

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT JUNE 2021

In the last year, the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) working group has drafted the college's EDI strategy, and overseen the various projects groups, including the newly established pilot exchange programme with a Historically Black University, the Care+ project, and newly updated College webpage information. These and other activities are more fully itemised below.

Some of the issues that come to the group involve wider discussions or consultation, and participation from members of the college community. A smaller number of issues are particularly complex and sensitive, and the working group has been able to approach these with care and appropriate consultation. The group has worked to develop a safe space in which difficult matters can be explored honestly and accountably.

Governance

The group engages with all College committees to discuss and coordinate EDI-related issues, provide advice, and contribute to various aspects of college life via targeted projects. The working group is inclusive, engaging all members of the college to contribute in discussions and decision-making processes.

The new Terms of Reference for the working group and the college EDI strategy (once it is finalised and approved), will pave the way for the development of action plans that will allow the strategy to be implemented. The ongoing work will continue to bring challenges, which will include complexities that will need to be appropriately tackled. The past year has demonstrated evidence to be optimistic about the lasting positive impact and contribution that the working group can make.

Strategic planning

Over the past year it has become clearer that a strategic plan would be helpful in bringing coherence to the breadth of EDI work across the College. The working group has developed a first draft of this plan, which will be reviewed over the summer, and hopefully reach the point of progressing through the College's governance structures in Michaelmas term. The strategy will then be populated with appropriate action plans to enable its implementation.

Mapping exercise

Over the last year, it has become clearer that one of the key roles of the EDI working group is to platform and celebrate existing good practice, so that we can learn from it, and to identify areas where there is room for development or where there are shared interests which would benefit from closer collaboration or at least the avoidance of working at cross purposes. The breadth of what might fall within EDI was not universally understood, leading to existing good practice going unnoticed, and opportunities for learning potentially being missed.

Therefore, a 'mapping exercise' has been initiated in which individuals, groups, departments and committees are being invited to engage with four questions, the answers to which will feed into the mapping document, the strategy and associated action plans, and future meeting. The questions are:

1. How EDI matters of perspectives are already reflected in our work;
2. What further potential there may be for considering our work through an EDI lens;
3. What resourcing (such as training, information) might be needed in order to address 2;
4. Whether there are any matters relating to our work that we would like the EDI working group to consider, discuss or research.

So far, these questions have been sent to the Heads of Department, and through them, to some committees. The next stage is to send them to the remaining committee chairs, and to the JCR and MCR committees. Some of the most fruitful outcomes of this exercise so far have been through conversations. We are hoping to facilitate a discussion with each of the JCR and MCR committees, and from there discern whether there are other student groups who might want to offer a more detailed response.

This is a substantial piece of work, which will take some time to complete. We hope that the finished mapping document will be a resource for the whole college community, to enable collaborative working and the sharing of wisdom.

College Values

Organisational values are shared beliefs or principles that an organisation holds dear, providing additional information to help people understand and implement an organisation's mission and vision. Values elucidate an organisation's purpose; they should not conflict with an existing mission. The College began a process of discerning and developing a set of values shortly before the pandemic, and over the last term this process has been restarted, with the Strategic Planning Committee supporting the suggestion that from summer 2021, the values work should be taken forward by the EDI working group in conjunction with the Communications Manager. It is a piece of work which sits helpfully alongside the development and implementation of the EDI strategy, and as a whole-community process it will benefit from being progressed by a group that includes staff, Fellows and students.

Project work (including events)

Some project groups were convened for a particular task or event, while others are ongoing or working on longer term goals; some events are likely to be reconvened annually. A summary of each project is included below.

- ***Legacies of Enslavement***

Further work on the ongoing Legacies of Enslavement project began at the end of Easter Term. Two student interns were appointed in a competitive process to look at a) the extent of the College's involvement, both financial and intellectual, in the South Sea Company, and b) the biography of Cecil Belfield Clarke, physician and social activist, and one of our earliest Black students. These internships have been kindly funded from the Master's Fund. Initial research has generated fascinating information and provocative questions. We hope to convene a seminar to discuss this work in Michaelmas Term, and promote it through publications and the College's social media channels.

- ***Annual calendar of events***

This project builds on the College flag policy to take account of annual EDI events. The annual calendar will set out key events, awareness campaigns, commemorations etc.. This will enable the college to ensure a consistent and balanced programme of events, while considering the academic year. It will ensure that these occasions can be marked and communicated externally, through planning and resourcing in consultation with the Communications Manager and key stakeholders. It is a key strategic aim that our communications about EDI matters are supported by genuine good practice. The calendar will be reviewed regularly. Events this year have included:

- ***Black History Month*** - A series of events was held to celebrate Black History Month, including: an exhibition of library and archival material about the College's Black history, a spoken word night, an exhibition of collected artwork by members of the college, and a

choral evensong and night songs with contributions from black members of the community and music by black composers. Plans are underway to run a similar programme of events for Black History Month in 2021.

- **Commemorating the anniversary of the murder of George Floyd** - A vigil was held online with participation from the chapel, welfare team, and members of the student body, and included music, the lighting of candles, artwork, and the reading of names of people who have died through recent police brutality. The event was hosted by the JCR BME officer, Stephanie Olujinmi-Raji.
- **Transgender awareness week and Transgender Day of Remembrance** – A series of events was held, including a vigil for Transgender Day of Remembrance, organised by the student LGBTQ+ officers.
- **LGBT+ History month** – This was celebrated in College including the following events, run and attended by students, staff and Fellows: Flying the Rainbow flag, Discussion on 'LGBT+ Identity and Faith', Night Songs livestreamed.
- **International Women's Day** - was celebrated with events including: A talk by Angie Stewart, CEO of Cambridge Women's Aid, FemSoc and Shirley Society's event on art and sexism, the Chapel's Time Out/Tune In session of music written and performed by women.

- **Community cohesion**

The community cohesion action points will be included in the relevant action plan, which will follow on from the productive meeting held earlier this year. Themes that emerged from that meeting included the need for better communication between different areas of college, and more opportunities to get to know colleagues as individuals, which has been particularly challenging through covid and with increased working from home and fear of socialising.

- **Nonvisible illnesses and disabilities**

The college has invested in the Hidden Disabilities sunflower lanyard scheme (<https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com>), which comes with training resources. Sunflower lanyards are used by individuals to show they might have specific needs or requirements, this might include people who are exempt from wearing a mask or might need a priority seat on public transport. These lanyards will be offered to staff, students and Fellows who may choose to take up this offer.

- **Accessible communications review**

An accessibility review of College communications has been carried out by Kat Steer (Communications Manager), reporting to the Strategic Planning Committee. This has been scoped and conducted with input from the EDIWG, Dr David Bainbridge (Disabilities Tutor), Kathryn Singleton (Schools Liaison Officer), and Maxine Flynn (HR Manager). Encompassing both in print and digital communications, the Communications Manager has brought a comprehensive summary of the legal requirements and best practice relevant for the College, and a proposed roadmap of activity. The Communications Manager will work with the relevant parties to undertake relevant changes.

- **Respecting individual identity and need**

Over the past year it has become clear that we need administrative systems and tools that enable those who work directly with students to access important information about student identities and needs, to ensure that those needs are met, and their identities respected. There is ongoing work in relation to how we record and share information about, for instance, disabilities and changes to

names/pronouns, given the importance of respecting confidentiality while ensuring continuity and quality of care.

- ***Care+***

In Easter Term 2021, the Governing Body agreed to convene the college Care+ group, which will be led by the newly created and elected LGBTQ+ Fellow, Dr Caroline Gonda. The EDI WG is delighted that St Catharine's was one of the first five colleges to adopt recommendations from the Cambridge SU Care+ initiative.

- ***Policies and training***

Several key HR policies have been created or reviewed in the light of EDI. We have started looking into what training is available for students, tutors, and other members of college that will help them navigate the complexities of situations with EDI related matters.

- ***Widening participation work***

Widening participation work is an area where all aspects of EDI can be championed. Over 83% of 2021 UK Catz undergraduate offer-holders are state school students, compared to the 72.7% average across all colleges. Kathryn Singleton (Outreach Manager) has continued or introduced these areas of good practise into her ongoing work:

- Including pronouns on presentation slides and encouraging colleagues and student panellists to share theirs too;
- Hosting events outside of typical working hours, as it is the most convenient time for prospective students, especially those sharing devices;
- Recording and sharing most events, so students can engage with these videos, regardless of whether they could make the live sessions; and
- Introducing anonymous questions on webinars means that prospective students have asked more honest questions than ever before: particularly surrounding gender, race, and LGBTQ+ issues at University. Demonstrating and encouraging openness and honesty about these issues from panellists where possible.

The past academic year has been hard for everyone, with many people having additional responsibilities or increased workloads due to the pandemic, and the additional challenge of needing to meet online rather than in person, which has made the process of creating a safe space for difficult topics a little more challenging. We have learned a lot about both the content of EDI, and the process of working in this area, including:

1. The importance of platforming, celebrating, integrating and embedding good practice;
2. That EDI is a rapidly changing area and there will always be more to learn;
3. That good leadership and whole-community engagement are both essential;
4. That an approach enabling collaboration, good discourse, and mutual learning is key;
5. That EDI needs to be embedded strategically to map external drivers to our own context.

The Chair and Secretary of the working group would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has participated in and supported the working group or in project groups for their contributions over the last year.

Ally Barrett and Immy Black - 10 July 2021