Birmingham City Business School: Principles for Responsible Management Education

Sharing Information on Progress 2020

May 2020
I am very pleased to introduce Birmingham City Business School’s first PRME report on the progress we have made to promote and embed the six Principles for Responsible Management Education. We are passionate that these six principles should frame our own organizational practices and serve as example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students. At the same time, I would like to affirm the School’s continuing commitment to these Principles, which are central to our teaching, research, community and stakeholder engagement.

Within this progress report you will see during the past two years there has been significant further developments that affirm we are passionate and steadfast in our desire to continually enhance our practice and efforts to embrace the UN SDGs more fully within our teaching, research, administrative and professional practice. Going forward the current review of the School’s curriculum to fulfil AASCB, EPAS and BGA requirements will further accelerate the sustainability of both the School’s curricula and practice.

At Birmingham City Business School, our teaching is based on a practice-oriented approach linked to the business community, ensuring student learning meets the needs of cutting-edge and sustainable global business practice. Our courses align with both professional and accreditation standards. We provide opportunities for students and staff with applied practice projects, interactions with professionals, adapted assessment methods, professional placements, Career+ and Graduate+ activities and online teaching. These multi-faceted approaches support our students to become both managers and business professionals who can both handle today’s realities and tomorrow’s global challenges. The examples we provide within this document, reflect only part of the work that has been undertaken within BCBS during the past two years. Finally, all our actions are driven by our research, our links with industry, and our alumni.

Professor Nassim Aissa Belbaly
Director Birmingham City Business School
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

Principle #1 Purpose

We will develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value for business and society at large and to work for an inclusive and sustainable global economy.

Birmingham City University’s (BCU’s) vision ‘to be the leading university for creative and professional practice inspired by innovation and enquiry’, is supported by a mission focussed on ‘enabling personal transformation’ of its students, staff, alumni and other stakeholders, as well as being, ‘the University for Birmingham’, within the City and globally. Enabled by the intent to become a sustainable university and an employer of choice, BCU’s intent clearly fits within PRME Principle 1.

Aligning with the vision and mission of BCU and PRME Principle 1, Birmingham City Business School’s (BCBS’s) vision centres on the diversity and collaboration of students, staff, and other stakeholders to ‘lead through creativity and innovation, by inspiring change and integrating research, teaching and professional practice’. A commitment that leads to a mission that seeks to ‘educate students, managers, and professionals to handle today’s realities and tomorrow’s challenges.’ The success of BCSB’s approach, and its impact on a diverse student experience, and their potential to generate sustainable value both within business and society are demonstrated by the following three 2018/2019 case studies, Mary Okyere, Chris Thrower and Jaspreet Singh.

Over this reporting period, the University and BCBS has seen continued development pertaining to PRME Principle 1. Below are five examples of achievements during this time:

1. Graduate+ Award Framework and Website. Over the past two years, this scheme and its four attributes, aligning to both BCU’s and BCBS’s vision, has gathered pace and penetration within both the University, School, and the curriculum. To achieve the four attributes of: being professional and work ready; having a global outlook; to be enterprising; to enact creative problem solving, the framework adopts a personalised approach for each student. There are three levels that the student can achieve, bronze, silver and platinum. The bronze award seeks to create a greater sense of learning community and university engagement for foundation-level and first year students, whilst the silver and platinum awards assist second and final year students to design their own futures and articulate the skills they possess. The development, impact and embedded nature of BCU’s Grad + initiative over the last two years was endorsed by AdvanceHE in 2019 in recognition to the University’s commitment to ensuring students received the best preparation for life beyond the University. Clearly, the framework and its attributes resonate with not only PRME Principle 1, but also PRME Principle 2 Values and 3 Methods.

2. Employability. Recognising the need to further develop the capabilities of students to be future generators of sustainable value, BCBS appointed Emma Neale as the School’s employability champion
in 2019/20. With BCBS’s support, Emma initiated a ground-breaking university student capability scheme. The initiative employed an external consultancy to bolster existing Careers+ support, by launching a pilot-project aimed at coaching and supporting 2nd year and final undergraduates on a one-to-one basis to access placement opportunities and/or graduate employment. Responding very quickly to the Covid-19 challenge, this scheme changed its delivery mode from a physical face-to-face service, in a matter of days, to one that is now accessed and delivered virtually. Converting to an online presence resulted in a further 32 final year students signing up to this initiative. Currently, 127 students are accessing this scheme. Initial indications of the main areas’ students requested support in, focus on career related advice, feelings, emotions, plus planning in times of uncertainty.

3. International trips. BCBS places importance in providing students the chance to enhance their inclusive and sustainable global outlook. The School organises and participates yearly international study trips at both undergraduate and postgraduate level focussed on equipping students with these attributes. In the last two academic years, the following trips took place: Cologne, Germany; Karlsruhe, Germany; China; Barcelona, Spain; Lyon, France; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. To give two examples of how BCBS aligns the visits to PRME Principle 1: the Postgraduate study trip to Karlsruhe focussed on open borders, refugees, and modern slavery; whilst, the Undergraduate trip to Kuala Lumpur enabled students to network with over 1000 participants from across the globe. The conference focussed on themes relating to economic development on a global basis, for example the rise of a cashless society, essential skills for accountants in the digital age, and cyber terrorism.

4. Entrepreneurial and Leadership Capabilities. Over the past two years there has been significant investment made to further develop the BCU Advantage scheme. A scheme that supports students to enact their business idea, within the STEAMhouse incubator hub, set-up in 2019. Here students receive orthodox or creative business advice and support, as well as the availability of workshop space to develop their product. Supporting this further is the BSEEN and Start-up initiatives, each supports students in conjunction with STEAMhouse to take their business idea forward. BSEEN, an ERDF initiative, continues to be successful recruiting 80 students a year, whilst start-up activity workshops in 2018/19 saw a rise in student numbers from 1100 to 1900, resulting in an increase in sessions delivered from 70 to 130. Examples of proposed start-ups include The TG Group.

5. Sustainability. Over the past two years, BCU has continued to develop its sustainability offering to students through events, communications and engagement. Increased environmental content has been embedded in the Student Newsletter including a ‘Carbon Footprint Journey’ showing students how to calculate their carbon footprint, before then honing in on specific areas such as travel, food and water to further educate and explain how carbon emissions can be reduced. Events that have taken place include Go Green Weeks, sustainable travel event, litter picks, tree planting and Fairtrade Fortnight. These events have provided students with an opportunity to learn about how the University is becoming more sustainable and to gain a broader understanding of how sustainability affects us locally, regionally, and globally.
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

**Principle #2 Values**

We will incorporate into our academic activities, curricula, and organisational practices the values of global social responsibility as portrayed in international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

Birmingham City University centers its practice around four key values which resonate closely with PRME Principle 2. They set out the principles of behaviour we encourage all members of the University community to not only know and appreciate but also live daily. We want our Values to be lived, to drive and define us.

**Excellence.** We take pride in ensuring the highest quality standards of academic achievement and professional service delivery.

**People Focussed.** We value everyone, recognising that what we do is for the benefit of all those connected with the University.

**Partnership Working.** We work with students and the wider University community to create strong and successful relationships.

**Fairness and Integrity.** We take a fair and balanced approach to our activities and are mindful of the impact of our actions.

On 20 September 2019 the University declared a climate emergency, recognising that there is a pressing need to act to support sustainability across its activities. Four primary areas of endeavor were identified: **Carbon reduction**, energy, waste, and consumption must all be reduced to lessen impact on the planet. We will move to being a zero carbon institution; **Research**, BCU recognises that it has a positive role to play in supporting research that enables improvements in sustainable practices; **Education**, the University will work as a single community, recognising that we all have a part to play in supporting sustainable practices and in helping to inform and educate one another; **Finances**: we will work to ensure that our financial sustainability is not at a cost to environmental sustainability.

Further to declaring a climate emergency, the University has developed its first Environmental Plan 2020-25, which was approved by the Board of Governors in February 2020. The Environmental Plan has a vision that, by 2025, we are a University where:

- Each and every one of our students and staff understands the principles of sustainability.
- Environmental sustainability is an integral part of our business functionality and operations.
- We bring about positive environmental change at the University, in Birmingham and beyond.
To achieve this vision, we are implementing three key objectives:

1. Embedding sustainability in our processes
2. Reducing the environmental impacts of our operations
3. Creating a green culture within BCU, locally and globally

Through achieving this vision and objectives the University will incorporate sustainability and global social responsibility into our academic activities, curricula, and organisational practices.

The appointment of the Director of BCBS in 2019 has led to an increased impetus of communicating BCBS’s values and building links and collaborations with external parties. An example of the success of this approach, one that fully captures the essence of PRME Principle 2, focusses on the School’s recent development of the world’s first digital safety Coronavirus Clearance Certificate (CCC), based on blockchain technology, to protect suppliers and consumers from the risks associated with COVID-19. CCC will enable companies to ensure that any risk related to the virus is managed within their supply chain. It will be initially trialed in the Midlands, which has been heavily affected by COVID-19 to ensure products, such as hand sanitizers, can be transparently tracked to build assurance. Thereby, ensuring that a supplier adheres to highest standards of public health, sustainability, anti-bribery, and modern slavery. The certificates will be issued by The Transnational Transparent Procurement (TTP) Foundation. The initiative is the first to emanate from the newly-launched CCEG-BCU 4IR Centre, which is a joint initiative between BCU and the non-profit Centre for Citizenship, Enterprise and Governance (CCEG).

At an operational-level, an example of the values aligned within both PRME Principle 2 and the University’s, are portrayed by BCBS’s rapid response to student concerns centred on an increased anxiety caused by Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown. Amber Ducane, a 2nd year marketing student, currently completing an internship with the Optimise Health Clinic, has set-up a weekly Facebook Live event, rolled out across the University, with the founder of Optimise, Dr Ben Sinclair, to discuss student well-being and mental health. 150 to 200 students view the event each week.

At a student-led level the number of projects that reflect the values of global social responsibility, have continually increased over the last two years. Examples from the Marketing student-run Link Agency include: organising a Fire and Ice ball in Dec 2019 to raise £50000 for Changes UK, a charity supporting people seeking abstinent recovery from drugs and/or alcohol; producing a research and communication plan for the charity Breaking the Silence and their ‘Behind Closed Doors’ project, aimed at educating communities and businesses to recognize signs of abuse. Other examples from across the School include identifying sustainable projects for a local foodbank, and within the University itself. Enactus, operating from the STEAMhouse incubator hub, continues to look to support the development of projects that are mapped against sustainable goals. Teen Families is a new project that is currently undertaken a needs assessment to identify project scope and meaningful deliverables.
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

**Principle #3 Methods**

We will create educational frameworks, materials, processes, and environments that enable effective learning experiences for responsible leadership.

Returning to the four Grad+ attributes, discussed under PRME Principle 2, which focused on: being professional and work ready; having a global outlook; being enterprising; enacting creative problem solving, over the last two years, there has been a gradual increase of opportunities for students within BCBS to express these both within and outside of the academic curriculum. Indeed, a large proportion of BCBS’s courses embed professional awarding body membership and awards within them, such as ACCA, CIMA, IFA, CMI, CIM, IIA. Each professional body has their own ‘Code of Conduct’ which the students are required to adhere to. Under PRME Principle 2, within this report, we have seen examples of voluntary student engagement focused on social good projects and community engagement. During this academic year, under the leadership of Francis Mcgonigal, first-year Economic students, as part of their module and its assessment, undertook an air pollution research project in partnership with Birmingham Friends of the Earth (BFOE). This enabled students to meld contemporary research with the real-time data they collected, and then subsequently interrogate statistically, to report back to BFOE.

The 2017 Transforming the Curriculum (TtC) initiative that refreshed all undergraduate and postgraduate courses within BCBS, acted as a springboard to further enhance student learning experiences for responsible leadership. In addition to this change, in 2018/19 the following two modules, which align to both sustainability and SDGs were retrospectively added to the TtC suite, ‘Economics for Sustainable Development’, and ‘Islamic Accounting and Finance’. In 2019, an initial audit of the modules across all BCBS was undertaken and there is evidence, if these are considered as a whole, albeit across different courses, they hit the UN’s 17 SDG’s to varying degrees. Furthermore, from 2021/22 the BCBS curriculum will be further enhanced. A periodic review is currently underway to facilitate AASCB, EPAS, and BGA accreditation. This initiative will further strengthen BCBS’s practice within PRME Principle 3, and further assist the alignment of UN Global Compact’s SDGs within the curriculum of each course, as a greater focus on governance, ethics and sustainability is required within each. The University has also been developing a new ‘Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum’ course for staff to support this process. This is due to go for accreditation to the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) in May 2020 and will be the first accredited SEDA course of its kind. BCBS supported the development of the course providing feedback and recommendations.

On the 4th November 2019, BCBS launched a Business Advice Centre (BAC), opened by Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). BAC provides a place for students to gain professional learning experience by working on a live business project; students are expected to
exhibit responsible leadership within this setting. Each project is supervised by an academic member of staff, and the BAC Centre Manager, and conducted in line with the School’s ethical policy. In providing supervised projects, the aim is also to support businesses and third sector organisations by offering a fresh perspective on an issue they currently face. There are a range of student projects that have sustainability themes enmeshed within them, for instance one project set by the WMCA, Birmingham City Council, and Redditch Borough Council tasked students to research the feasibility of introducing the E-Super Prix to Birmingham City Centre as an annual event. Historically, between 1986-1990 Formula 3000 used to take place in Birmingham, but this was halted because of safety concerns. Another project, set by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, required students to research the likely impact the Brexit may have on the retail sector and economy of Lichfield.

Applied research to develop students’ knowledge, competence, and leadership also forms an intrinsic part of the fabric of the educational methods BCBS employ. As an example of this approach, the Builder’s Merchants Federation (BMF), again against the scenario of Brexit, reached out to BSBC in mid-2018 to develop a model that would forecast the economic condition of their sector by gaining a clearer understanding of how differing scenarios could impact on growing sustainability concerns within the building supply industry. BMF support industry leaders such as Travis Perkins and Jewson, and wanted to provide its members with quarterly forecasts, that reflected changing scenarios as the duration of this change progressed. Dr Erez Yerushalmi led the KEEN project to upskill, coach, support and recruit a recent graduate economist to develop a model that forecasted scenario-based demand. The brief was to develop an econometrics model, and enable BMF to produce a quarterly report for its members. The model developed, incorporated an Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average, ideal for analysing time series data. Dr Yerushalmi subsequently draws on this project as an in-class case study for BCBS Economics undergraduate students.

During the Summer of 2019, BCU launched its Micro-Placement Initiative, which offered BCBS and other students, primarily from widening participation or disadvantaged backgrounds, flexible short-term work placements aimed at enhancing their employability potential. The scheme links with the BCU Access and Participation Plan, as well as the university’s strategic plan to improve graduate outcomes for specific demographic cohorts of students and specific courses and support the objective of becoming the University for Birmingham. The original project proposal was to propose 100 placements, but due to positive interest from students and employers, 132 students’ microplacements were offered, with 80 businesses involved. Due to the targeted work with courses and student cohorts, 83% of students taking placements were from widening participation (WP) backgrounds. The results from a post-project student survey were positive with an indicated 8% increase in overall student confidence in gaining graduate jobs and a 15% increase in confidence to students navigating recruitment and selection practices. It was hoped that students would continue to work with their host organisation and this was supported by 56% of students surveyed reporting that they had continued this relationship. Employer feedback was also positive, 100% said it improved their relationship with the university, 89% of employers said they would remain in contact with their students, and 100% said they would like to be involved in future schemes.
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

Principle #4 Research

We will engage in conceptual and empirical research that advances our understanding about the role, dynamics, and impact of corporations in the creation of sustainable social, environmental and economic value.

The major overhaul of BCBS’s research strategy and ambitions, led by Dr Bruce Philp and outlined in BCBS’s original PRME application, just two years ago, has borne fruition over this reporting period. During this time there have been 20 journal articles published from BCBS academics specifically focused on themes such as economic and sustainable development, development and health, access to water resources, determinants of infant mortality, poverty alleviation, microfinance, technology, effective management, complexity, ethics, diversity, gender, inclusivity, empowerment and faith. This reporting period has also seen the setting up of two further research centres within BCBS, which cast their lens over themes associated with the six principles of PRME and UN Global Compact SDGs.

The Centre for Applied Finance and Economics (CAFÉ) was set up in August 2019, the Centre specialises in applied Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models, Econometrics, Business Analytics and other methods. Its members are active in various research topics, including among others Health, Environment and Sustainability. For example, see funded research projects, and publications. Other research clusters within the Centre include: behavioural economics and finance; regional, labour, and political economy; corporate finance, microfinance and governance; digital transformation; asset pricing.

Dr Erez Yershalmi, the Research Director of BCBS’s CAFÉ, was approached by the Canadian Council of Academics (CCA) to assist them in their study of the potential socio-economic impacts of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in Canada; antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is a growing problem across the globe. Erez, in partnership with the RAND corporation, was tasked to develop a predictive, dynamic, multi-country, computable general equilibrium (CGE) model that focused on the Canadian economy. The model simulated various AMR scenarios to assess the economic cost of rising antimicrobial resistant organisms on the Canadian economy, and its healthcare system. The output of the overall project, using the data generated by the model Erez and the RAND Corporation developed, was to provide Canadian policy makers with an evidence-based approach to plan for the future, one that would enable them to use reliable data on which to make investment decisions into further research, or strategies to mitigate the spread of AMR.

BCBS’s second research centre, the BCU-CCEG 4th Industrial Revolution Technologies Centre, was set up in April 2020, as a result of a collaboration between BCBS and the Centre for Citizenship, Enterprise and Governance (CCEG). Dr. Shishank Shishank has been appointed as the Director of the Centre. The partnership was established on 6th February 2020 for 5 years, with the following aims:
• To establish a research centre to explore applications of Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and 5th Generation mobile telecommunication (5G).
• To facilitate BCU certification on non-credit bearing courses, credit bearing courses for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Masters and Post Graduate Research Programmes (MSc, MA, MPhil, PhD)
• To identify business opportunities for conducting funded development leading to joint ventures, which also includes links to BCBS’s Business Advice Centre.

Whilst, it is early days, the Centre has already started to cast part of its lens over themes associated with the six principles of PRME and UN Global Compact SDGs. The development of the Coronavirus Clearance Certificate already outlined in this report under PRME Principle 2 is testament to this. The Centre’s research clusters align with CCEG’s existing research pillars of Banking, Procurement and Mobile. Currently the clusters centre on:

The 5G Think Tank focuses on ‘5G for good’ applications including socially responsible, ethical and inclusive approach to the opportunities promised by 5G services such as realtime, locative and data driven services, biometric and behavioural analytics, mobile and ubiquitous AI. Of particular interest are the use of social nudging instruments across 5G data layers to change consumer behaviour not merely for retail, but behavioural transformation of society towards more laudable and aligned goals.

Transnational Transparent Procurement (TTP) focuses on 4IR applications to supply chains, procurement, purchasing and logistics. New paradigms have included circular economy, tokenisation of payments to align buyer/supplier values, and blockchain certification to capture and reward good practice in sustainability, modern slavery and anti-slavery. With over 40,000 members in Africa alone, TTP has become the trusted partner to over 300 multinationals with institutional partnership including the China-Africa Business Council.

Values Enabler focuses on social fintech instruments such as DLT Open Banking, Unredeemed Loyalty Points, Impact Investment, Crowd Funding, Quantum Computing for Orphaned Tokens, and Crypto-Exchange for Non-financial tokens. Current projects include visionary Smart Cities, Youth Banking and Campus Incubators particularly germane to the Middle East.

The Entrepreneurship Research cluster, led by Dr Charlotte Carey, and currently part of BCBS’s initial research centre the Centre for Enterprise, Innovation and Growth (CEIG) builds on the strong and long-standing stem of work related to entrepreneurship education. Much of this work focuses on multi-disciplinary aspects of teaching entrepreneurship. For instance, research themes include: entrepreneurship and intersectionality; how to teach social entrepreneurship; gender and entrepreneurship; creative industries entrepreneurship; and minority entrepreneurship. The Centre has a strong team of doctoral students working in the field of entrepreneurship. In addition the Centre plays a number of key roles in the wider entrepreneurship research community for example Dr Carey co-chairs the Creative Industry Entrepreneurship track and special interest group for the Institute of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ISBE). Dr Thomas Domboka chairs the Minority Entrepreneurship conference track for ISBE and Prof Mark Gilman (who leads CEIG) is on the board of ISBE.
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

Principle #5 Partnerships

We will interact with managers of business corporations to extend our knowledge of their challenges in meeting social and environmental responsibilities and to explore jointly effective approaches to meeting these challenges.

Throughout this progress report there are numerous examples that evidence BCBS’s growing engagement in partnership with businesses and organisations over the last two years. Engagement that extends the School’s knowledge of the challenges faced by these institutions when meeting their social and environmental responsibilities. Work that builds further on the existing partnership work and dialogue with businesses, PRME Principles 5 and 6, of the BCBS’s existing Academy of Multi-Unit Leadership (AMUL) executive education programme, led by Professor Chris Edger, and its Centre for Enterprise, Innovation and Growth, led by Professor Mark Gilman.

AMUL’s Post-Graduate Diploma in Multi-Unit Leadership and Strategy, provides a platform for executives to explore concepts of sustainability and CSR in the Strategy and Branding, and Operational Improvement modules. During this reporting period dissertation/in-company projects have focused on issues such as responsible gambling, values and ethics transference, executive trust, sustainable builder merchanting practice, and inter-branch transfer economies.

The Centre for Enterprise, Innovation and Growth (CEIG) (headed by Professor Mark Gilman) works with SMEs to promote the sustainable growth and development of students, businesses and their leader. CEIG’s BIG Ten growth capabilities are a key example of how we help leaders and their business build upon their Piloting, Process and People capabilities through transformational leadership, against a background of business, social and environmental needs and responsibilities. The Centre also facilitates and supports a wide range of dialogue with local, regional, national and international stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability, thereby aligning to PRME Principle 6 as well. Over the last 2 years the Centre have completed diagnostics in the following areas: 300 in the West Midlands; 400 in Indonesia; 340 in Canada. Further to this in the West Midlands there have been 100 follow-up meetings with businesses to review areas of strength and development. Forty of these businesses have subsequently had 12 hours of facilitated ERDF funded business innovation and growth support:

Returning to the Entrepreneurship Research cluster, led by Dr Charlotte Carey, part of BCBS’s Centre for Enterprise, Innovation and Growth, Charlotte is involved as a key partner within the Erasmus + African Higher Education Leadership in Advancing Inclusive Innovation for Development (AHEAD) project, which continues to evolve and develop in terms of both partnerships and impact. In May 2019, BCBS hosted a ‘train the trainer transnational’ with 45 guests from across the partnership. The week-long training program was facilitated by guest speakers from across the School, Birmingham
City Council, and Coventry University, all who were specialists in entrepreneurship education and innovation. Furthermore, during October 2019, BCBS helped to facilitate workshops, based in Kampala, Uganda, focused on developing innovation hubs in partner HEIs. Charlotte is also involved in a range of partnerships that cast a lens over social and environmental challenges. These include:

- Working with the Accord Housing Association on several research projects, centered on developing the entrepreneurial capacity amongst long-term unemployed housing tenants. More recently this work evolved to develop a project that looks at how the university can work with the housing association to train their outreach team to act as the ‘vital spark’ in supporting and nurturing social enterprise.

- Partnering with the Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT) to establish how the School might help them to develop a sustainable business model. Amongst other things this has resulted in the joint project doctoral research bursary project ‘Cultural Intrapreneurship and Marketing: The case of Birmingham Museums as a Source of Cultural Value, Citizen Identity and Place-making’. This is an exciting interdisciplinary project working in partnership with Birmingham Museums Trust (BMT). It aims to explore how BMT can engage more widely with hard-to-reach Birmingham communities and build a sustainable business model. Looking through both a marketing and entrepreneurship lens it addresses: What relationships do communities have with Birmingham Museums? How could these develop to foster local pride and community cohesion? What is the role for BMT in place-making, skills development, health and well-being and tourism? How might widening audiences and fostering an entrepreneurial culture and mind-set in the organisation help to identify new opportunities for self-generated income?

From a partnership developed at this year’s University’s Go Green Week, the university’s environmental team and the student volunteering team, which includes BCBS students, have partnered with World Against Single Use Plastic (WASUP), originally a Birmingham charity that now has global reach. One of the activities planned is to clean local canals in the vicinity of Curzon Building, which houses the Faculty of Business, Law and Social Science. This initiative will commence once Covid 19 restrictions are relaxed.

In 2019 BCBS signed a partnership agreement with ConnCat, USA and INPUT, Hungary to engage in an Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy project. The project aims to train the next generation of global entrepreneurs from the US, Hungary and now BCBS to work together in multi-cultural, interdisciplinary teams to develop a product and a business concept for the product over a 10 days period. BCBS was to host its first bootcamp as part of the partnership in August 2020, but this was cancelled due to the Covid-19 situation. It is anticipated that entrepreneurial initiatives focused on addressing global social and environmental challenges will form one of the key themes of this initiative.
Actions and outcomes 2018-20

Principle #6 Dialogue Purpose

We will facilitate and support dialog and debate among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organisations and other interested groups and stakeholders on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

Whilst examples cited previously within this progress report demonstrate a continued and innovative alignment to this PRME Principle over this reporting period, the examples below illustrate further ways both the University and BCBS promote the support and facilitation of dialogue on critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability across multiple and diverse stakeholder groups.

BCBS Research seminars:

The BCBS research strategy, put in place two years ago, has further invigorated the dissemination of research and facilitated dialog within the School, through its research centers, between educators, students, businesses and organisations. Open invites to external and internal colleagues to research seminars are now held at least monthly. Themes of recent sessions include: the effects of criminalizing the sex trade; the effects of wages, wealth, gender inequality, fiscal policy on business and public finance; the social-economic impact of antimicrobial resistance; capital structure choices under asymmetric information and confident managers; leading people and remote working in times of crisis; data protection in light of Covid 19. The latter two themes were addressed within three seminars that responded to the current need to social distance and therefore were delivered virtually.

tigerLab:

In April 2019, BCBS launched tigerLAB, an initiative bringing together, academics, businesses, community leaders and BCU students. Over the course of this academic year there have been four tigerLabs featuring: Dean Smith, the Manager of Aston Villa Football Club; Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority; Deborah Cadman OBE, CEO of the West Midlands Authority; Jonny Cole, Comedian, Singer, Songwriter. Topics covered at
these events included organizational culture, leadership, inclusive growth, and engagement, where the audience were split into teams and then asked to identify and present potential solutions to solve a particular community problem focused around the theme of that particular meeting. At each event, the audience is also given the opportunity to decide which charity will receive a cheque of £250 donated by a local business.

**Talking heads:**

In November 2019 BCU launched its innovative, thought-provoking, and inclusive ‘Talking Heads’ program. An initiative that invites organisations, businesses, academics, and students to take part in a round table discussion focused on what is generally regarded as taboo global social subjects, prior to then inviting dialogue from the audience. So far there have been two talks, the first centered around the theme ‘Inspiring women’, where topics discussed included gender pay gap; intersectionality; career progression, journey, barriers, gender bias/sexism; education; imposter syndrome, work life balance/children/pregnancy; non inclusivity/exclusion; and fear, confidence and anxiety. The second table round talk centered on the discussion of male gender stereotyping and perception. Topics at this talk focused on stereotyping; perception and journey; work-life balance and parenting; violence; breadwinner; mental health; LGBTQ+; failure and support.

**TEDx:**

Over this reporting period the University and BCBS have delivered, in partnership with businesses and organisations, two TEDx talks that reflect not only their vision, mission and values, but also focus on the social and environmental responsibilities that align with this PRME Principle. The first focused on ‘Transformation in Uncertain times’, and more recently the second centered on ‘Community, Unity and Us’. Samples of presentations include those from Dr Martin Glynn from the first TedX talk, and Victoria Masso and Dr Karl George MBE from the second talk.
Reflections on progress and future objectives

Looking back over BCBS’s first reporting period, this progress report demonstrates that BCBS has further reinforced its alignment to PRME’s six principles and the UN Compact’s SDGs, through the initiatives both the University and the School have taken to strengthen its teaching, research, administrative and professional practice. There are examples of innovative practice within each of the principle reporting areas.

Looking forward there is always space for continued improvement. Indeed, much can be further achieved through an even closer alignment with the work of PRME. A move that will further strengthen the already innovative steps BCBS have taken to further develop its current research strategy and focus, its new curriculum, and extra-curricular activities from 2021/22, as well as its organizational practices. These are areas that BCBS will continue to focus on over the next two years.

For further information regarding this report, please contact:

Steve Harris
Associate Professor BCBS
steve.harris@bcu.ac.uk