**The Queen’s College: follow up to the Black Lives Matter statement by the GB - next steps in the College**

**Summary note of Working Group meeting, 3-4.30pm, 1 July 2020 (Zoom)**

Present: Claire Craig (Chair), Marie Bracey, Mark Buckley, Nadia Haworth, Neil Huntley, Sean Ketteringham, Sarah McHugh, Poorna Mysoor, Ludovic Phalippou, Andrew Timms, Afra Sterne-Rodgers, Nafisah Tabassum, Lindsay Turnbull, Susan Tutty, Gracie Wilson, Alice Wong

The Chair reminded the Working Group (WG) of the remit set out in the Governing Body’s statement of the 9 June (Annex A). The WG agreed the groundrules for discussions that had been circulated in advance (also Annex A).

Members of the Working Group (WG) introduced themselves and, during an initial ice-breaking session, presented their initial top short and longer term priorities for the Group to consider.

**Timetable**

The Group agreed that the timetable should be for the WG to meet in September and October. This timetable would enable the WG to make recommendations to the GB meeting on 22 October 2020. (Action: Provost to arrange for dates for the WG meetings).

The Group noted that in addition to its general commitment to transparency, it would be important to engage with others, including those who had indicated an interest in joining the Group but who had responded after the deadline. This might be done in the context of individual initiatives, or through discussions on the programme as a whole, or both.

**Name**

The Group briefly discussed its name, which had been presented in the meeting papers as “Working Group for Greater Inclusivity”. Several members felt strongly that this title was euphemistic and that the title should better reflect the Group’s focus on anti-racism. The Group agreed that getting the name right was important but that, in order to ensure it used its time at its first meeting to set up work over the summer to develop actionable proposals, it should continue the meeting without finalising its name. The Chair agreed to consider options and consult. (Action: Provost).

**Work programme**

The WG’s task was to consider the full breadth (“bucket”) of issues that might help the College meet the remit in the statement of 9 June, to identify, prioritise and make concrete recommendations where possible. Members recognised that some recommendations might be actionable very rapidly, while others would take time to enact. Similarly, some actions might deliver visible change immediately, while others would be intended to achieve long term goals.

The WG agreed to divide the full range of potential actions into four workstrands. Each workstrand was considered in a separate breakout session, with WG members identifying which session they wished to join. The breakout session groups then reported their proposed initial priorities for further development over the summer.

The provisional priorities identified were as follows:

1. Culture, behaviours, communication. Includes related policies and codes of conduct.

* Develop a programme to ensure all members of the College receive relevant training. This should include induction training, and regular refresher training for those in key roles.
* Review the formal procedures for raising concerns about potential incidents of racial discrimination: what are the routes? are they sufficient, sufficiently accessible, and do all groups have confidence in them?
* Consider options for informal procedures: how can individuals raise concerns within the College where they involve incidents that do not warrant formal procedures, but which may nevertheless be significant to those involved and which might otherwise be ignored?

1. Prospective students: outreach and admissions.

* Admissions: there is much that is good in the programme, but it could be looked at again, including through the lens of subject-specific needs
* Image: make the College (and Oxford) less potentially offputting to those without a pre-existing sense of belonging to its world, while preserving its sense of specialness

1. Current students’ experience and services. Includes access to welfare and financial and other support for undergraduates and graduates.

* Diversifying the communities of Queen’s. Some of the issues that the BAME communities face vary by Common Room and between academic and support staff. Students would like to see a higher proportion of BAME members in all of these other communities. Initial steps might involve looking at graduate and postgraduate offers including scholarships; and looking at academic and support staff appointments processes, especially where there were likely to be decisions in the next year, and including Honorary Fellows.
* History: there is scope for further enquiry into the history of Queen’s, any connections to the slave trade, and to the history of BAME individuals at the College.
* Being able to call-out or report micro-aggressions might help everyone understand and learn more about the experiences of BAME individuals and therefore reinforce dialogue and positive behaviour change. Informal resolution and mediation processes would help.

1. Recruitment, appointments and training. Includes support and academic staff; also all stages of post-graduate careers.

(This breakout group was particularly clear that it had not had long enough to talk, and wanted to continue its discussions).

* Diversifying academic appointments: noting that many appointments are joint with the relevant faculty but that the College should go further to ensure that its processes pro-actively encourage and support BAME applications and interests wherever possible. Achieving BAME representation on the Governing Body.
* Improving the academic pipeline: graduate scholarships, targeted funding, support for graduate scholars to carry on in academia, take early career appointments and eventually senior ones.
* Regular training
* Making better use of equality monitoring data in order to track progress: this data is collected, but is patchy due to self-reporting, and it is not clear how it is used.

In the short final plenary session, one WG member raised the matter of the Oxford Living Wage, as low pay disproportionately affects the minority ethnic population. (Action: Provost).

The Chair thanked everyone for their extremely thoughtful contributions and reported that she would take stock of the afternoon’s discussions and propose specific next steps, for consideration by email, together with the draft minutes.

12 July 2020

Annex A

In its statement of 9 June, the Governing Body said:

*“We are setting up a working group, to include students and staff from across the College, tasked with working over the summer to put forward concrete and meaningful proposals to the Governing Body at its first meeting next term. It will look at all areas where the College can improve: in its outreach activities, in admissions, and in financial support, for undergraduates and postgraduates alike; in the procedures related to hiring and retaining academic and non-academic staff members of the highest calibre; in student support; and in all aspects of fostering an inclusive community in which everyone feels respected, valued, and heard. “*

**Working Group groundrules**

The Working Group will discuss issues that are contentious and where language and understanding are moving fast. Members will observe the following groundrules:

1. Everyone listens and everyone contributes
2. Remember that language and understandings are moving fast: what one person says may be heard differently by another
3. Explore and ask questions: no suggestion or comment should be dismissed out of hand.
4. Contributions are made on a personal basis, with the aim of creating an inclusive environment for everyone associated with the College
5. The Chatham House Rule applies (outside the meeting remarks are not attributed to individuals without their agreement)
6. The aim is to be transparent and to engage all parts of the College community. The Group will agree and publish minutes of each meeting.