

## ROYCE BLOG

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**The Royce mission is to support and grow world-recognised excellence in UK materials research, accelerating commercial exploitation and delivering positive economic and societal impact for the UK.**

We recognise that this ambition can't be achieved without an inclusive and, importantly, a supportive working culture which enables belonging.

As a national institute, Royce welcomes many different kinds of people, with differing expertise, into the materials science research and innovation system. We want to ensure that everyone in this system is valued, respected and enabled to develop their talents to the full – from our researchers to our professional services staff.

We all have a part to play and driving forward an inclusive culture is underpinned by co-creation of that culture. This is about a long term, positive change programme enabled by key tools. It's also about setting SMART objectives, so we can track, monitor and measure the impact of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activity, using resources from across the Royce Partnership. We also need time to measure and monitor this activity, and to use those results to drive that change.

My own previous experience with the Athena Swan initiative has demonstrated to me how far we can go and how we can go about getting results. During my time in the Department of Chemical Engineering and Analytical Science at The University of Manchester, I was the postdoctoral researcher representative on the Departmental Panel, as well as subsequently becoming the University's Athena Swan Coordinator within the central EDI team. It's clear from my involvement in this work that embedding a real culture change takes both time and a long term commitment. We saw some fantastic outcomes from this work, and I'm committed to taking Royce on this journey.

We're actually making progress all the time. For example earlier this year, recent appointments to our Strategic Advisory Board were focussed on engaging individuals that reflect our population and we were delighted to welcome a number of new members, who also come from differing backgrounds.

For our major conferences earlier this year we implemented EDI surveys for the first time so that we can better understand the make-up of those attending. We also imposed speaker diversity targets and we have made a commitment that staff members of the Manchester Hub and Leadership Team will now not speak at events where the speaker panel is not balanced.

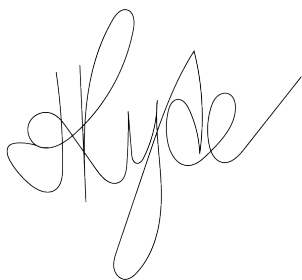
I'm excited that we've just signed up to the Black United Representation Network (BURN) which aims to address racial inequalities in Greater Manchester by bringing systemic change and addressing the acute shortage of people of African descent in senior leadership positions that can influence policy and decision-making. Our involvement will see us placing diverse professionals as 'board apprentices' on our boards for one year, allowing them to gain first-hand experience through observation of the workings of a board.

These are just examples and of course there is much more to do. We know that for our research leadership we have a long way to go; however the good news is that the picture is better across our technical, operations and engagement teams.

I'm absolutely delighted to take up one of the two new Co-Chair positions for the Royce EDI Committee, alongside David Knowles our CEO. Owing to the critical nature of the role, I will also sit as an "ex officio" member of our Governing Board.

We know we must embrace wider diversity and intersectionality through the recruitment of, and involvement with, a broad range of people who are different to ourselves. So we'll continue to engage on this agenda and promote the message that while diversity is an ongoing challenge, our long term success depends on it.

*The [Athena Swan Charter](#) is a framework which is used across the globe to support and transform gender equality within higher education (HE) and research*



Dr Helen Ryder