

## History Faculty Race Equality Action Group Interim Report

The Race Equality Action Group (REAG) was launched in Michaelmas 2020 with a view to taking significant action to address racism within the History Faculty and to respond to concerns about race equality in the profession and about eurocentricism in the curriculum raised by students and staff in recent years. This involves short, medium and long-term projects, focusing on five key areas of activity. The Steering Committee<sup>1</sup> met for the first time in November 2020, and again in March 2021. We are extremely indebted to all the members of the Steering Committee, particularly the External Advisors and Student representatives, for their generosity with their time and advice. It agreed a programme of activities, principally concerned with data collection, student experience, and curriculum, which has been pursued over the course of the year. The short and medium-term projects undertaken or launched in 2020-21 are listed below, with plans for the 2021 summer vacation and 2021-22 academic year in blue. Longer term projects, such as fundraising for studentships & research support, will be developed over the course of the 2021-22 academic year and will respond to the data collected as appropriate.

Unfortunately, delays in the recruitment of a data analyst have meant that we have not yet been able to gather the information we need to analyse student admissions, progression and outcomes, or to analyse the data collected through our student surveys, but we expect to make significant progress with this over the course of the vacation, which should put us in a good position to reflect and act on what is revealed, over the course of the 2021-22 academic year.

### 1) Reporting and Data Collection

- Designed and distributed two student surveys (one postgraduate and one graduate) in Hilary Term 2021. Rates of return were unfortunately low (52 of 568 postgraduates invited to respond, of whom 15 (29%) identified themselves as of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and 96 of 1,130 undergraduates invited to respond, of whom 35 (36%) identified themselves as of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic backgrounds) but very preliminary analysis suggests that these have nonetheless collected valuable information which will be fruitfully explored both using statistical analyses alive to measures of significance, and through sensitive reading of the qualitative information solicited through free-text questions. These will be fully analysed over the course of the 2021 summer vacation
- Organised an Undergraduate Listening Forum and a Postgraduate Listening Forum in Hilary Term 2021. Comments and suggestions from these events have informed contributions to the New Guidance for Tutors and Seminar Convenors
- [Develop mechanisms for regularly capturing and reviewing key data on recruitment, progression and outcomes](#)

### 2) Recruitment and Staff Experience

- Advised with respect to equality and diversity in respect to the Further Particulars for new posts

---

<sup>1</sup> The Steering Committee is co-convened by Christina de Bellaigue & Faridah Zaman; the other postholders on the Committee are Fanny Bessard, Steven Gunn, Alexander Morrison, Richard Reid and Stephen Tuck. The ECR representative is Mike Joseph. The postgraduate representatives are Zobia Haq, Caine Tayo Lewin-Turner and Eunice Yu. The undergraduate representatives are Xaira Adebayo, Nadia Awad, Ciara Garcha and Gracie Oddie-James. We are very fortunate to have benefited from advice and guidance from 5 external advisory members: Naomi Kellman (Rare Recruitment & Target Oxbridge), Dr Sadiyah Qureshi (University of Birmingham, RHS Race report), Dr Kristy Warren (University of Leicester), Dr Jonathan Saha (University of Durham, RHS Race report), Professor Barbara Savage (University of Pennsylvania).

- Proposed enhanced training around race equality bringing together incoming postholders, ECRs, and office-holders in the Faculty to ensure engagement with these issues at all levels of the Faculty and to strengthen connections between Faculty members
- Draw on Staff Experience Survey data to reflect on issues relevant to the History Faculty
- Contribute to discussion of workload to establish mechanisms guarding against overburdening of Faculty members from under-represented groups, and to ensure proper recognition (in terms of buyout/funding support, IPOs, RoD) of work on equality and diversity issues

### **3) Admissions and Student Experience**

- Identified Harassment Officer with particular focus on issues of concern to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and Faculty members
- Fed matters raised in the Undergraduate Listening Forum and a Postgraduate Listening Forum in Hilary Term 2021 into development of Faculty Guidance for Tutors & Convenors
- Supported Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic graduate network (this organisation is student-led and independent of the REAG, but the REAG will offer infrastructural and financial support where appropriate)
- Contribute to renewal of Faculty website to encourage recruitment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic graduate students and highlight work in the History Faculty that may be of particular interest to those interested in histories of race and raced experience
- Contribute to discussion of work on Graduate Admissions, in particular with respect to the use of contextual data for assessments, and with respect to the Financial Declaration, which may be a particular deterrent for students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- Contribute to discussion of complaints procedures at University level and within the History Faculty's control that would bring the Faculty in-line with other institutions

### **4) Events and publicity**

- Created a REAG webpage on the History Faculty site (with significant help from Laura Spence), providing details of REAG activities, regular updates, and information about activities of interest
- Organised a Black History Month Roundtable event on Legacies of Slavery at Oxford, with free Uncomfortable Oxford tour offered to students
- Established REAG twitter and facebook accounts publicizing the work of the REAG and events of interest
- Organised a series of reading group discussions in collaboration with the Transnational and Global History Seminar on 'Race, Research and the University' and on 'Race, Teaching and the University'
- Collaborate in planning event(s) for Black History Month
- Work with History Faculty Community History Fellow to develop new projects

### **5) Curriculum**

- Organised three short lectures on Histories of Race (in the medieval, early modern and modern world) aimed at undergraduates, with accompanying Q&A session in Hilary Term
- Contributed to development of new Approaches strand on Histories of Race, and to revision of Approaches strand on Gender History to incorporate material on race and raced experience
- Communicated with and supported colleagues and students where questions have been raised about the range of material covered in course bibliographies
- Worked with DUS and Athena-SWAN coordinator, and drawing on student feedback and on advice from Steering Committee, to develop Faculty Guidance for Tutors and Convenors that

will help to ensure bibliographies and teaching are regularly renewed and reviewed, to encourage tutors and convenors to incorporate new material and new perspectives, and to underline the importance of this range

- In conjunction with William Whyte as convenor of Approaches to History, organise workshop on Teaching Histories of Race, to be held in MT2021, intended particularly for those teaching this Approach but open to all
- Work with DUS to update and enhance feedback mechanisms for student comments and suggestions on Faculty teaching and resources, which have tended to fall into abeyance with the shift to online reporting
- Set up a (moderated) area on Canvas where students can post bibliographic suggestions and additions to supplement Faculty bibliographies (these can both respond to current student interests in more spontaneous ways than official bibliographies and provide inspiration in reviewing Faculty bibliographies)
- Contribute to discussions of Curriculum Review when appropriate
- Contribute to initiatives supporting undergraduate language learning, including in heritage languages
- Fundraise for student support, travel grants, and language learning to support graduate research involving fieldwork and archives beyond the UK