

## BCA Education Focus Group

Dear Colleague

There were a number on ideas/initiatives we planned to discuss with you at our meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 but regrettably we were insufficient in number at the meeting to do justice to the subjects. Accordingly, we detail the intended discussion items below.

1. The March 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Day celebrations involved a flag raising ceremony at the Town Hall, the swearing in of new citizens and a dinner at UCB.
2. The Association also has a 'Trade and Business' and a 'Communities' focus group and it is apparent that there are opportunities for our Commonwealth students to benefit from or partake in some of the activities of these groups, such as those when presentations are made to the Group. I will ask Mike and Keith to highlight these in advance to you.

The Association's Trade Focus Group holds quarterly Commonwealth Country focused presentations. In February of this year it was India and April, South Africa. The Group are considering Australia for July this year. Should any of your Business Studies students feel that they may be interested in attending any of these presentations, we may well have some capacity to accommodate them.

3. Despite meeting again with Marketing Birmingham to discuss the Economic Impact study of overseas students to the city, we are unable to progress as we still await figures from some partners. As soon as we have these figures we can complete the findings fairly quickly.
4. One idea previously discussed, and for which the economic impact study would provide for a strong case, was to explore the potential of developing a city wide new students/freshers event/festival in the city. Those of you who engage in the International Student Barometer survey will know that there is a section asking students to feedback on their 'official Welcome' to the city. On checking the calendar of events/festivals in the city in September and October, it would appear that there is a gap in the calendar from week commencing 11<sup>th</sup> October to the end of the month. However, I imagine that we may all have different induction/enrolment dates for new students and therefore would request colleagues to forward me dates as to when such an event might suit their calendar. Joan Durose is the contact in the City Council who coordinates events, but I think it best that we only approach her with dates that meet our needs.
5. Please can I remind colleagues who have not already done so, to let Mike have a contact/contacts in your institution to whom we can all refer potential applicants to. Along with the UoB, I was in Saudi Arabia last week and received numerous enquiries for engineering, art and design, and English language courses which I could have forwarded.

6. If you have any students looking for a project please contact Mike. Keith has some projects too for any students seeking some work-experience.

7. **On the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015-HM the Queen Elizabeth the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Head of the Commonwealth, becomes the longest reigning English Monarch.**

Led by the Birmingham Commonwealth Association's Communities Group, it is intended to use Victoria Square in Birmingham city centre as an all-day location for as many Commonwealth related groups as can be mustered to showcase their Commonwealth links and their appreciation of HM the Queen as its head. In this regard, quite a few of the 53 Commonwealth countries do not presently have established community groups and, as such, the BCA would be looking to invite students from those unrepresented nations to participate in the above.

8. Keith will also be inviting Business'/Educational establishments to recognise this special day and be discussing with them how this can be achieved. In the Evening, it is planned that there will be a celebration Dinner.

9. **14<sup>th</sup> March 2016-Commonwealth Day**

As this year, the BCA will be organising a 'Commonwealth Dinner' in the evening. It is intended that during the day, we will again occupy Victoria Square with a Commonwealth theme. All of the three focus groups will be invited to contribute to the day, including our Education focus group and, in turn, Universities/Colleges and their students. We hope you/your students will support this.

Also during the day, it is planned to hold Birmingham's/Greater Birmingham's first Commonwealth Day multi faith Service, hopefully in Birmingham city centre, to which the universities/major colleagues will be invited.

On the Saturday or Sunday immediately before or after 14<sup>th</sup> March 16, within Birmingham City Centre, it is planned to have a 'Commonwealth' parade of Floats, at least one for each Commonwealth Country. Participation will be open to all Commonwealth Community Groups, businesses with a Commonwealth interest/theme and Universities.