

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE  
**WORKING GROUP FOR RACE AND EQUALITY**  
**Report to Governing Body**

## **I OVERVIEW**

1. The Working Group was established by Governing Body in Michaelmas Term 2020 with a remit to
  - review the College's Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity and the Vision Statement, making suggestions for revision;
  - consider the need for further training for College members in unconscious bias, cultural sensitivity, race-awareness and make recommendations for appropriate providers, taking account of differing needs;
  - consider ways of increasing recruitment of more diverse staff at all levels;
  - ensure there are robust processes for monitoring and reviewing diversity statistics in staff records;
  - recommend an action plan to address issues of inequality, with specific reference to race.

2. The membership of the group comprised:

The President (Chair)

Professor Lloyd Pratt (Deputy Chair)

Mr Lamin Darboe, Staff Representative (MT & HT)

Dr Kate Doornik, Fellow for Equality (ex officio)

Mr Daniel Epih, Staff Representative

Ms Minying Huang, MCR BAME Officer

Mr Ethan Joseph, JCR Representative

Ms Jahnavi Kalayil, JCR Equality and Diversity Officer

Professor Philip Maini, Fellow for Ethnic Minorities (ex officio)

Mr Krishnendu Ray, MCR BAME Officer

Dr Mishka Sinha, Research Associate

Dr Devinder Sivia

Professor Jason Stanyek (MT)

Ms Monica Wilson, HR Manager

Mrs Eileen Marston (Secretary to the Working Group).

Professor Jaideep Pandit replaced Professor Maini as Fellow for Ethnic Minorities and Ms Naomi Reiter replaced Ms Jahnavi Kalayil as JCR Equality and Diversity Officer from the beginning of Hilary Term 2021.

3. The group met on six occasions during the course of the academic year, twice per term. All meetings were virtual due to the effects of the pandemic. Notes of the meetings were forwarded to the Welfare Dean for information. Professor Rebecca Surender, Pro-VC and the University Advocate for Equality & Diversity, attended the first meeting of Hilary Term and Professor Rob Gilbert, Chair of the BAME Student Welfare and Wellbeing Sub-Group, attended the second.

4. During Hilary Term, the President, Senior Tutor, Welfare Dean and Fellow for Equality attended an 'Inside Government' conference 'Supporting BAME Students in Higher Education'.
5. The group had the benefit of input from the Race and Equality Advisory Group which met on four occasions during the course of the year, the last of these meetings being a joint meeting with the Working Group. Membership of the Race and Equality Advisory Group comprised:
 

Ms Jenny Fay (Chemistry, 2000)  
 Dr Rashmi Shankar (DPhil Psychology, 1980)  
 Ms Shamim Tong (Law, 1994)  
 Mr Uche Ukachi (Engineering, Economics and Management, 2010)  
 Ms Tabassum Rasheed (PPE 2008).
6. The Advisory Group highlighted the need to consider students' lived experience and to support progression. The personal experience of BAME students and graduates might be improved by addressing issues of isolation and fostering an awareness of issues around race and racism faced in social settings. Providing an enhanced level of support for on-course BAME students could help to foster a sense of connection and promote resilience for life whilst ongoing support after graduation, perhaps using the College's women's network as a model, could provide networking and lifelong learning opportunities.
7. The Working and Advisory Groups' discussions were conducted with an awareness of the context in which they were being held, notably concerns which were expressed within College during Trinity Term 2020, at the time of the Black Lives Matter protests, about the way in which it embraces diversity.

## II CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. The College's Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity and the Vision Statement

Following discussion at the Trinity Term meeting of the Equality Committee it was agreed that a group of individuals, to include some Race and Equality Working Group members, junior representatives and a non-academic staff member would agree a draft anti-racism statement. [This was approved at Governing Body on 9 July 2021.] (Annexe A).

### 2. The University's ongoing commitment

The University's Race Equality Taskforce was established at the beginning of MT 2020 after the Black Lives Matters protests. Due to its size it has organized its workload into five focus areas:

- Staff issues across all areas of employment in the university, for example: recruitment, career progression, occupational health, HR.
- Student issues, for example; recruitment of under-represented groups within BAME, postgraduate scholarships, decolonizing syllabi, promotion and celebration of diversity and inclusion.

- Governance; addressing why current structures do not represent BAME staff, how to diversify governance, and the issue of institutional architecture (how the EDI is structured and resourced in the University).
- Research: the possible establishment of an Oxford Institute for Equality and Diversity
- Harassment issues and how to dedicate channels to address this adequately.

A business plan, to include recommendations, will be published during September 2021 if possible, although there may be some drift into Michaelmas Term.<sup>1</sup>

- It is proposed to forward the results of the work carried out by the College Working Group to the University's task force in order to promote the College's active engagement with the University's initiatives.
- The Working Group notes the potential for the College to continue to advocate for developments across the Collegiate University in the area of equality and diversity. The President was actively involved in the establishment of the Conference of Colleges Equality & Diversity Forum and was its founding chair. With the endorsement of Governing Body, the incoming President could also be a strong voice in support of the continuation of similar and related work at the University level, via the Conference of Colleges and in interaction with the Divisions and the central University administration.

### 3. Staff training

#### (i) Non-academic staff

'Equality in the Workplace' training was arranged during 2019-20. Part 1 of the training (covering the Equality Act 2010 definition, bullying and harassment) was attended by 122 non-academic staff. Part 2 sessions (on cultural awareness, diversity and inclusion, and the importance of language (e.g. microaggressions<sup>2</sup>)) were curtailed on account of the pandemic but 90 staff were able to attend over three of a total of five planned sessions.

The working group agrees:

- That Equality and Diversity training should be mandatory for all members of the non-academic staff on a rolling programme.
- That the use of a values-based approach to ongoing staff training, aligned with the core values and ethics of the College and embedded as part of staff culture, can have a significant impact on interactions.
- That the promotion of good practice amongst non-academic staff might be encouraged by the identification of staff 'champions' with a remit to lead by example in promoting good practice in line with the College's race and equality values.

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of progress is available at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2021-05-17-reflecting-value-equality>

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of microaggressions see <https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityframeworksandactivities/equalityawardsandreports/equalityawards/raceequalitycharter/microaggressionsvideo/>

- That consideration be given to the establishment of a platform for non-academic staff, in line with other work the College is undertaking in the area but separate to the usual channels, where non-academic staff members might raise concerns over issues relating to race and equality.

#### (ii) Academic staff

In 2017 all members of Governing Body and key College committees were required to take part in the University's online E&D training. An introduction to E&D issues is also included in induction sessions for new academic staff and during training for those taking part in undergraduate admissions. These are afforded by occasional training sessions offered as optional events. Governing Body has agreed in Michaelmas Term 2020 that all members of Governing Body and other permanent members of academic staff who have significant teaching/leadership roles in College should be required to take part in training.

The working group agrees that tutoring and graduate advising should be the next focus of training for academic staff. Training should cover anti-racist teaching and reference should be made to the University's work on decolonizing the curriculum<sup>3</sup>. This training should be embedded as part of the College's ongoing commitment to equality and diversity training.

#### 4. Staff diversity

The working group notes that with 250 non-academic and in the region of 100 academic staff, increasing the diversity of the workplace is only possible when staff retire or leave their posts. The nature of some academic appointments, being joint appointments with the University, also limits the degree of freedom offered to the College. Whilst accepting that, opportunities should be taken when possible to increase the ethnic diversity of the academic and non-academic staff body.

Anonymous data collection forms (to be submitted online or in hard copy) have been circulated to academic and non-academic staff for the purposes of equality monitoring. The working group supports the embedding of this process as part of an annual HR audit.

#### 5. Staff recruitment

##### (i) Non-academic staff

The working group strongly supports moves by the College to actively promote the recruitment of staff from under-represented groups. It recommends that further consideration be given to the following as possible means of doing so:

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<sup>3</sup> A growing number of university departments have taken steps to develop more inclusive curricula and the University's Education Policy Support team has set up a forum for departments to share experiences and explore next steps. The University's Diversity Fund has funded a project in MPLS Division to develop teaching materials to diversify STEM curricula. The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH) hosted a workshop on [Decolonising the curriculum: towards a manifesto](#) and continues to promote debate and challenge racism through its [Race and Resistance programme](#)

- The use of name-blind shortlisting on non-academic posts.
- The promotion of the College's credentials to attract employees from under-represented groups.
- Engagement with local further education colleges and schools when recruiting for entry-level jobs.
- Offering an Open Day for local families, to include a version of a Job Fair, as an effective way to open up opportunities to diverse groups living in and around the city.

(ii) Academic Staff

The University's strategic plan aims to: "recruit and retain the best academic staff and ensure that under-represented groups have equality of opportunity in recruitment, personal development, and career progression in all areas of employment in the University".

The Associate Professor Recruitment Guidance (and the associated Joint Appointments procedure) supports the strategic plan by focussing on good practice in recruitment to attract and recruit high-calibre staff from across the world and to work towards an increasingly diverse staffing profile. The appointment of an Associate Professor is a joint exercise of two employers; the college and the faculty/department, with the College side being a Tutorial Fellowship.

The working group notes that in addition to joint appointments with the University, the College recruits to a number of College-only academic posts. The working group:

- proposes that the University's guidelines are taken as a template with a view to producing a best practice guide for recruitment to these posts.
- recommends that it is made an explicit part of the remit of the ECR working group to consider how the job structure, recruitment process and communication may impact on diversity in recruitment to College-only academic posts.
- recommends that those members of the College's academic staff who arrange out-tuition should be reminded of the need to ensure that issues surrounding diversity and inclusion are considered when making arrangements for tutorial teaching.

## 6. Students

When considering support for BAME students in Higher Education, the Office for Students discusses the overarching journey: participation -> experience -> progression.

The Working Group's discussions focused on:

- (i) Access and Outreach: The group was encouraged to learn that at the University level, 68.1% of new UK students are from a state school background and that in College, approximately 55% of UK students admitted in 2020 were from the least advantaged bands (note: It is not possible to arrive at a precise figure as some UK schools are not banded).

The College's Inspire programme engages young people in less advantaged schools in Harrow and Ealing from Year 9 onwards - it is a sustained outreach programme reflecting

best practice in the field and many of the participants are from minority backgrounds. Through collaboration with three other Colleges, its reach is now throughout the south east of England.

- (ii) Admissions: The University's Annual Admissions Statistical Report sets out what is known about the ethnicity of UK-domiciled applicants to Oxford. At the University level, the number of UK-domiciled BAME applicants to Oxford has increased since 2016, as have the numbers of students receiving offers and being admitted. The percentage of BAME candidates admitted to St John's in MT 2018, 19 & 20 is consistent with the percentage across the collegiate university. The College is participating in the Opportunity Oxford access scheme which is designed to increase access for under-represented groups.
- (iii) Experience: The College has put in place an officership to support students from Ethnic Minorities and an annual 'BAME' dinner (2017). It caters for diverse dietary requirements and has also provided special meals for religious festivals as well as international dinners. It was agreed that there is an ongoing need for diversity to be fully integrated into college life and the termly calendars.
- (iv) Welfare: The Group heard that, although there is mixed evidence about the outcomes reported in studies where the ethnicity of the counsellor and client were matched, this is recognized in the literature as a complex issue requiring more systematic research. For example, there can be differing effect sizes for the different variables that are studied. Whilst there is a moderate preference for a therapist of one's own race/ethnicity, there appeared to be minimal benefit to treatment outcomes across 53 studies of mental health treatments (Cabral, & Smith, 2011)<sup>4</sup>.

The evolving status of the field does not detract from the need to consider students' preferences for a more diverse representation (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language) among the workforce for the welfare provision available to College members.

A review of the College's welfare provision is currently underway, in line with the regular schedule of reviews of aspects of the college's working provision.

- (v) Equality and Diversity Workshops: Officers of the MCR and JCR investigated the training which could be made available to junior members and pilot workshops were delivered virtually to small groups during Hilary Term by the Diversity Trust. Following feedback that these were successful it was agreed that they should be offered annually to junior members, during the induction week at the beginning of Michaelmas Term, with attendance strongly endorsed by College.
- (vi) Careers and Progression: Although there are concerns in some institutions about awarding/attainment gaps affecting students from BAME backgrounds there is no

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<sup>4</sup> Cabral, R. R., & Smith, T. B. (2011). Racial/ethnic matching of clients and therapists in mental health services: A meta-analytic review of preferences, perceptions, and outcomes. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 58(4), 537–554. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0025266>

evidence of such a gap in St John's. Feedback from the HE conference attended suggests that there are, however, career challenges for BAME students and academics. Feedback from the Alumni Advisory Group endorsed the need for support on entering the workplace.

The Working Group notes in particular the work of the Oxford Foundry, which in Hilary Term 2021 launched a BAME Entrepreneurial Fellowship initiative providing 20 BAME students from the University of Oxford with 8-week funded placements with high growth ventures.<sup>5</sup> It was agreed that the College should where possible facilitate student participation in initiatives such as this in order encouraging ongoing success after St John's. In addition, it was hoped that funding could be raised for graduate scholarships for this group, possibly via the Black Academic Futures scheme.<sup>6</sup>

## 7. Choice of language

The group considered whether terminology is something the College ought to be addressing (especially BME/BAME v ethnic minorities v people of colour). The University tends to use BAME, the College thus far has used BME, choosing not to use BME or Race when giving a title to the representative Tutor (now Tutor for Ethnic Minorities). Whilst BAME is not deemed to be "perfect" (e.g. BAME might be an adequate term but it needs to be heard in context, and in some contexts, it would make more sense to specify "black British") it does provide consistency across the University.

The group acknowledges that this is a complicated issue and that there might need to be some understanding for all, in the context of an international College community, of the arguments for and against certain terms; "people of colour" is a political category in the US, for example.

The working group:

- Agrees that the issue of nomenclature should remain a topic for active discussion.
- Believes that a key issue is the avoidance of categorising people by homogenised groups.

## 8. Anonymous harassment reporting

The Working Group is aware of and endorses a proposal discussed by the Equality Committee to develop and implement an anonymous harassment reporting process for all current staff and students, for a trial period of one year, via an internal on-line multiple choice form<sup>7</sup>.

## 9. Celebrating Diversity

The Working Group and the Alumni Advisory Group are supportive of the College's ongoing promotion and celebration of diversity in College life via events such as the annual BAME

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2021-04-22-new-oxford-initiative-ensure-inclusion-entrepreneurship>

<sup>6</sup> Governing Body agreed at its meeting on 26/05/21 that the College should participate in the Academic Futures Programme and to explore fundraising possibilities (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-09-30-ambitious-oxford-initiative-launched-address-graduate-under-representation>)

<sup>7</sup> as exemplified by the [Cambridge example](#)

Dinner, International Dinners and lecture suppers. Whilst the celebration of diversity through events such as these is important, it is equally important that the College strives to ensure that the promotion and celebration of diversity is embedded as part of the daily lived experience of students and staff.

### **III CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) Although the pandemic meant that all meetings of the REWG were conducted virtually which may have had the effect of inhibiting discussion, considerable progress was made in shaping an action plan to combat racism and to encourage and support ethnic minority students and staff at St John's.
- (ii) The Group endorses the importance of listening to concerns and ensuring that everyone at all levels of the organisation acts together to support the recruitment of students and staff from all backgrounds and to provide an environment in College in which they are able to flourish.
- (iii) The Group recommends that the President be tasked with the identification and promotion of the College's race and equality values to all members of the academic and non-academic staff.
- (iv) The Group recommends the adoption by Governing Body of an anti-racism statement (Annexe A).
- (v) The Group recommends that Governing Body agrees to the implementation of an action plan on race and equality and that a small group of interested individuals be tasked with taking forward the implementation of the plan, under the guidance of a senior member of the College acting as lead advocate<sup>8</sup>. Elements of the action plan will be incorporated into the College's PSED specific equality objectives for 2021–25.

### **IV PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

In conducting its business, the group was aware that in all of its decision making it should have due regard to equality considerations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. The group noted that there is potential for a positive impact on equality in relation to race and ethnicity. The recommended actions could have positive impacts on equality by:

- (i) eliminating harassment or victimization;
- (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between members of different racial or ethnic groups;
- (iii) fostering good relations between members of different racial or ethnic groups.

The group considered that it was unlikely that any of the recommended actions would have any negative impact on equality. The positive impacts will be achieved by:

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<sup>8</sup> It is suggested that in addition to the lead advocate, membership of the group might include the Fellow for Ethnic Minorities, the Fellow for Equality, JCR and MCR Equality and Ethnic Minority reps, HR Manager, representatives from the College's Early Career Fellowship and from its non-academic staff.

<b>Aim under PSED</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Eliminating harassment or victimisation	Detailed in action plan
Advancing equality of opportunity	Detailed in action plan
Fostering good relations	Detailed in action plan

In order to ensure that the potential positive impacts are realised, a small group will be responsible for implementing the action plan under the guidance of a senior member of the College acting as lead advocate. Elements of the action plan will be incorporated into the College's PSED specific equality objectives for 2021–25.

## Draft anti-racist statement

St John's College is committed to becoming an anti-racist community. Racism exists within our own community as well as in society at large. It is unacceptable that any College member or visitor experiences racism and we pledge to acknowledge, challenge and dismantle structural racism within our policies, practices and behaviour. We are determined to ensure that St John's College provides a supportive and inclusive environment in which all our students, staff and Fellows can flourish.

During 2020-21 the College set up a working group on race and equality to address the concerns of the BAME community and identify priorities for action. Members of the group included College students, staff and Fellows and we also benefited from advice from a group of alumni. As a result, the College has agreed an action plan and in the short term we will take steps including:

- Implement a system of active support in order to improve the experience of BAME students in College
- Embed diversity and anti-racism training for all students into College life beyond Freshers' week
- Establish a mentoring scheme for BAME students, drawing on the experience of interested alumni
- Work with outside providers to develop diversity and anti-racism training for all staff and Fellows that is tailored to the College context and culture.
- Explore ways of increasing staff diversity, including working with suitably experienced local employers and running an open day for the local community
- Incorporate the celebration of diversity into the life of College, starting with a photographic exhibition to celebrate current and former BAME members.
- Participate in the University's Black Academic Futures programme and explore future funding possibilities to support access for under-represented groups

This cannot succeed as an isolated intervention. We will continue to strive to understand what it means in practice to be anti-racist and work towards sustained change.