Court Workshop: 
\textit{Becoming an Anti-Racist University}
Governance Team 
Governance & Executive Support
Thursday 29th April 2021

Dear Court,

I am very pleased to now provide papers and pre-reading for the workshop “Becoming an Anti-Racist University” on the 7th May 2021. I would remind you that the workshop will be held online, via Zoom, and will include a breakout session.

The workshop is being delivered by the University’s Anti-Racism Steering Group, which aims to help the University develop strategies and take action to address individual, cultural and structural racism across our institution.

Our aim is to create an atmosphere of free and open discussion in relation to anti-racism where members of Court will treat each other with courtesy and respect. We recognise that freedom of expression is central to facilitating the sharing of ideas and information. As such, all views, including those that can be difficult to hear, should be able to be expressed and heard with tolerance and mutual respect. However, in line with our institutional commitment to inclusion, we will not tolerate discrimination or harassment of any kind.

You will note that the workshop will include one breakout session, related to one of the workstreams of the Anti-Racism Steering Group. Thank you for indicating your ranked preferences for this session, we are pleased to have been able to allocate you to one of your top three preferences.

Please join the meeting 5 – 10 minutes early. Please note that when you join the meeting, we will add the number of your allocated breakout session to the start of your name. Please note that we will be recording the workshop and breakout sessions.

In your pack you will find the agenda for the day, and pre-reading for some of the breakout sessions. You are welcome to engage with pre-reading as best fits your interests. If you find you have additional comments, which do not relate to your allocated breakout session, you are welcome to provide these as part of the post-event feedback process.

We look forward to engaging with you on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

Ms Lucinda Parr
Registrar & University Secretary
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<td>Welcome to Court</td>
<td>Prof Hugh Brady, Vice-Chancellor &amp; President</td>
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<td>14.15</td>
<td>Becoming an Anti-Racist University</td>
<td>Professor Judith Squires &amp; Dr Jane Khawaja, Co-Chairs Anti-Racism Steering Group</td>
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<td>14.40</td>
<td>Breakout sessions</td>
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<td>15.30</td>
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<td>15.45</td>
<td>Feedback from breakout sessions</td>
<td>Theme Leads, hosted by Co-Chairs</td>
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### Breaking Session Themes

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<td>Consideration of barriers to representation, engagement with the Board of Trustees, empowerment of representatives and the workshop for Court.</td>
<td>Tariq Modood, Jason Palmer, Lucinda Parr</td>
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<td>Naming</td>
<td>Consideration of names of buildings, places and spaces, named chairs, and visual representation of the University, including the University logo</td>
<td>Alicia O’Grady, Olivette Otele</td>
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<td>Research &amp; Civic Engagement</td>
<td>Consideration of our research endeavour and collaborative work with partners, as well as how Bristol engages with city initiatives</td>
<td>Madhu Krishnan, John McWilliams, Kate Miller</td>
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<td>Staff Representation &amp; Support</td>
<td>Focused on improving the representation and experience of our Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff</td>
<td>Claire Buchanan, Raeesah Ellis-Haque, Robiu Salisu</td>
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<td>Student Representation &amp; Support</td>
<td>Focused on improving the representation and experience of our Black, Asian and minority ethnic students.</td>
<td>Roy Kiruri, Julio Mkok, Zoe Pither, Sarah Purdy, Palie Smart</td>
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<td>Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>Developing our approach to decolonising the curriculum, and embedding anti-racist practices in teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Alvin Birdi, David Ion, Leah Martindale, Khadija Meghrawi, Leon Tikly</td>
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Pre-Reading: Diverse Board Recruitment

1. Background & Context

Robust discussions about challenging issues require deep insight, multiple angles and collective experience. That's why the best boards are the most diverse boards. Nationally, 29% of University Boards have no Board members from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic backgrounds. This represents a significant challenge for the sector, and while many Universities, including Bristol, have made positive steps towards creating representative boards, it is clear that there is still much work to be done if governing bodies are to be truly representative and reflective of their stakeholders - the broader community, their staff and their students.

We appreciate that creating diverse and inclusive boards is a complex challenge with no single solution, and one which requires a collective, multi-pronged approach. In the paper which follows, we identify some of the initiatives that Bristol has employed and seek your input for discussion on the day.

The Board of Trustees recruits for different types of members from different constituencies – these include:

- **Lay Trustees**: Independent members of the Board who are recruited externally;
- **Staff Trustees**: Members of staff who are recruited from the Academic or Professional Services communities internally;
- **Student Trustees**: Students or sabbatical officers who are recruited from the student community; with support from the Students Union
- **Additional Members**: Independent members of Committees, who are recruited externally and do not serve on the Board, but who have specific skills and expertise.

The Nominations Committee is the key Committee which regulates and oversees the recruitment and appointment process. The Committee has the responsibility to identify what skills and experiences the Board requires at any given moment in time, and to agree the recruitment process, in alignment with any constitutional requirements. The Committee leads on the process, and reports its recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

2. Recruitment:

When recruiting for members of the Board, the Nominations Committee has:

- made use of an annual skills audit to assess the strengths of the current board, and which aligns those skills to the strategic needs of the University - this has helped to identify any gaps that could be addressed in the recruitment process;
- been explicit about the desire to recruit candidates from diverse backgrounds, and considers an annual equality and diversity assessment to ascertain whether specific actions could be implemented to attract trustees from groups which may be under-represented;
considered its use of external search partners – options have included a) recruiting without the use of a search partner b) requiring evidence from the search firms, as part of the overall procurement process, of successfully running a diverse search; and c) considering smaller specialist/more focussed search agencies;

• broadened the advertising to target specific staff and student diversity networks;

• worked with the Students Union to access their communication processes, social media and reach;

• worked with existing student and staff trustees to understand barriers to recruitment and to address these, including introducing additional support and mentoring, and guidance for line managers;

• targeted local groups in the City through existing networks;

• reviewed candidate briefs to focus specifically on core skills and competencies; and introduced more clarity around the essential and desirable criteria;

• extended timelines for recruitment to account for a more specific set of skills criteria;

• ensured reviews of candidate information by the University’s EDI team;

• introduced clear, standard application processes and;

• ensured diverse recruitment panels.

3. Other issues

a. Pipeline: From our experience of running recruitment, and in common with other Universities, we have identified a need for a better pipeline for candidates. The Nominations Committee has agreed to join the Governance Apprenticeship Programme, in partnership with Perrett Laver and other Universities to provide Board experience to apprentices from diverse backgrounds. We expect to host a board apprentice from September 2021. The Programme includes support and mentoring for the apprentice.

b. Transparency: The Nominations Committee reviews the diversity of the Board annually, and it is now able to compare across the sector with reference to HESA data. From this year, the data is published on the Bristol University Governance web pages.

c. Remuneration: Feedback from candidates and from parts of the local community has evidenced that the lack of remuneration for University Trustees can be a barrier to the recruitment of candidates. This is a sector-wide issue, and many institutions will have legal constraints in offering remuneration. We are looking to approach this matter in two ways. Firstly, the Chair of the Board is in discussion with the Committee of University Chairs to establish a sector-wide position, and secondly, we have taken independent legal advice specifically for our University in order to work through the required considerations and to agree a way forward. Any resultant constitutional change will require the permission of the Charity Commission, the Office for Students and the Privy Council - and this will impact on the implementation timeline.
Pre-Reading: Anti-racist research and civic activity

To introduce the session, we will be presenting a summary of our workstream, and asking participants to join us in discussing a series of interlinked questions about how we can best pursue being anti-racist in our civic and research activities. This workstream is at a relatively early stage, so we will particularly appreciate the input of members of Court at this time. There are a couple of things to note ahead of the session.

How are we defining a (global) civic university?

• One that is deeply and genuinely engaged with its city/city-region.
• One that asks not just ‘what are we good at?’ but also ‘what are we good for, and for whose benefit are we working?’
• One that addresses global challenges in a local context and shares our civic practice globally.

Defining ‘civic’ is a complex (and sometimes contentious) issue – and something we are continuing to work through as an institution – but these definitions are a good starting point. In the workshop session we will aim to focus our discussion on anti-racism in civic work rather than the definition of civic per se, as this has already been the subject of a Court meeting.

The initial aims of our workstream are to:

• ensure that the University’s existing anti-racist civic activities and research are better known and understood;
• ensure that we consider research and civic activities through the lens of anti-racism;
• facilitate colleagues and partners who wish to undertake anti-racist research or civic activity;
• help our community to understand the principles which drive anti-racist research and civic activity.

And our proposed initial actions are to:

• Create a database of anti-racist research and civic activity to be created, shared and updated on an ongoing basis;
• create a set of resources to enable anti-racist research and civic activity;
• share the output of workshops (including the Court workshop), to be conducted in Spring 2021;
• analyse data around our internal funding panels and then share policy and guidance around these. However, these are just a starting point and they will evolve and be added to with further input, including from this Court session.
This document contains a summary of a paper which has been developed to facilitate discussion within academic departments and schools in the University, and a brief outline of Universal City, an online initiative aimed at supporting and enhancing our work in this area through local partnerships and engagement with the City.

1. Decolonising the Curriculum at UoB
Following consultation with both staff and students, we started to develop guidance to support colleagues with developing or enhancing their decolonial approaches to learning and teaching. The guidance focusses on four areas:
- Why does it matter?
- What do we need to consider?
- How do we go about it?
- What if we do nothing?

Why does it matter?
Discussions on decolonising the curriculum are happening across the sector and challenge many institutions, in particular their role in providing a full and well-balanced learning opportunity and educational experience for all. The concept of decolonising the curriculum is firmly associated with the 2015 campaign in South Africa, #RhodesMustFall. This hashtag triggered reactions from university institutions worldwide and was soon followed by Oxford’s own Rhodes Must Fall campaign and Why is my curriculum White? campaign at UCL.

The University of Bristol (UoB) is seemingly late in bringing the discussion to the table; however it would be incorrect to present this as a new interest at UoB. Indeed in 2016 the Student Union engaged in the national discussion on what liberating the curriculum would look like? In the same year, UoB commissioned Bristol SU to produce the ‘BME Attainment Gap’ report to inform work on the awards gap. The report revealed that at the University of Bristol 31% of white students in 2015/16 graduated with a first-class degree, compared to 20% of BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students. BAME students were also more likely to graduate with a 2:2 classification (14% compared to 7% of white students). Similar statistics were found across sector as illustrated in ‘Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Students Attainment at UK Universities: #Closingthegap’, a research study published in May 2019 by Universities UK and the National Union of Students.

The research found that BME students often experienced feelings of isolation, and a majority felt that BME representation within the student and staff body was poor. 55% of survey respondents felt that BME representation in the student body was extremely or relatively bad and 67% felt that BME representation in the academic staff body was extremely or relatively bad. 18% reported feeling that the teaching and learning environment was cliquey and isolating and only 5% of students described their teaching and learning environment as diverse. Awareness of equality policies was low, with 50% of respondents unaware of the Unacceptable Behaviour policy, through which students could make a complaint of racism or discrimination.

There has been some progress in relation to the awards gap at Bristol which reduced to 5pp overall in 2019-20. It is currently unclear the extent to which this may have been affected by specific assessment arrangements in place during the pandemic but the progress is encouraging. In 2019 the University conducted surveys of staff and students as part of its work towards the Race Equality Charter. Findings from the student survey show that concerns about representation in both the student body and academic staff persist, with 78% of BAME students agreeing to some extent that the ethnic/racial diversity of the University affects their sense of belonging, compared to 38% of
white students. BAME students were also less confident than their white peers that issues of ethnicity and race are included in academic discussions when relevant, with 28% of BAME students agreeing or strongly agreeing that this was the case, compared to 41% of white students.

The echoing of experiences of BAME Students and Staff in HEIs highlight a systemic structural issue within the education sector that privileges certain groups to the detriment of others. These systemic issues are rooted in historical, cultural, institutional, interpersonal practices that have been legitimised and validated as the norm. Any deviance from the norm has less value.

What do we need to consider?
The current way in which knowledge is produced, validated and disseminated, was institutionally established in the age of European colonisation. This is true of most of the European educational institutions, some of which were themselves formed during colonial times, and curricula developed to match that world view. To change this, we need to de-centre our received notion of knowledge linked to the colonial matrix of power. For Mignolo (2007), the link between the colonial matrix of power and knowledge takes the form of transforming one particular form of knowledge (post-Enlightenment European thought) into the universal, at the expense of other modes of thinking. You cannot use colonial logic to decolonise. Colonialism hasn’t only created harmful hierarchies of race, it has contributed to conceptualise just about every aspect of people and society and has a bearing on definitions of gender, sexuality, ability, faith, political organisations and more. Every one of us speaks from a place of enunciation and within a given context. To think of pathways to decolonise, one should be reflexive and honest about the nature of the challenge, the possibilities for change and our own position within existing power structures.

How do we go about it?
Once we have an appreciation of this dynamic, we also can appreciate that decolonisation is not an end point. You do not just get a decolonised curriculum. Just adding Black authors to a reading list is not decolonising especially if the said authors have mindset that endorse in their writing the colonial matrix of power. Decolonising goes beyond diversifying the curriculum, it is a continuous process, it is a process of self-reflection, self-interrogation and a process of knowledge production as well as pedagogy.

Consideration would need to be given to the following issues:

• Where is knowledge created?
• How do we dismantle the colonial legacies in present-day institutions?
• How do we re-make, de-centre the problematic of knowledge creation?
• How to adopt a decolonial approach to all curriculum review or unit development?
• How can we close the attainment gap, especially as it impacts on African and African diaspora heritage learners? How do we engage learners with content?
• How do we ensure that the assessments methods we use are inclusive and do not disadvantage certain groups due to cultural biases?

What if we do nothing?
Students will be cheated out of the full education with knowledge limited to a narrow worldview. Failing to engage in a decolonial approach also means that the institution risks perpetuating systemic issues of inequalities (e.g. attainment gaps) where BME students are at a disadvantage due to structural inequalities founded on the colonial matrix of power.

Below are examples of responses and discussions from other universities working in these areas. Keele University’s Manifesto for decolonizing their curricula
University of Kent’s decolonising the curriculum project
SOAS Blog – Decolonising the Curriculum – What the fuss?
Wonkhe blog – To decolonise the curriculum we have to decolonise ourselves
2. CARGO and Universal City: Introduction to the Concept

Meaningful co-creation with local communities is an integral part of decolonising the University and reparative justice, working towards recognition and empowerment through free educational content, local investment and co-creation.

Over the summer, the Decolonising the Curriculum group worked with the local digital creative organisation, CARGO, on a series of short videos on Bristol, its diverse communities and colonial legacy. We created the concept of Universal City, a digital platform aimed at developing creative ways of engagement between the University and the communities of Bristol. Universal City is a bespoke interactive platform through which UoB may publicly build new avenues for community engagement.

The University has made it a priority to:
1. Increase students’ breadth of engagement with communities in the city of Bristol.
2. Contribute to Bristol’s social and cultural enrichment as part of its civic responsibility.
3. Undertake and proactively support initiatives for a more inclusive education system.

The current site features an interactive map highlighting businesses and cultural sites in the city which can be added to limitlessly and a platform for quality cultural content. This includes bespoke video content which explores the history and present life of Bristol, poetry from a chorus of Bristolian voices, portraits of three Bristolians living in different parts of the city, and musical performances from Bristol talent.

Universal City was designed to evolve. This could mean:
1. Developing the interactive map to include more points of interest across a number of categories: historical, cultural, volunteering, learning or job opportunities.
2. Developing the site as a hub for news and resources around inclusive education and student engagement opportunities in the wider city. These new layers of information could also connect to the map.

An example of a recent collaboration that could be showcased on Universal City is CARGO Classroom, aimed at recreating the Key Stage 3 history classroom experientially through poetry, film and illustration. The University Futurelearn decolonisation course (Decolonising Education: From Theory to Practice) could also become a free community resource on colonial legacy, heritage and decolonisation by working with local schools and CARGO.