



Reach Society

Building Connections



Patrons: Lord Herman Ouseley, Prof. Sir Geoff Palmer, Prof. T. Williams & John Budu-Aggrey

2017 Report of Sixth Careers Conference

On Tuesday, 4th April, Reach Society launched a full scholarship for a British young man of Caribbean background seeking entry to Brunel University London in September 2017. The Grace Foods and Reach Society scholarship was launched this spring to mark a number of things: Grace Foods' 10 year milestone of trading in the UK; Brunel University's drive to increase the presence of British young men of Caribbean background in high value universities; and Reach Society's objective of inspiring young people to hone their potential.

The scholarship announcement was made in the Society's 6th Careers Conference which was attended by roughly 970 participants, the vast majority of whom were young people aged 14 to 24. The speakers Brian Mitchell, CFO, Grace Foods, Clive Gee, Director, Brunel University London, and Lord Herman Ouseley, Patron of Reach Society, highlighted the need for corporates and high value universities to join forces to create meaningful opportunities for young people to grow and develop their potential, in order to become productive citizens in the community.

The event was divided into two halves by the very popular "Yes We Can" interlude in which a panel of 7 highly successful people explored the link between education and wealth generation; and took questions from the young people. The YWC interlude was enhanced by the wise messages from Rene Carayol, a Business Guru; Emeritus Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, the Society's Patron; Ms Mei Sim Lei, Founder Lai Peters & Co; Simon Dowson-Collins, Director, HarperCollins Publishers; Brian Mitchell, CFO, Grace Foods; Rudi Page, Founder, MCW; and Fitz Thomas, Former City Trader and Property Expert.

Roughly a dozen lucky young people and adults who asked questions of the expert panel were rewarded with copies of books donated by HarperCollins Publishers and Reach Society Publishing.

This year the Careers Conference attracted 8 more exhibitors, lifting the total number to 30; and making it the largest group of exhibitors assembled to date by the Society. There were several employers and groups who had not attended before such as Grace Foods, HarperCollins Publishers, High Speed 2, the LSE African Caribbean Society, Makers Academy, Mark Martin (the Urban Teacher), Ministry of Justice, Network Rail, Southside Young Leaders Academy, Toptask and Transport for London.

This year we also welcomed back a couple of erstwhile exhibitors such as KPMG and the RAF; and we are grateful for the ongoing support of Alpha BSE Training, Amos Bursary, Brunel University London, EDF Energy, Enfield Caribbean

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Association, Excell3, Kick It Out, King's College London, the London Black Teacher's Association, and Turner Lovell (a recruitment agency).

The conference halls were a buzz of activity. The LSE African Caribbean Society and friends attracted lots of attention as they discussed life as undergraduates in a Russell Group University with young people and parents. Similarly, the four young men from Amos Bursary, all alumni and undergraduates at high value or Russell Group universities, inspired their audience in the main hall, and in their Perfect 10 Workshop.

The new STEMM (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine) panel of 7 professionals was always busy as large groups of young people took advantage of the unlimited access to the panel members which included a top mathematician, a consultant surgeon, 3 experts in chemistry, physics and engineering, an immunologist and a clinical scientist.

The fast growing demand for Tech expertise and training pathways was highlighted by a Just IT manager in a very popular Perfect 10 Workshop; and Tech was a key feature at the stands hosted by Mark Martin, Makers Academy and KPMG.

Two new Perfect 10 Workshops got many young people talking. One was themed around building study skills, hosted by King's College London; and the other was around Michelle Obama Qualities, hosted by 3 professional women (Grace, Shadia and Cynthia). Both workshops were informative and thought provoking.

As the 6th Careers Conference drew to a close many attendees were still buzzing from the experience and some were overheard saying, "Today felt like a celebration of talent in the black community!"

Dr Dwain A Neil, Reach Society, Chairman (April 2017)