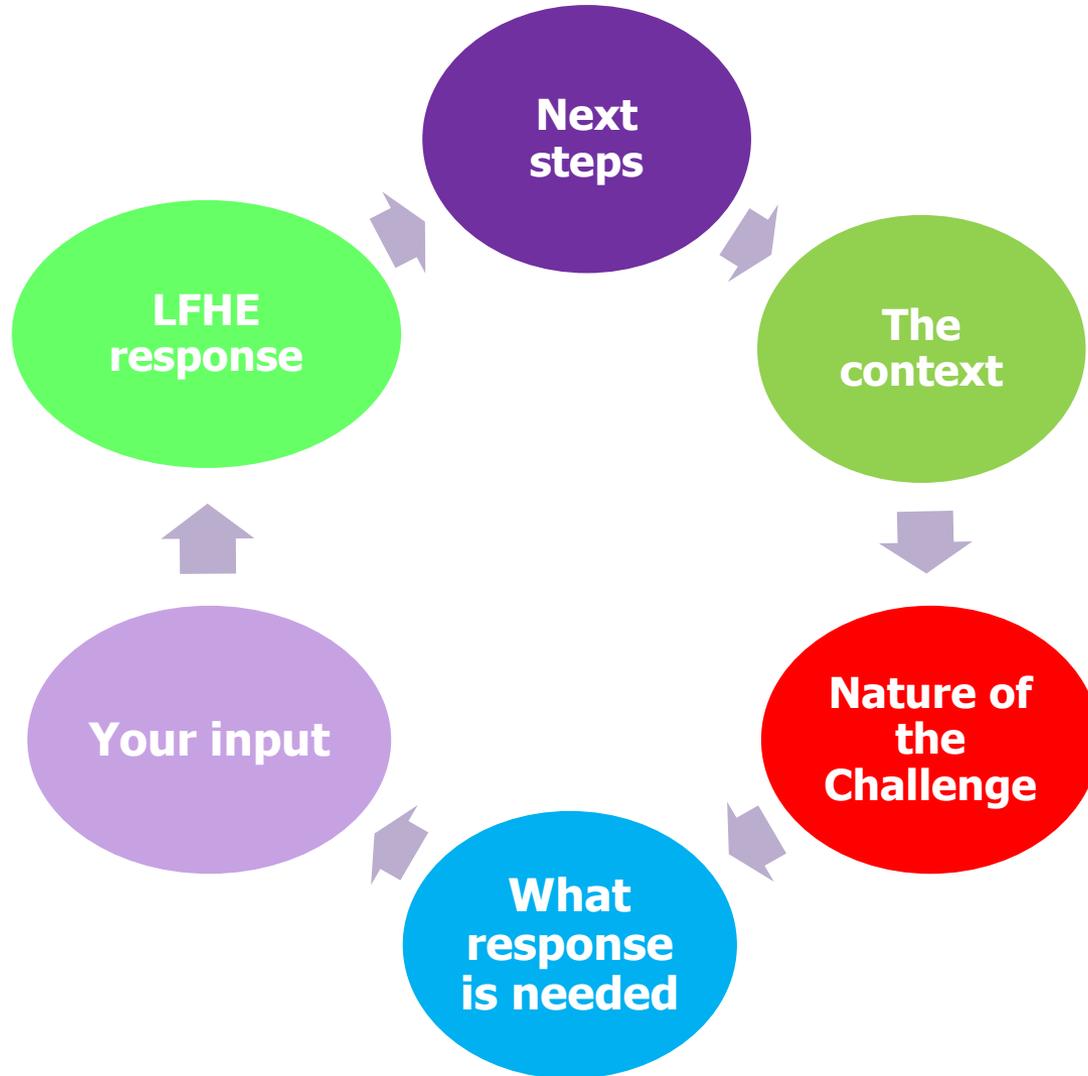# TACKLING LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FOR BME LEADERS IN HE

Vijaya Nath, director of leadership development and Tracy Bell-Reeves, deputy director of leadership development LFHE

Media headlines:

- It is high time UK higher education got its act together on ethnic diversity

- Do universities' workforces reflect the diversity of their students?

- LGBT Initiatives: there's still room for improvement

- Kehinde Andrews, Professor of Black Studies, BCU – 'universities' regressive role in society'

- Diversity in the curriculum: 'Why is my curriculum white?'

- Universities wise up to the needs of staff with disabilities

- 'Ethnic minority Britons surge into middle class'

- Black female professor feels role models 'required' for BME students

Messages from the 'funders' / regulators:

HE Act proposes : 'to double the proportion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering university in 2020 compared to 2009, and to increase the number of BME students going to university by 20% by 2020.'

OfS to have dedicated Board member 'with experience of representing or promoting the interests of students'

HE Bill amendment: *ensures that a registered higher education provider may be required by the OfS to provide and publish information in relation to the number of offers given and accepted, and the number of students who complete their courses (in addition to the applications received) by reference to the **gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background of the individuals concerned.***

- **Race audit:** *the audit will be led by a new dedicated Whitehall unit situated in the cabinet office, reporting jointly to the secretary of state for communities and local government, Sajid Javid, and the minister for the Cabinet Office, Ben Gummer. The first data is expected to be published before the summer 2017 and will be updated annually to ensure the public can track improvement and better hold services to account.*

- Hefce 40% target to achieve gender-balanced boards of 40 to 60 per cent either men or women by 2020.

- UUK social mobility report & UUK report on sexual harassment and hate crime

- OfS will represent a culture change for the 'regulator' as they aim to put students at the heart of their regulatory world, rather than students-via-the-health-of-HEIs-and-sector (i.e. more directly engaged with students).

- Prevent

- Unconscious bias in admissions ('name-blind trial')

ECU

- [Race Equality Charter](Developed since 2012): improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within HE. HEIs use framework to identify/self-reflect on cultural barriers, and develop initiatives and solutions for action – then apply for bronze or silver.

- **REC** covers professional, support and academic staff; student progression and attainment, and curriculum diversity

- Is contributing to creating a lever for change, similar to Athena Swan and gender

- Brexit

- Immigration and visa restrictions (campus, student and workforce diversity)

- 'Post-fact'; 'post-expert'; 'rhetoric Trumps evidence'

- localism and protectionism

- UK education policy: grammar schools, WP funding and school 'sponsorship'

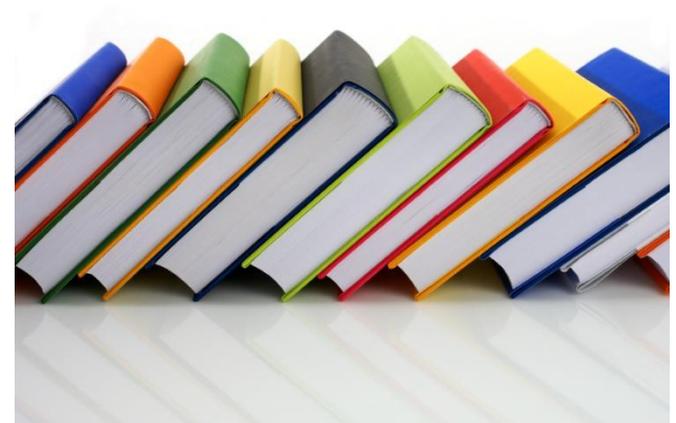# CONTEXT – BME (THE 'CONCRETE CEILING' IN HE)

- Three BME vcs
- 20 UK born BME dvcs or pvcs, compared with 350 white

- Half as likely to hold one of these top roles, despite:
  - UK BME academics up 80%: 6,000 in 2003/04 to almost 10,700 in 2013-14
  - Non-uk BME academics up from 7,050 to 12,735

- Some system barriers to progression – conscious and unconscious bias: selection panels; executive search firms; lack of diverse long/short lists

Statistics from ECU *Equality in Higher Education: Statistical Report 2015*
https://www.timeshighereducation.com/blog/it-high-time-uk-higher-education-got-its-act-together-ethnic-diversity

The Student View …

- NUS campaign: https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/why-is-my-curriculum-white/

- & http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/why-is-my-curriculum-white-decolonising-the-academy

- UEA students union: https://www.uea.su/ents/event/246/

- UCLU presentation https://uclu.org/sites/uclu.org/files/u136288/documents/why_is_my_curriculum_whiteb2.pdf

- Leeds SU paper and library

Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
Inspiring Leadership

Female Governors
Female Chairs
Female Vice-Chancellors
Gender-balanced Governing Bodies
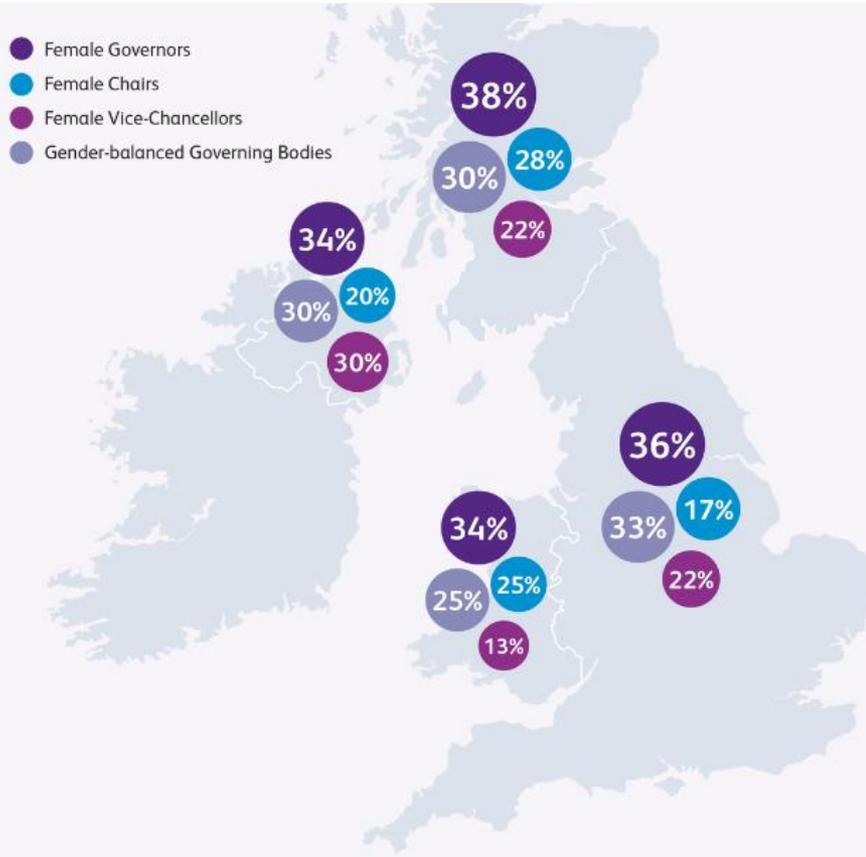
- "60 per cent of new chairs are recruited externally rather than from the internal governing body members, and the public, private and third sectors offer a very large pool of talent.

- Does this suggest we need to pay more attention to the search process, the composition of the nominations committee, the interviewing panel or to training for unconscious bias? Alumni associations and executive search firms can be used to identify a broader pool of chair candidates.

- The talent pool for vice-chancellors is normally professors, and women are only 23 per cent of all professors. This figure has barely changed over the past few years, which, in itself, suggests that there is a bottleneck limiting women's progress.

- But there are also concerns about selection. Women can put themselves forward for a professorship, but many complain that selection focusses on a narrow set of research achievements and that teaching, administration and outreach work are not valued enough.

- To think a little more widely, we should also note that women account for 31 per cent in the top tier of the academic structure and 34 per cent of executive teams. Which raises another issue: should professional staff be considered for vice-chancellor roles? Of the 15 new vice-chancellors, only two came from this background.

- And what about considering candidates from outside academia? This broadens the talent pool, and yet it rarely happens. Four of the vice-chancellors appointed since 2013 had distinguished non-academic careers in the diplomatic service, industry and the media. Should academics and their governing bodies be open to the most senior executive role being a non-academic?

- Surely it would also be helpful if governing bodies, who elect chairs and appoint vice-chancellors, were more diverse?

- Women hold 36 per cent of all governing body seats, but this varies across institutions from 7 per cent to 59 per cent."

https://womencountblog.wordpress.com/portfolio/womencount-leaders-in-higher-education-2016/

Http://blog.Hefce.Ac.Uk/2016/04/12/women-hold-just-one-fifth-of-senior-leadership-roles-in-higher-education/

HE faces a significant challenge to radically re-shape the landscape and embody authentically principles of EDI and enable the talent pipeline for BME leaders.

Your provocation:

What do institutions need to do to create the step change needed at a local level?

What can you do to support this?

What can LFHE do to support effective leadership that strongly advocates and champions EDI and the BME pipeline with you?

LF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (2013-2016)

- How can we make not break black and minority ethnic leaders in higher education? (Gurnam and Kwhali, 2015)

- Why does ethnicity matter in higher education? (Morrow, 2015)

- Gender and higher education leadership: researching the careers of Top Management Programme alumni (Manfredi, Grisoni, Handley, 2014)

- The experience of BME academics in higher education: Aspirations in the face of inequality (Bhopal, 2014)

- Women in higher education leadership: Absences and aspirations (Morley, 2013)

LF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (2016-)

- **Longitudinal studies:** opportunities, barriers, experiences
    - Aurora – women in leadership
    - Diversifying leadership – BME colleagues in leadership

- **Encouraging disabled leaders in higher education**: recognising hidden talents (working title for Insight publication)

- **Leading in uncertain times:** Inequality and higher education (view from 2016) (working title)

- **Exploring BME students'** perceptions of inclusive leadership styles and the links to student attainment

- **Increasing gender and BME diversity in higher education:** The role of Executive Search Firms in the appointment process for senior roles

- **Higher Education: What is it good for?** Marginal voices in HE; a reflective critique

DIVERSIFYING LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

- **Four day programme for early career academics/professional service staff from BME background**

- **Asset model approach: preparation, collaboration, reflection, opportunity**

- **Strategic influence through engagement with senior sponsors**

- **100% of participants felt more confident in carrying out their role post programme**

- **DL Year One alumna: "[the programme provides] a reflective space to share my concerns within my work space but more importantly to untangle issues for colleagues in a safe and nurturing space, THANK YOU!'**

LF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (SDPS, 2013-16)

Women professors as intellectual leaders (University of Southampton, 2016) - in progress

Carers and careers: career development and access to leadership positions among academic staff with caring responsibilities (University of Roehampton, 2016) – in progress

BME leaders: support networks and strategies for success in higher education (Southampton and Winchester universities, 2015) – published

The aditi leadership programme: developing the potential of aspiring black, asian and minority ethnic leaders at the university of birmingham (2015) – in progress

Understanding leadership from a disability perspective (University of Wolverhampton, 2014) – published.

Mid-career academic women: strategies, choices and motivation (King's College London, 2013) - published
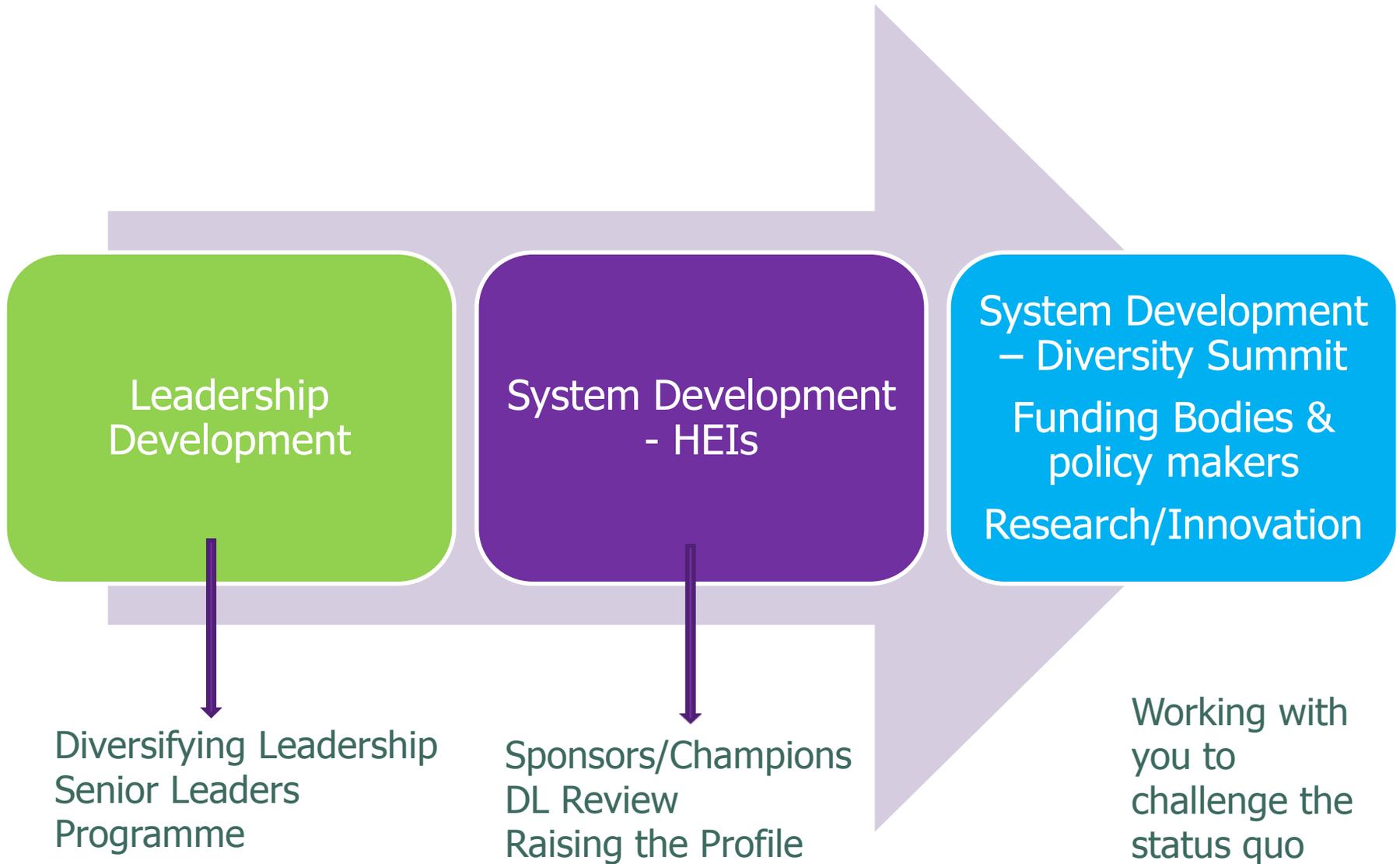
'THE COURSE WILL NOT MAKE YOU A LEADER OVERNIGHT BUT WILL INSPIRE THE LEADER WITH IN YOU.'

'THE COURSE ENABLED ME TO REFLECT ON MYSELF AS A LEADER IN HE AND WHAT I NEEDED TO DO TO TAKE ON OPPORTUNITIES. THE MOST INSIGHTFUL ASPECTS WERE LEARNING THE RANGE OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES AS WELL AS THE ACTION LEARNING SETS, THESE PROVIDED ME WITH A REFLECTIVE SPACE TO SHARE MY CONCERNS WITHIN MY WORK SPACE AND UNTANGLE ISSUES FOR COLLEAGUES IN A SAFE AND NURTURING SPACE, THANK YOU!'

"I FOUND THE COURSE EXTREMELY USEFUL. I CAME AWAY WITH A LOT OF LEARNING , OTHER COLLEAGUES EXPERIENCES OF WORKING IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR JOURNEY TO BECOMING LEADERS WITHIN THEIR WORKPLACE. THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORS INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY – I GAINED TIME TO REFLECT ON MY CAREER ASPIRATIONS"