now open every weekday from 10:00-16:00 and have regular events taking place during the semester which can be viewed [here](#).

**Advanced HE updates:**

The programme for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2022: Inclusive Institutions in Action is now available to view or download. The conference will take place on 16-17 March 2022 in Manchester.

**Applications now open for the Strategic Leadership Programme**

The **deadline for applications is 4 April 2022** and successful applicants are allocated places on a first-come, first-served basis. Please click [here](#) to book your place.
PU Training and Central EDI update:

**Union Black Training**
A new online training course on Black British culture and anti-racism for all staff and students will be launching on 17th January; keep an eye on staff and student bulletins in the coming weeks for more information.

**Asylum Seeker Awareness Training**
In conjunction with the University’s Sanctuary Scholarship Scheme, all staff are invited to engage with Asylum Seeker Awareness Training through a new dedicated SharePoint page. Visit the SharePoint page for videos, case studies, internal information, and links to external learning. This is a non-mandatory learning resource to explain the asylum process and learn how to best support our asylum seeker and refugees staff and students.

**New Central EDI homepage**
Our new landing page contains news updates and important links as well as contact information and information on reporting incidents. We will post all EDI updates to this page so recommend you bookmark it for future reference. This page also links to the pages below:

**Resources and Learning**
Here you will find sector best practice and guidance on a whole range of EDI-related issues from maternity/paternity, living with HIV, weight stigma, world faiths and more through our resource library. You can also browse our podcast, film and book recommendations via our EDI Toolkits, sign up for EDI training courses and use our University glossary for help with terminology and abbreviations. This page also links to our brand new Asylum Seeker Awareness Training Portal.

**Helplines and Information**
These pages contain confidential advice and information on a range of topics from addictions support to domestic abuse and parents and carers advice. You will be able to find helplines, online services and apps to support you.

**Staff Networks**
Finally, you can join staff networks and access members - only files from this space and chairs can access their membership resources too.

Please see some useful links to support those working from home and training available below:
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Kind regards,

Kelly & Stacey

Senior Administrators – Equality and Diversity Support
You may receive this email outside of your normal office hours. Please be assured that there is no expectation to reply outside of your normal working hours.