Dear all,

Please find the agenda and papers for next Wednesday’s E&I committee meeting attached.

Kind regards,
EMAIL TWO

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 29 October 2020 09:25
To: [Redacted]
Subject: [Redacted]
Attachments: See PDF – Email Two attachments

Here are the documents I mentioned
Hi

I think the various BAME reports might come later as part of building toward an action and in light of imminent faculty updates (i.e. homework for the committee for our 2nd sitting).

[remainder of email out of scope]
Hi

Thanks for this. Your thoughts would be much appreciated too, but for me the agenda might read:

1. Committee Composition
2. Staff/PGR Communication and Consultation
3. Black Lives Matter (incl. staff training, recruitment, UG curriculum, awarding gap, and PG recruitment) *English Taught Student Education datasets. Curriculum proposal documents from 2019-20 given for context; verbal updates to be given in meeting.*
4. Report on Northern Students Experience at Durham University: General Discussion
5. COVID19 differential impacts: students. *English Taught Student Education datasets also relevant here.*
6. COVID19 differential impacts: staff; has E & I received [name]'s report here? If not we might add in with a note that it has been discussed at the Board.

What do you think? I've asked [name] if [name] would like to speak to item 2.

Hi

I hope you’ve had an ok day.
Really sorry to chase on this, but would you be able to let me know what you want to go on the agenda for the E&I committee next Weds, and any papers you want to go out with it? Ideally, I’d like to be able to send these to the committee by the end of the day tomorrow or on Friday morning.

Many thanks,
Hi,

Apologies, I should have included a reminder about the below/attached in my handover stuff from earlier. This is to add to the agenda for the Oct E&I meeting.

Kind regards,

---

Dear [Name],

[Name] and I had a handover meeting on 30 July covering all outstanding business and documentation in relation to the School’s E&I Committee. I told [Name] and [Name] that someone else would be chairing the committee during my period of leave from [Name], but I’m not sure who is taking on that role, particularly in connection with the additional committee meeting designed to deal with matters particularly connection with Black Lives Matter. The PGR rep was, however, invited to suggest items for the agenda of this particular meeting if they wished to do so.

Best wishes,

---

Begin forwarded message:

From: [Name]
Subject: Request: September Equality and Inclusion Committee Meeting
Date: 3 September 2020 at 11:57:10 BST
To: [Name]
Dear all,

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones safe and well, and that you had an enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend.

Following our discussion about the date of a future Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting, I would like to formally request that our next discussion of matters arising from communications between the School and PGRs about Black Lives Matter takes the form of an E&I committee meeting, as was discussed in the meeting held between [date], [date] and I on 09.07.20.

Given that September is already upon us, I would like to request that a meeting is called to take place this month, ideally as soon as possible.

It is understandable that the School is currently facing many additional challenges; however, we cannot allow the many concerns which PGRs voiced in their communication with their Reps and the School to remain unexamined. Discussion of these at E&I committee-level is a necessary first step if the School wishes to demonstrate its tangible commitment towards progress and the dismantling of structural and racial inequalities in the department.

[Name] and I would like to thank [Name] for inviting us (via email on 15.07.20) to attend the next E&I meeting. [Name] and I can confirm that we would both still like to attend the meeting, and hope you understand that we would both be doing so virtually for health and safety reasons.

Please see attached a list of the points which we would like to add to the agenda. I also attach a copy of the report compiled by [Name] and which collated PGR responses to School communications about Black Lives Matter. This was sent to [Name], [Name], [Name] and all PGRs on 06/07/20.

We look forward to hearing more from you soon.

Best wishes,

[Name]
(also on behalf of [Name], [Name])
EMAIL SIX

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 04 September 2020 09:14
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
PGR <englishpgr@leeds.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: Request: September Equality and Inclusion Committee Meeting

Dear [Redacted],

Thank you for this email. I can confirm that discussions about finding someone to deputise for [Redacted] for the coming term remain underway, and as soon as we can confirm this new appointment we will also confirm the date of the next committee. Thanks for your patience and we look forward to further discussions very soon.

Kind regards,

-----

From: [Redacted]
Sent: 03 September 2020 11:57
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Request: September Equality and Inclusion Committee Meeting
Dear all,

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones safe and well, and that you had an enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend.

Following our discussion about the date of a future Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting, I would like to formally request that our next discussion of matters arising from communications between the School and PGRs about Black Lives Matter takes the form of an E&I committee meeting, as was discussed in the meeting held between [Redacted] and I on 09.07.20.

Given that September is already upon us, I would like to request that a meeting is called to take place this month, ideally as soon as possible.
It is understandable that the School is currently facing many additional challenges; however, we cannot allow the many concerns which PGRs voiced in their communication with their Reps and the School to remain unexamined. Discussion of these at E&I committee-level is a necessary first step if the School wishes to demonstrate its tangible commitment towards progress and the dismantling of structural and racial inequalities in the department.

Dear [Name],

I ([Name]) would like to thank [Name] for inviting us (via email on 15.07.20) to attend the next E&I meeting. [Name] and I can confirm that we would both still like to attend the meeting, and hope you understand that we would both be doing so virtually for health and safety reasons.

Please see attached a list of the points which we would like to add to the agenda. I also attach a copy of the report compiled by [Name] and I which collated PGR responses to School communications about Black Lives Matter. This was sent to [Name], [Name], [Name] and all PGRs on 06/07/20.

We look forward to hearing more from you soon.
Best wishes,

[Name]

From: [Name]
Sent: 07 September 2020 10:08
To: [Name]
Cc: [Name]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for updating us on the current situation. We also look forward to further discussion in the near future.

Best wishes,
Thank you for this email. I can confirm that discussions about finding someone to deputise for [REDACTED] for the coming term remain underway, and as soon as we can confirm this new appointment we will also confirm the date of the next committee. Thanks for your patience and we look forward to further discussions very soon.

kind regards

---

I hope this email finds you and your loved ones safe and well, and that you had an enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend.

Following our discussion about the date of a future Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting, I would like to formally request that our next discussion of matters arising from communications between the School and PGRs about Black Lives Matter takes the form of
an E&I committee meeting, as was discussed in the meeting held between [blanks].

Given that September is already upon us, I would like to request that a meeting is called to take place this month, ideally as soon as possible.

It is understandable that the School is currently facing many additional challenges; however, we cannot allow the many concerns which PGRs voiced in their communication with their Reps and the School to remain unexamined. Discussion of these at E&I committee-level is a necessary first step if the School wishes to demonstrate its tangible commitment towards progress and the dismantling of structural and racial inequalities in the department.

[blanks] and I ([blanks]) would like to thank [blanks] for inviting us (via email on 15.07.20) to attend the next E&I meeting. [blanks] and I can confirm that we would both still like to attend the meeting, and hope you understand that we would both be doing so virtually for health and safety reasons.

Please see attached a list of the points which we would like to add to the agenda. I also attach a copy of the report compiled by [blanks] and I which collated PGR responses to School communications about Black Lives Matter. This was sent to [blanks], [blanks] and all PGRs on 06/07/20.

We look forward to hearing more from you soon.
Best wishes,

[signature]

-----Original Message-----
From: [blanks]
Sent: 16 June 2020 14:59
To: [blanks]
Cc: [blanks]
Subject: Re: Summer E&I committee meeting & PGR representation on the committee

Yes, of course.

Best wishes,
On 16 Jun 2020, at 14:35, [Name] wrote:

Hi [Name]

Thanks for this. I am next due to have a catch up with [Name] next Monday. Is it ok for me to discuss these matters with [Name] then and get back to you?

Kind regards,

-----Original Message-----

From: [Name]
Sent: 16 June 2020 14:12
To: [Name]
Cc: [Name]
Subject: Re: Summer E&I committee meeting & PGR representation on the committee

Dear [Name]

I hope you are well.

I wanted to follow-up on two practical matters that [Name] outlined in the School’s response to the open PGR letter about Black Lives Matter.

1) The question of PGR representation on the E&I committee. At present, [Name] is the PGR Union rep. She is an optional attendee, but hasn’t been to either of the committee meetings that I have chaired this year so far. [Name] invited additional PGR representation at an E&I committee meeting to be convened in the summer. Given the range of PGR issues that have been flagged recently, going well beyond the immediate political and diversity issues raised in the PGR’s open letter on BLM, thinking about how best to actively engage the PGR community through the committee is an important priority, and one that might involve rethinking PGR representation. This could just be for the single meeting that [Name]’s email flagged, but it might be constructive to change the committee’s membership to reflect this. ([Name] has, for example, suggested one rep for teaching and one rep for student experience, but it might also be helpful to divide it along the lines of taught and research PGR representation).

2) The timing of an additional E&I committee meeting over the summer. I am in the [Name] role until [Name]. I am very happy to chair a committee meeting before that date. However, I realise that everyone’s schedules are going to be a moveable feast between early July and mid September, so it might make more sense for it to be chaired by whoever replaces me while I’m on leave. Either way, it would be good to discuss an appropriate time and to get as much buy-in from
colleagues on the committee as possible. Given the extensive staff turnover within roles from 1 August that your earlier email today indicates, I guess it depends on how important continuity is to framing the conversation with PGRs as well.

> I’d be grateful for your thoughts.

Best wishes,
Hi all
We still need to recruit someone to sit in during [redacted]'s period of leave but hope to do so soon.
all best

From: [redacted]
Sent: 15 July 2020 11:27
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting

Dear [redacted],

Thank you very much for getting back to us, and for welcoming us to attend the next School Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting as guests. We look forward to meeting the Committee and taking part in the discussion.

It is useful to know that you will be going on [redacted] leave from [redacted]. Might you know who will be chairing the committee meetings which will be held during that time?

Thank you for collating a list of documents and agenda items before the next meeting, this is most helpful. We'll be sure to get back to you if there's anything else which we can think of.

Best wishes,

From: [redacted]
Sent: 15 July 2020 08:56
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your email. The School Equality and Inclusion Committee sits alongside the Faculty Equality and Inclusion Committee, the University Equality and Inclusion Committee, and the Equality
Policy Unit, to provide a forum for dealing with matters such as those you raise in response to #BlackLivesMatter, has requested that we schedule an additional School committee meeting to address these issues specifically. The E&I Committee currently has two UG student representatives, and one PG student representative. You would both be very welcome to attend the next meeting as guests. Any longterm changes to the composition of the committee itself would need to be reviewed and agreed by the committee at a future meeting. I will be going on [imput] leave for 6 months from [imput], which means that committee meetings held during that time will be chaired by another colleague, so it will be best if [imput] (whom you’ve copied in here) confirms the most appropriate date for this additional E&I Committee meeting.

I am collating a list of documents and agenda items in advance of the next meeting, including those you mention here, so please feel free to get in touch if anything additional comes to mind.

With all best wishes,

[Name]

On 14 Jul 2020, at 15:55, [Name] wrote:

Dear [Name],

We hope this email finds you well. [Name] and I (imput) are contacting you as you are the [imput].

As you may be aware, recently a large number of PGRs have responded to communications from the School regarding Black Lives Matter. We have received extensive feedback from PGRs who are eager for the School to make progress in dismantling structural inequalities, especially racial inequalities, within the School. As a first step, we believe that the E&I Committee would provide an ideal forum for ongoing, forward-facing discussion of the myriad of issues relating to structural racism and racial inequalities within the School.

Following on from our recent discussion with [Name] and I, would, if you thought it appropriate, be very interested in joining the next Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting, to discuss increased PGR representation at future meetings. Are we right in thinking that the committee currently only includes one student representative, the UCU Student Rep, [imput]? Given the wide-ranging nature of PGR concerns, it would perhaps be useful for the committee to expand its PGR representation to include multiple PGR representatives. If possible, we would very much like to discuss which form such representation might take in the future at the next meeting.

In the same discussion, [Name] suggested that the next E&I meeting could potentially take place in either late August or early September, with Thursday 3rd September tentatively being mentioned as a possible date. Might it be possible for the next E&I Committee meeting to take place around that time, and would you have a preference as to which date would be most suitable?

We understand that this academic year has placed an extraordinary amount of additional stresses on all staff, yourself included, no doubt. We hope, therefore, that a proposed E&I
meeting shortly before the new academic year would allow for time to staff to recuperate after the challenges of the current year, and enable committee members to plan for the coming year with renewed energies.

We very much look forward to hearing from you, and hope to have more discussions with you in future.

Best wishes,
EMAIL EIGHT

From: [redacted]
Sent: 14 July 2020 17:02
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting

Thanks, [redacted]. That's a helpful clarification. I'll respond to the email in the morning when I've got the headspace to do it properly. I have just been to several hours of online training on engaging the public with controversial research topics, so I'm exhausted!

I hope you're keeping well.

Best wishes,

On 14 Jul 2020, at 16:58, [redacted] wrote:

Yes -- except I did say to [redacted] twice that I wasn't sure what the existing PGR representation was and I had reservations about expanding. So maybe avoid "increased" in favour of "review and agree"?? Thanks for your help here. All best [redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 14 July 2020 16:53
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting

Thanks, [redacted], that's helpful to know.

I assume that it is OK for me to confirm that both PGRs are welcome to attend the next E&I committee meeting as guests, and that the question of increased PGR representation and the form it should take will be raised for discussion by the committee?

Best wishes,

On 14 Jul 2020, at 16:42, [redacted] wrote:

Hi [redacted]
No, unfortunately not, though [redacted] is aware your successor will be in post at that stage. All best

From: [redacted]
Sent: 14 July 2020 16:17
To: [redacted]; [redacted]
Subject: Fwd: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting

Dear [redacted], dear [redacted]

Before I respond to the email below, would you be able to tell me whether anyone has yet been appointed to take on the E&I/SALIP roles when I go on [redacted] leave from [redacted]? The SALIP question came up in a different email exchange earlier today. I will obviously continue to engage with these issues for the
next month, but given the importance of some of the conversations, it would be helpful to know who to refer students and colleagues to as the most appropriate School-based contact after that.

Best wishes,

Begin forwarded message:

From: 
Subject: Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting
Date: 14 July 2020 at 15:55:02 BST
To: 
Cc: 

Dear 

We hope this email finds you well. and I ( ) are contacting you as you are the Equality and Inclusion Lead for the School.

As you may be aware, recently a large number of PGRs have responded to communications from the School regarding Black Lives Matter. We have received extensive feedback from PGRs who are eager for the School to make progress in dismantling structural inequalities, especially racial inequalities, within the School. As a first step, we believe that the E&I Committee would provide an ideal forum for ongoing, forward-facing discussion of the myriad of issues relating to structural racism and racial inequalities within the School.

Following on from our recent discussion with and I would, if you thought it appropriate, be very interested in joining the next Equality and Inclusion Committee meeting, to discuss increased PGR representation at future meetings. Are we right in thinking that the committee currently only includes one student representative, the UCU Student Rep, ? Given the wide-ranging nature of PGR concerns, it would perhaps be useful for the committee to expand its PGR representation to include multiple PGR representatives. If possible, we would very much like to discuss which form such representation might take in the future at the next meeting.

In the same discussion, suggested that the next E&I meeting could potentially take place in either late August or early September, with Thursday 3rd September tentatively being mentioned as a possible date. Might it be possible for the next E&I Committee meeting to take place around that time, and would you have a preference as to which date would be most suitable?

We understand that this academic year has placed an extraordinary amount of additional stresses on all staff, yourself included, no doubt. We hope, therefore, that a proposed E&I meeting shortly before the new academic year would allow for time to staff to recuperate after the challenges of the current year, and enable committee members to plan for the coming year with renewed energies.

We very much look forward to hearing from you, and hope to have more discussions with you in future.
Best wishes,
Meeting discussion ONE

Many thanks. I look forward to discussing at this time.

all best,

---

Hello all,

2pm on Thursday works for me as well. Thank you very much for rescheduling.

Best wishes,

---

From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:04:37 PM
To: [Redacted]
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Re: Black Lives Matter: PGR reply to School response from 16.06.20

Thanks very much for this. 2pm that day works for me too.

Best wishes,

---

On 7 Jul 2020, at 15:49, [Redacted] wrote:

2pm Thursday is okay for me.

School of English
University of Leeds
From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 July 2020 15:47
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Black Lives Matter: PGR reply to School response from 16.06.20

Yes that's fine for me. Looks like I'm also free at 2pm that day if any good? (OK for you I guess)
<DFC99DED2C4E959E31728EF715E8A3.png>

From: [redacted]
Sent: 07 July 2020 14:02
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: Black Lives Matter: PGR reply to School response from 16.06.20

Dear [redacted],

Thank you so much for the opportunity to meet and discuss these issues with you.

We think discussing this with you in person will be fruitful. However, [redacted] and I have noted an advertised lecture, aimed at PGRs, about BAME students’ experiences in higher education, delivered by Professor Kalwant Bhopal from the University of Birmingham. We feel that given the issues we have been discussing here it would be relevant and helpful for us to attend. It is from 10am - 11am on Thursday 9th.

With this in mind, is there any possibility that we could please reschedule our meeting?

With best wishes,

[redacted]

On 6 Jul 2020, at 11:29, [redacted] wrote:

<DB173ADE8C074A688288464FF2B43CE8.png>

From: [redacted]
Sent: 06 July 2020 09:32
To: [redacted]
Dear all

I'm currently free on Thursday a.m. and could participate.

Best wishes

Many thanks for your email. I'm wondering whether, as an initial response and ahead of School discussions in September, it would be good to meet and discuss some time this week? On Thursday morning I am free between 9.30 and 11. I'm not sure of [ ]'s availability but it would be good if [ ] could join us if possible.

kind regards,
Dear [Name],

Thank you for your email on 16th June 2020 to PGRs in response to the PGR letter about Black Lives Matter, discussing the School’s commitments to addressing racial inequalities. As PGR Reps ([Name] and [Name]), this response is the culmination of a consultation period with our fellow PGRs. Our email underlines the actions and commitments which we and our peers want the School to implement in a timely manner. In all of these matters, we are cognisant that there is no quick or easy fix. However, change is necessary. Our PGR colleagues are eager for change and as reps we will continue to support them, to represent their views, and to facilitate this dialogue.

Our peers have indicated to us that the School must demonstrate more transparent and continuous commitments to addressing racial inequalities locally, and must communicate suitable timeframes for completion. We also welcome policies, committees, and procedures which aim to redress these disparities, and we implore the School to provide PGRs with clear and comprehensive communication about what these policies are, and how, when, and by whom they are being implemented.

Feedback to this effect is summarised and grouped under sub-headings, below:

**Action points from the Open Letter:**

In their open letter entitled ‘Black Lives Matter – School of English PGR Response’, our colleagues called on the School to commit to certain actions, but we have not yet had a response which engages with these action points. We would like to reemphasise them here and request timeframes for their completion:

- Reviewing and decolonising all the School’s core modules to ensure inclusion of diverse authors, perspectives, and voices, beyond the new ‘Race, Writing, and Decolonisation’ module, and including on English Language modules. PGTAs would like to be involved in discussions about these changes and to receive regular updates about curriculum reform;
- Providing mandatory staff and PGTA training and materials on appropriate discussions of race in teaching activities;
- Supporting this by establishing a staff training library, including exemplars of texts which explore racial and other inequalities;

- A review of existing strategies to support BAME students and a commitment to continually reviewing and maintaining these, including gathering these students’ feedback on support strategies;
- Increasing the presence of BAME PGRs, Postdoctoral Fellows, and staff, through targeted funding and a consultation to gather information about barriers to progression;
- Engaging with initiatives such as the Free Black University Fund;
After your email on 16th June 2020, our consultation with fellow PGRs resulted in the following requests:

**Equality and Inclusion Committee**

- We would like a set date for the next meeting of this committee, early in semester 1 of the 2020-21 academic year;
- Information should be shared with PGRs about the committee’s current membership, focus, and aims;
- PGRs should be appointed as representatives for different underrepresented groups within PGR, to sit on the committee. We can provide appointed members at a later date, but they might include representatives for Black and other BAME PGRs, international students, LGBTQ+ students, Disabled students, and others;
- PGRs should be included in committee communications and receive copies of minutes, papers, and agendas.

We are also grateful for the statistics you have provided in your email, which demonstrate some improvements in the recruitment of BAME students. However, feedback from colleagues has indicated that:

- We would like access to actual numbers, rather than percentages, where possible
- We would like to see some transparent discussion of and strategies for addressing BAME student attainment and retention figures;
- Whilst the School is making considerable efforts in Undergraduate recruitment, we would like to access the figures relating to BAME PGT and PGRs, including breakdown of scholarship recipients;
- We wish to draw attention to another open letter which you may have seen, from the School’s undergraduates and alumni, which shows very different figures from those cited in your email. How can the differences in figures be accounted for? [https://medium.com/@leedsunidefundtodecolonise/open-letter-defund-to-decolonise-leeds-university-cda09a1109a2](https://medium.com/@leedsunidefundtodecolonise/open-letter-defund-to-decolonise-leeds-university-cda09a1109a2);
- Similar figures should be provided on staff recruitment. PGRs have noted, for instance, that whilst the School is proud to have opened one of the first university postcolonial studies centres, postcolonial studies has no BAME staff. The School should take action to staffing inequalities, including a review of job postings and discussion of barriers to applying;
- The School should also be cognisant of the insensitivity of sending out module marketing materials in response to highly triggering and violent global events;
- A public-facing roadmap for curriculum changes and regular updates should be made available, and PGRs should be included in any discussions.
We have also received extensive feedback from PGRs calling for the School to implement training for all staff, including PGTAs, which specifically addresses and works to dismantle unconscious racial biases and microaggressions. The School needs to take such action to demonstrate it is firmly and tangibly committed to the facilitation of a safe and inclusive working environment for all PGRs and staff. This is particularly pertinent to ensure the safety and wellbeing of BAME researchers in the School, who are especially likely to experience intersecting vectors of oppression.

As PGR Reps we would like to reiterate what PGRs have repeatedly outlined in their communications with us and with the School: we want to receive direct and firm confirmation from the School of English about which specific concrete actions it will be taking to dismantle the racial inequalities which continue to pervade the department, faculty and university as a whole. Structural racism greatly endangers the safety and wellbeing of all BAME PGRs, many of whom face additional injustices and repeated oppression beyond the School/University.

We implore the School to work openly and transparently with PGRs to ensure that the School becomes a universally welcoming and supportive environment for PGRs from all backgrounds. We believe that an Equality and Inclusion Committee which includes and amplifies marginalised PGR voices is the first of many steps which need to be taken in this direction.

We know that any work to combat prejudices and structural inequalities of any kind in the School needs to be ongoing, cannot be achieved overnight, and of course it cannot be allayed by general reassurances of support. PGRs want to see real changes happen in the School, and evidence of how the School plans to implement these in real time.

We look forward to a productive, open, and reflective continuation of this conversation, and of the work which needs to be done.

Best wishes,

[Name]

and

[Name]
Dear all,

Please see an email below from Warnes, the Head of the School of English, in response to your messages last week.

Dear PGR representatives and PGR students,

Thank you for your recent communications and for the open letter you sent to us yesterday morning. Please accept the following as our reply.

I know that in my time at Leeds, as well as my own teaching and WP work, many colleagues have taught core and option modules that reckon with racism, slavery, and empire, and that support for Black Lives Matter runs deep through the school. Your letter reminds us that we have more to do, and we look forward to discussing the issues it raises in a mutual spirit. We feel together we can deliver a distinctive contribution to permanent change in higher education.

Although time is tight I can confirm that the following actions are already underway. Our plan for undergraduate curriculum reform remains on course, and further student consultation on decolonisation and inclusion will take place as planned early in the next session. In other steps, the Equality and Inclusion Committee that my predecessor Professor Fiona Becket established a few years ago has, among other things, developed new recruitment processes to address our lack of diversity. Our datasets confirm that, in part thanks to new WP and School recruitment approaches, BAME recruitment has risen from 10.2% in 2015 to 16.8% last year. Our degree outcomes data shows that, while there is less evidence here of grade inflation than in other English departments in the country, nor do we have an awarding gap. In 2019 95% of black or minority students received “good degrees” compared to an average of 93%. (BAME and average % figures were similar over the previous four years.) This positive outcome is a massive credit to those students. It also reflects the work of all School staff as well as the large amount of work colleagues have done behind the scenes to ensure our non-continuation rates remain low. These rates—identified in the Broken Pipeline report as a key cause of the undergraduate awarding gap—have as a result been reduced from 6.2% in 2014-5 (19.6% of whom were BAME students) to 3.5% in 2019-20 (4% of whom are BAME students).

We acknowledge that there is a great deal of work still ahead, and perhaps not least at the postgraduate levels. In discussions ahead we would love to discuss your proposals, to discuss our proposals, and to work on these together. Right now staff time is committed to the marking and ratifying of UG degrees; to PhD transfer; and to the production of a plan of teaching amid the huge uncertainties ahead. Our leadership team is depleted and I am very conscious that, after a challenging semester, academic staff are exhausted. Many, like myself, are continuing to homeschool or carry out caring duties while meeting the usual demands of academic work. As such I would suggest that, before UG curriculum discussions resume in late September, we hold an Equality and Inclusion Committee toward the end of the vacation period. This would be a good moment for us to meet and discuss our more general equality strategy. We would welcome additional PGR representation at that meeting.
In the meantime, thank you again for your letter. Words are always important in the School of English, and I think it was right that we signalled our commitment to Black Lives Matter last week, but I hope it is also clear that these words reflect our ongoing work as well as our commitment for the future. We are pleased you share that commitment and look forward to working with you to ensure the School is true to its principles and offers a welcoming, inclusive culture to all.

Kind regards

[Blank] on behalf of the academic staff of the School of English
EMAIL NINE

From: 
Sent: 03 July 2020 13:04
To: 
Subject: Re: Black Lives Matter responses

Dear [Name],

Just to say thanks for this. If you'd like to discuss future plans from next summer please let me know. Like your teaching, your leadership on FYPs is really terrific and the school will be lucky if you can contribute in other roles at that time.

all best --

[Name]

From: 
Sent: 23 June 2020 13:28
To: 
Subject: RE: Black Lives Matter responses

Dear [Name],

Thanks for your very reassuring and sensible response on BLM and curriculum review. What you say below about incorporating reflections on race, empire and whiteness into an essentially white modernist / Victorian curriculum is essentially what we're trying to do for now—and the connections between Joyce and Alain Locke are really exciting! In a similar vein, I was really pleased to find so many echoes of and tributes to Joyce in *Invisible Man*.

Thanks, too, for your encouragement about the admin roles. It is something I'm interested in for the future—this time next year, perhaps, once my leave is out of the way / the teaching I've committed to with [Name] is finished.

Best wishes,

[Name]

From: 
Sent: 19 June 2020 16:59
To: 
Subject: Re: Black Lives Matter responses

Hi [Name],

Just wanted to write to thank you for this response. I think we're on a similar page with this. While the open letter includes some claims and suppositions that we may need to challenge in due course, its intentions are good and it points toward constructive dialogue. Personally I don't believe this needs to entail diversification of primary material in every instance, and I feel that a study of UK modernism may involve a white corpus, especially if it
featured reflections on race, empire and whiteness, but this is perhaps a matter for
discussion and will feel more legitimate or just easier if it sits in a more diversified
curriculum all round. By the same token I think modernisms could extend internationally to
great effect, and some consideration of postcolonial Dublin on the course could lead quite
wonderfully to Harlem as another modernist hub. (Alain Locke e.g. was really inspired by
Joyce and Irish independence.) I suppose I feel that either approach is legitimate but that
while the first is probably already quite close to the reality of Mod Lit the latter probably
needs some serious discussion and planning between us. Having an eye on what's practical
and on what interests us intellectually would be important here, and this takes time. My
feeling is that we're getting enough right that we can give ourselves that time, and make
further changes -- if we wanted to -- in time for September 2021. Much as I propose
dialogue with students in the response, then, I think also we really need an awayday-style
space as a School away from them to take stock and discuss with each other, and hope to
figure out a way we can achieve this come September.

I hope this email is making sense -- I've got Outlook fatigue and need to stop!

Re: internal posts I would welcome discussion. [name] would probably have kittens if we
revisited your plan for 2020-1, and I know you've had a difficult time and understand the
desire for balance and to defend research focus, but just to say, as I've said before, that any
future contribution to admin or leadership roles would be welcome.

all best, and hope you have a restful weekend,

From: [name]
Sent: 15 June 2020 15:16
To: [name]
Subject: RE: Black Lives Matter responses

Dear [name],

This is an important open letter, and I support its intentions wholeheartedly.

Anyway, I'm writing about the singling out of the Victorian and Modern Lit core modules as
particular culprits. They are: this is fair comment. However, I am really stuck when considering how
we might address it. The problem is that Black British writing seems, as far as I am aware, pretty
much a post-WW2 phenomenon: there are plenty of brilliant Black writers publishing before 1945,
but they are (usually) American. Hence, I am not sure how we might, with the best will in the world,
go about decolonising this aspect of our curriculum as it currently stands. Race is, of course, a theme
in Victorian literature, and in British Modernism, but it is a theme mediated by white writers, often in ways which are now uncomfortable, unacceptable or offensive.

Hopefully, curriculum reform will address this by breaking down some of the divisions between American, Postcolonial and Modern / Victorian cores, but I do think that this aspect of the problem under discussion here is going to be really tricky to address in the meantime, if that is what is being asked of us. Unless, of course, you have any recommendations of some pre-1945 British writers of colour, which would be gratefully received.

All the best,

From: [name]
Sent: 15 June 2020 13:52
To: [name]

Subject: Black Lives Matter responses

Dear colleagues

I hope you all had chance to enjoy the weekend.
I know that many of you, like me, have received a large number of emails from students about Black Lives Matter over the last two weeks. Most of these have been useful and constructive, and feel like dialogue to be welcomed. PGR views now seem focused on a single open letter (attached)-- I received this, with a helpful prefatory message from Vic Clarke, this morning. I have now drafted a response and tabled at SMT for comment. It includes some important positive data that is the result of everyone's hard work, and which I feel gives us a good basis for further work, and maybe for further work at the postgraduate levels in particular. It's with the Dean too. I wanted the whole school to see it and (while time, I know, remains hugely stretched for us all) if you do have comments or revisions please let me know. If so, to minimise email traffic, I'd be grateful if you could send them to me individually.

I'd like to send this message tomorrow morning, and to send a similar, shorter message to our undergraduates then too. (Their message is along similar lines, positive in tone, with a little less detail.) It commits us to further meaningful discussion and to resume our long-planned work from August onward. Writing these messages -- and submitting them for the whole school's perusal -- isn't easy but it's important that you can see what our students are asking us and the kind of response we can give. Our awarding gap is certainly a positive news story for us -- thank you everyone -- and we have a bit of work to do now both to see how good it is nationally speaking and to ensure that next steps don't inadvertently jeopardise it.

But, as I say, if you have a comment before I send tomorrow morning, I'd be grateful

all best

[Signature]

Dear PGR representatives and PGR students,

Thank you for your many recent communications and for the open letter you sent to us yesterday morning. During my years at Leeds I have run modules and WP events and campaigns around racial injustice and African American studies, and it is good to know momentum is gathering behind further change in higher education. We look forward to discussing the issues you identify in a mutual spirit, and feel it can offer us a useful guide for further action.

Although time is very tight for us this summer I can confirm that the following actions are in place. Our agreed plan for undergraduate curriculum reform remains on course, and a further round of student discussions will take place as planned early in the next session. In other steps, my predecessor Professor Fiona Becket established an Equality and Inclusivity Committee a few years ago, and under [Name] and [Name]'s leadership we have,
among other things, developed new recruitment processes to address our lack of diversity. Our datasets confirm that, in part thanks to new WP and School recruitment approaches, BAME recruitment has risen from 10.2% in 2015 to 16.8% last year. Moreover, our degree outcomes data shows that, while there is far less evidence here of grade inflation than in other English departments in the country, nor do we have an awarding gap. In 2019 95% of black or minority students received “good degrees” compared to an average of 93%. This good result is a massive credit to those students. It also reflects the work of all School staff, our longstanding commitment to a diverse curriculum, and the huge amount of work we have done behind the scenes to ensure our non-continuation rates remain low. These rates—identified in the Broken Pipeline report as a key cause of the undergraduate awarding gap—have as a result been reduced from 6.2% in 2014-5 (19.6% of whom were BAME students) to 3.5% in 2019-20 (4% of whom are BAME students).

We acknowledge that there is a huge amount of work still ahead, and perhaps not least at postgraduate levels. In discussions ahead we would love to discuss your proposals, to discuss our proposals, and to work on these together. Right now we do need to devote our time to the marking and ratifying of UG degrees; to PhD transfer; and to the production of a plan of teaching amid the huge uncertainties ahead. This a time of significant depletion in leadership roles and general staff exhaustion, and many, like myself, are home schooling or have caring duties while they continue to meet all the usual heavy demands of academic work. As such I would suggest that, before our planning UG curriculum discussions resume in late September, we hold an Equality and Inclusivity Committee toward the end of the vacation period in which we can meet and discuss our more general equality strategy. We would welcome additional PGR representation at that meeting.

In the meantime, thank you again for your letter. Words are always important in the School of English, and I think it was right that we signalled our commitment to Black Lives Matter last week, but I hope it is also clear that these words reflect our ongoing work as well as our commitment for the future. We are pleased you share that commitment and look forward to working with you to ensure the School is true to its principles and offers a welcoming, inclusive culture to all.

Kind regards

[Name] on behalf of the academic staff of the School of English
Dear [Name],

Yes, please, to a conversation! I attach here our curriculum plan and letters from [Name2] and our school rep (incoming uni rep) [Name3] endorsing it from last year. Not sure the English Society are aware -- the new [Name4] was, I believe, away last year -- and I was poised to write to set out this next step. We don't have an awarding gap currently and a key priority is to ensure curriculum changes don't spoil that.

This morning I'm free any time except 11 -- 11.45. 3 - 4 this afternoon is also clear.

Thanks for the offer & I look forward to talking.

[Name2]

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From: [Name]
Sent: 29 June 2020 22:01
To: [Name]
Subject: Decolonisation of the curriculum

Dear [Name],

I am working in the teaching centre, supporting [Name]. We have been responding to incoming emails expressing support for the Defund to Decolonise campaign and wanted to make you aware of the email below as it is from a representative of the English Society. I know you’ve been corresponding with [Name5] about this issue more widely. I am talking to [Name5] about how to respond and will do so as soon as possible.

Happy to discuss if that would be helpful,

Best wishes,

[Name]
From: [Email Address]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 3:45 pm
To: Vice-Chancellor; alumni@leeds.ac.uk
Subject: Decolonisation of the curriculum

Dear Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and The Leeds Alumni Development Office,

I am writing to you as the [Name] at the University of Leeds regarding the Decolonisation of our curriculum.

The University states that they 'stand with black staff and students, friends and family' but it is a fact that the University is systematically failing Black students, staff and the wider community and failing to address this is going against their own claims. With the passing of time the University has continued to claim their support, but we feel that it’s time now to take positive and productive action. It is time for the University to implement radical changes to finally make the institution a place that allows Black students to thrive and succeed without limitations. It is time to finally make the University a place it always claims to be.

The English Society is committed to anti-racist practices, therefore we strongly approve of the need to defund in order to decolonise. We should not allow racism, in any form, to thrive on campus at the expense of Black students, staff and the wider community any longer. With this in mind, until further action is taken the English Society will be asking its alumni to withdraw donations. We will be sending out an email to EngSoc members, posting on our pages and letting the English department know that their students support the need for radical change. We have also signed the open letter by Defund to Decolonise, pledging our support.
The University has a large endowment and has in recent years funded many capital projects so any response to this letter that suggests it will affect scholarships for low-income students is unacceptable. Black people deserve an equal access to opportunities, and all of the future changes should be made with this in mind.

We hope that you will listen to the letters issued by Leeds University’s UCU branch and Defund to Decolonise Leeds as a matter of urgency and make the changes desperately needed.

Sent with kind regards from,

[Signature]

on behalf of LUU EngSoc committee
Dear all,
Please see an email below which has been sent to all of the School’s PGRs.
Best wishes

Dear PGR representatives and PGR students,
Thank you for your recent communications and for the open letter you sent to us yesterday morning. Please accept the following as our reply.

I know that in my time at Leeds, as well as my own teaching and WP work, many colleagues have taught core and option modules that reckon with racism, slavery, and empire, and that support for Black Lives Matter runs deep through the school. Your letter reminds us that we have more to do, and we look forward to discussing the issues it raises in a mutual spirit. We feel together we can deliver a distinctive contribution to permanent change in higher education. Although time is tight I can confirm that the following actions are already underway. Our plan for undergraduate curriculum reform remains on course, and further student consultation on decolonisation and inclusion will take place as planned early in the next session. In other steps, the Equality and Inclusion Committee that my predecessor Professor Fiona Becket established a few years ago has, among other things, developed new recruitment processes to address our lack of diversity. Our datasets confirm that, in part thanks to new WP and School recruitment approaches, BAME recruitment has risen from 10.2% in 2015 to 16.8% last year. Our degree outcomes data shows that, while there is less evidence here of grade inflation than in other English departments in the country, nor do we have an awarding gap. In 2019 95% of black or minority students received “good degrees” compared to an average of 93%. (BAME and average % figures were similar over the previous four years.) This positive outcome is a massive credit to those students. It also reflects the work of all School staff as well as the large amount of work colleagues have done behind the scenes to ensure our non-continuation rates remain low. These rates—identified in the Broken Pipeline report as a key cause of the undergraduate awarding gap—have as a result been reduced from 6.2% in 2014-5 (19.6% of whom were BAME students) to 3.5% in 2019-20 (4% of whom are BAME students). We acknowledge that there is a great deal of work still ahead, and perhaps not least at the postgraduate levels. In discussions ahead we would love to discuss your proposals, to discuss our proposals, and to work on these together. Right now staff time is committed to the marking and ratifying of UG degrees; to PhD transfer; and to the production of a plan of teaching amid the huge uncertainties ahead. Our leadership team is depleted and I am very conscious that, after a challenging semester, academic staff are exhausted. Many, like myself, are continuing to homeschool or carry out caring duties while meeting the usual demands of academic work. As such I would suggest that, before UG curriculum discussions resume in late September, we hold an Equality and Inclusion Committee toward the end of the vacation period. This would be a good moment for us to meet and discuss our more general equality strategy. We would welcome additional PGR representation at that meeting.
In the meantime, thank you again for your letter. Words are always important in the School of English, and I think it was right that we signalled our commitment to Black Lives Matter last week, but I hope it is also clear that these words reflect our ongoing work as well as our commitment for the future. We are pleased you share that commitment and look forward to working with you to ensure the School is true to its principles and offers a welcoming, inclusive culture to all.

Kind regards

[Signature]
on behalf of the academic staff of the School of English
Dear colleagues

I hope you all had chance to enjoy the weekend.

I know that many of you, like me, have received a large number of emails from students about Black Lives Matter over the last two weeks. Most of these have been useful and constructive, and feel like dialogue to be welcomed. PGR views now seem focused on a single open letter (attached) -- I received this, with a helpful prefatory message from [redacted], this morning. I have now drafted a response which I have discussed at SMT. It includes some important positive data that is the result of everyone's hard work, and which I feel gives us a good basis for further work, and maybe for further work at the postgraduate levels in particular. It's with the Dean too. I wanted the whole school to see it and (while time, I know, remains hugely stretched for us all) if you do have comments or revisions please let me know. If so, to minimise email traffic, I'd be grateful if you could send them to me individually.

I'd like to send this message tomorrow morning, and to send a similar, shorter message to our undergraduates then too. (Their message is along similar lines, positive in tone, with a little less detail.) It commits us to further meaningful discussion and to resume our long-planned work from August onward. Writing these messages -- and submitting them for the whole school's perusal -- isn't easy but it's important that you can see what our students are asking us and the kind of response we can give. Our awarding gap is certainly a positive news story for us -- thank you everyone -- and we have a bit of work to do now both to see how good it is nationally speaking and to ensure that next steps don't inadvertently jeopardise it.

But, as I say, if you have a comment before I send tomorrow morning, I'd be grateful

all best

Dear PGR representatives and PGR students,
Thank you for your many communications and for the open letter you have sent to us yesterday morning. During my years at Leeds I have run modules and WP events and campaigns around racial injustice and African American studies, and it is good to know momentum is gathering behind further change in higher education. We look forward to discussing the issues you identify in a mutual spirit, and feel it can offer us a useful guide for further action.

Although time is very tight for us this summer I can confirm that the following actions are in place. Our agreed plan for undergraduate curriculum reform remains on course, and a further round of student discussions will take place as planned early in the next session. In other steps, my predecessor Professor Fiona Becket established an Equality and Inclusivity Committee a few years ago, and under [Redacted] and [Redacted]’s leadership we have, among other things, developed new recruitment processes to address our lack of diversity. Our datasets meanwhile confirm that, in part thanks to new WP and School recruitment approaches, BAME recruitment has risen from 10.2% in 2015 to 16.8% last year. Moreover, our degree outcomes data shows that, while there is far less evidence here of grade inflation than in other English departments in the country, nor do we have an awarding gap. In 2019 95% of black or minority students received “good degrees” compared to an average of 93%. This good result is a massive credit to those students. It also reflects the work of all School staff, our longstanding commitment to a diverse curriculum, and the huge amount of work we have done behind the scenes to ensure our non-continuation rates remain low. These rates—identified in the Broken Pipeline report as a key cause of the undergraduate awarding gap—have as a result been reduced from 6.2% in 2014-5 (19.6% of whom were BAME students) to 3.5% in 2019-20 (4% of whom are BAME students).

We acknowledge that there is a huge amount of work still ahead, and perhaps not least at postgraduate levels. In discussions ahead we would love to hear your proposals about promoting BAME recruitment and success at PGT and PGR level or which ensure your culture and community is inclusive. In the weeks immediately ahead we will need to devote our time to the marking and ratifying of UG degrees; to PhD transfer; and to the production of a plan of teaching amid the huge uncertainties ahead. This a time of significant depletion in leadership roles and general staff exhaustion, and many, like myself, are home schooling or have caring duties while they continue to meet all the usual heavy demands of academic work. As such I would suggest that, before our planning UG curriculum discussions resume in late September, we hold an Equality and Inclusivity Committee toward the end of the vacation period in which we can meet and discuss our more general equality strategy. We would welcome additional PGR representation at that meeting.

In the meantime, thank you again for your letter. Words are always important in the School of English, and I think it was right that we signalled our commitment to Black Lives Matter last week, but I hope it is also clear that these words reflect our ongoing work as well as our commitment for the future. We are pleased you share that commitment and look forward to working with you to ensure the School is true to its principles and offers a welcoming, inclusive culture to all.

Kind regards
on behalf of the academic staff of the School of English

From: [Name]
Sent: 11 June 2020 13:46
To: [Name]
Cc: [Name]
Subject: Black Lives Matter advice

Hi [Name] (cc'ing [Name])

We've received an open letter from our PGRs about Black Lives Matter, and among other things it asks us about our awarding gap. I've been meaning to ask you about this since it came up in the university twitter thread last Friday. The datasets we went through with you and [Name] (when? January?) suggested we have "positive" gap -- BAME two percentage points higher than the overall average. (Fourth table on "Undergraduate % Good Degrees" page.) I appreciate that this kind of information will need to be handled intelligently and that we must avoid looking complacent, but it would be helpful to know:

1. Whether this data is confidential. Figuring out how to make it visible intelligently would be good for us I think.
2. If there are wider tables by subject for context. It compares favourably with the overall institutional figure for Leeds but of course we must avoid invidious comparisons with other AHC Schools. But if you know of national comparisons they could be quite helpful.
3. If you can point easily toward similar national datasets for non-continuation, BAME non-continuation, BAME as % of UG, these too could be very helpful

The open letter is also asking for what we once called race awareness training and a kind of decolonial task force to scrutinise new and existing modules. I imagine similar debates are happening elsewhere in the faculty and wonder if there are any moves underway towards this that I could refer to. Might I forward this to [Name]?

Your sense of the stats would be really helpful

[Name]
Dear all,

I’m sure you’ve all seen this thread below. I wanted to echo and support what [redacted] and [redacted] have asked, especially in light of the response [redacted] received this morning, which is indicative of what [redacted] has faced, and continues to face, as a Black scholar as part of an almost-exclusively white School of English.

There needs to be specific detailing of what changes are being made. Open discussions, while useful for gauging opinions and ideas for action, place the onus on those facing the oppression to do the work of speaking up. This is emotionally and intellectually exhausting, especially alongside producing work as undergraduate or postgraduate students (not to mention on top of work as PGTAs, etc).

As an institution, the School of English can take an active role in implementing change, be this through, for instance, hiring policy, scholarship, core module design, etc. Even details of what is being discussed/tabled gives an indicator of the direction the School is going in, which would:

- a) help alleviate concerns that the School isn’t taking this seriously
- b) let the School be held to account and continually assessed/pressured to follow through to definitive action
- c) show the school’s intention to make positive change
- d) make processes more transparent anyway

This does not really warrant an individual reply to me—public statements or School-wide email circulations would be preferred.

Best,
Responses like the one below are part of the problem.

I have several problems with the email you have sent:

1: You have blanket mailed me and you don't even know who I am.
2: You presume that I am white and privileged.
3: Why are you sending an email now, and you didn't last year, or the year before.
4: You say in your email it needs to be communicated "....", yet you haven't communicated anything.

Please remove me from your email list.

From: 
Sent: 10 June 2020 17:14 
To:
Subject: Re: English: Black Lives Matter- message sent on behalf of School of English

As it needs to be communicated explicitly to all what the School is doing to make structural and institutional changes — ‘to recognise, examine, and contest white privilege and the ongoing effects of racial injustice’.

From: [Redacted]
Date: Tuesday, 9 June 2020 at 15:02
To: English PGR <englishpgr@leeds.ac.uk>
Cc: [Redacted]
Subject: Re: English: Black Lives Matter - message sent on behalf of School of English

Thanks for this email. However, may I please ask how many BIPOC lecturers are employed in the School of English?

Thanks,

On 9 Jun 2020, at 14:50, English PGR <englishpgr@leeds.ac.uk> wrote:

For information
Dear students,

Following the police violence in America over the last week we wanted to write to express our School's solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This is a critical moment for us all to recognise, examine, and contest white privilege and the ongoing effects of racial injustice. We want the School always to be a place where you can do these things in a spirit of free and searching discussion. We want every voice to be heard and valued equally, and we want all our students, especially those from black and minority groups, to know and feel that they belong. Early next term we will hold open discussions to get your latest view of things, to help the School continue to enact our principles and develop and improve our everyday culture. For now, please stay safe, and enjoy exploring your module and FYP options for next sessions. We look forward to study resuming after the summer.

stay safe,
your tutors and lecturers at the School of English
Hi everyone

The information session for students interested in studying issues and ideas related to Black Lives Matter takes place tomorrow afternoon. I anticipate that our conversations will lead in a variety of directions, and that we'll be recommending not just about African and diasporic modules but the full range of option/FYP possibilities in response to students' interests. We'll be sure we exhort the full range of enquiry in the School. If any of you would like to join us for this informal info session, please come along (the link is

all best
Hi,

I think it may be better to leave this. It doesn’t ask for a response, and challenging [ ] on some of the misrepresentations in [ ] email will feel at this juncture like point-scoring. This may change if I receive similar responses from our undergraduates, many of whom are also part of the decolonial campaign, but I haven’t seen any so far.

all best

Dear [ ],

Not sure whether [ ] or [ ] have already forwarded the message below to you. Perhaps we can discuss this later too?

Kind regards,

Dear [ ],

A message of solidarity is all well and good, but what is the school doing to address its all white, predominantly male academic body?

for example, a group of students made a complaint last year about the second year core modules only including one Black writer, only to be met with excuses that it takes a very long time to change the syllabus. What is the school doing to address the needs of its Black students? How are you supporting and attracting Black PhD students and staff? How inclusive are your modules, not just option modules but core modules? How are you training your staff to talk about race in seminars and lectures in ways that do not further marginalise, undermine, and silence Black students?

I do not need a response to this email. We need to see action and policy change.
Best wishes,

From: <Minerva_Notification@leeds.ac.uk>

Date: Friday, 5 June 2020 at 13:45

Subject: English: Black Lives Matter - message sent on behalf of School of English

Dear students,

Following the police violence in America over the last week we wanted to write to express our School’s solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This is a critical moment for us all to recognise, examine, and contest white privilege and the ongoing effects of racial injustice. We want the School always to be a place where you can do these things in a spirit of free and searching discussion. We want every voice to be heard and valued equally, and we want all our students, especially those from black and minority groups, to know and feel that they belong. Early next term we will hold open discussions to get your latest view of things, to help the School continue to enact our principles and develop and improve our everyday culture. For now, please stay safe, and enjoy exploring your module and FYP options for next sessions. We look forward to study resuming after the summer.

stay safe,

your tutors and lecturers at the School of English
Dear all,

I hope you are well.

I want to add my voice to the messages you have been receiving concerning the school’s response to the Black Lives Matter protests. Primarily, I want to provide my full support to [redacted] and [redacted] by echoing the questions they have raised.

The school needs to be proactive in the implementation of change. Issues such as poor representation of black and non-black people of colour at postgraduate level and a lack of diversity amongst teaching staff have been on the radar of staff and students for many years. I want to echo my colleague [redacted]’s concerns that discussions with students are a vital part of this process, but one which puts further pressure on those who are oppressed to perform further intellectual and emotional labour. Such discussions cannot take the place of affirmative action from the school itself.

Communication of the steps being taken is vital for fostering trust in the school’s stated desire to address such issues. Detailed information regarding the steps the school is taking at all stages of devising and implementation is a must.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I look forward to hearing statements from you in due course.

Best,
[redacted]
As well as a general message of solidarity, we wanted to write in response to those of you who asked us about how to study the cultural aspects of #Black Lives Matter in greater depth. To help you do this, we have planned a special online session #Black Lives Matter: Further Study in the School of English and scheduled it for next Thursday 11 June at 2pm. You can access it via: [link]

This will be a great opportunity to find out more about our modules in postcolonial writing, African, and African diasporic literature, including that of the United States. We will be delighted to hear of any ambitions you have for further study in these areas, and pleased to give advice on dissertation ideas, to recommend summer reading, and to set out our ongoing public work with the David Oluwale Memorial Association (remberoluwal.org) and future plans. We look forward to seeing you at this session, and hope it will be helpful to you.
Dear students,

Following the police violence in America over the last week we wanted to write to express our School’s solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. This is a critical moment for us all to recognise, examine, and contest white privilege and the ongoing effects of racial injustice. We want the School always to be a place where you can do these things in a spirit of free and searching discussion. We want every voice to be heard and valued equally, and we want all our students, especially those from black and minority groups, to know and feel that they belong. Early next term we will hold open discussions to get your latest view of things, to help the School continue to enact our principles and develop and improve our everyday culture. For now, please stay safe, and enjoy exploring your module and FYP options for next sessions. We look forward to study resuming after the summer.

stay safe,
your tutors and lecturers at the School of English
Dear Colleagues

The University of Birmingham is hosting a free online conference on Decolonising the Curriculum that some of you may be interested in given our own recent School and Faculty discussions on the subject, and the launch of the new Level 1 option module Race, Writing and Decolonisation. See https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/decolonising-the-curriculum-online-conference-tickets-106541538610. (If one ignores the heinous spelling errors on the sign up page, it could be worth a look.)

Schedule
June 4th | 2pm - 3pm | Professor Kehinde Andrews: 'Black Studies as the Science of Liberation.'
June 11th | 1pm - 2pm | Dr. Patricia Noxolo: '(Post)COVID-19 online learning: opportunites and dangers for black students and staff.'
June 11th | 3pm - 4pm | Daniel Stone: 'Student activism and breaking down barriers to decolonising the curriculum.'
June 18th | 3pm - 4pm | Augustine Farinola: 'Black Heritage and Epistemic Pathway to Decolonising the Curriculum.'
June 25th | 11am - 12pm | Dr. Emanuelle Rodrigues dos Santos: 'Decolonise the curriculum: beyond the buzzword toward actual change.'

Best wishes