

Social Sciences Division Diversity Network News – October 2019

Dear colleagues,

Please find below the latest news from the **University of Oxford Social Sciences Division Diversity Network**. This network is for all staff with an interest in, or formal responsibility for, matters of Equality and Diversity.

Please note: these newsletters can also be found on the Social Sciences Division intranet at <https://socsci.web.ox.ac.uk/intranet#collapse873256>

All staff are welcome to subscribe, by contacting the divisional office directly (diversity@socsci.ox.ac.uk). Please forward on this message to anyone whom you think might be interested. Note that the list of members is not published. You may unsubscribe at any time via the same email address.

Please send any requests to circulate items to diversity@socsci.ox.ac.uk. Feedback on Network messages is also welcome at any time.

Opportunities

Returning Carers' Fund – deadline Friday 15th November (5th week)

The University Returning Carers' Fund supports staff who have taken a break due to caring responsibilities to re-establish their academic careers. The fund is deliberately designed to be flexible. Applicants can apply for grants of normally up to £5k, which can be used in whatever way they feel will best support them to return to research and develop their career. Previous applicants have used their grants for a variety of activities, including attending conferences and training sessions, funding research collaborators to travel to Oxford, employing short-term research or administrative assistance, and funding teaching buy-outs.

Please do draw this to the attention of any colleagues who might benefit. Note that there is one application round each term for this scheme, with an application deadline of Friday 5th week.

Applications will need the support of the applicant's Head of Research Group/Head of Department and departmental Head of Administration. Application forms should be sent to diversity@socsci.ox.ac.uk by the deadline. (Please also use this address for any queries.)

For full details, including eligibility, and an application form see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/returning-carers-fund>.

Events

Enough! Mental health in the university, what can we do about it? - 15th November 2019, 12.15pm to 5.15pm, lunch provided, School of Geography and the Environment, South Parks Road

We are all by now accustomed to coming across media articles, blogs, and twitter posts reminding us that '[more academics and students have mental health problems than ever before](#),' or that '[half of](#)

[UK academics are stressed and 40% thinking of leaving.](#) The crisis in mental health is not just affecting academic staff of course. It has been found that professional service staff are often the biggest users of university counselling services. Although awareness of the scale of mental health issues within universities is growing, awareness of and attempts to redress the structural causes remain inadequate. Academic institutions have been accused of having a 'silencing effect' and a '[culture of acceptance around mental health issues](#),' with [less than 11% of universities having a specific well-being policy](#) for staff.

This event aims to bring together staff in the School of Geography & Environment, as well as colleagues from across the Social Sciences and Humanities Divisions, to discuss the different issues facing both academics from various career stages and professional staff, as well as how these issues cut across gender, race, sexuality, class, and religion. We also want this event to provide a space to discuss what can actually be done to improve the current situation, both at departmental and University level, as well as looking beyond.

The event will begin with lunch for all attendees, followed by a keynote from Dr Liz Morrish, independent scholar and author of *Pressure Vessels: The epidemic of poor mental health among higher education staff (HEPI Occasional Paper)*. We will then have two panels and one break-out session, each addressing a different aspect of distress cutting across the experience of academics and professional staff: exhaustion, competition, and uncertainty. We will then conclude by suggesting some concrete areas for advocacy and further discussion. For more information about the event, please email harry.pettit@ouce.ox.ac.uk or thomas.jellis@ouce.ox.ac.uk

Please register for the event via Eventbrite: <https://mentalhealth-soge.eventbrite.co.uk>

Schedule:

12.15-13.00 – lunch

13.00-14.00 – Keynote by Dr Liz Morrish

14.00-14.45 – Panel: Uncertainty, with speakers Dan Holloway (Head of Admin & Finance, Faculty of Linguistics, Philology and Phonetics) and Dr Marion Ernwein (Departmental Lecturer, SoGE)

15.00-15.45 – Breakout session: Competition

16.00-16.45 – Panel: Exhaustion, with speakers Dr Nargis Islam (Academic and Clinical Psychologist) and Anne Ryan (administrator in SoGE and training as a body psychotherapist)

16.45-17.15 – Concluding thoughts

2019 Black History Month Lecture: 'How Should we Write the History of Antiracism in Britain?' by Paul Gilroy – 5.30pm, 25 October, Pembroke College (poster attached)

The BME staff network invite you to the 2019 Black History Month lecture, delivered by Prof Paul Gilroy, the founding director of the new Centre for the Study of Race and Racism at UCL – [to register](#): bhm_pgilroy2019.eventbrite.co.uk

For other events in Black History Month at Oxford see <http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/black-history-month>

'Superior: The Return of Race Science' talk by Angela Saini – 5.30-7.00pm, 23 October, Mathematical Institute, Andrew Wiles Building, Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, Woodstock Road
Angela Saini will discuss her most recent book, *Superior: The Return of Race Science*, exploring the murky history of race science and the ways in which it is being resurrected in the 21st century. Combining science, history and politics, she explores how race maps out biologically, the abuse of the idea of race, and how those on the far-right are attempting to repackage racism. This talk will be

followed by a drinks reception, book sale and signing. All are welcome. RSVP via Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/y5nty2w9>

For those who prefer not to book online, please email diversity@mpls.ox.ac.uk to check availability and reserve a place for the event.

News and Resources

HEPI Report: The white elephant in the room: ideas for reducing racial inequalities in higher education

A [report](#) published in September brings together experts' ideas for reducing racial inequality across the sector. It includes perspectives and recommendations from academia, university leadership, diversity practitioners, charities, student unions and academic disciplines. The report makes a number of policy recommendations, including:

- making research grants to universities conditional on their participation in the Race Equality Charter;
- funding new PhD places for black and ethnic minority (BME) candidates; and
- recognising and rewarding informal work by BME staff, such as mentoring BME students.

See also [blog post](#) by Dr Ben Bleasdale, Policy & Advocacy Adviser at the Wellcome Trust.

The Broken Pipeline – Barriers to Black PhD Students Accessing Research Council Funding

A [recent report](#) from Leading Routes takes a closer look at the pipeline to postgraduate study for Black students. A Freedom of Information request submitted to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) found that of the total 19,868 PhD studentships funded by research councils, only 1.2 per cent were awarded to Black students, with only 30 going to those from Black Caribbean backgrounds. The authors recommend improving patchy national data collection, diversifying PhD interview panels, and ring-fencing funding for Black students.

The League of European Research Universities report (Sept 2019), Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach

[Report](#) published in September - see https://www.leru.org/files/LERU-EDI-paper_final.pdf

AdvanceHE Equality in higher education: statistical report 2019

Using data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the [publication](#) presents a snapshot of the age, disability, ethnicity and gender of the higher education (HE) workforce in the academic year 2017/18, as well as the interplay of these identities (eg female Black professors or male disabled senior managers). In addition, the report presents high-level findings on institutional collection and return rates of staff gender reassignment, religion and belief and sexual orientation data, as well as how this data intersects with other identity characteristics. The reports identify some positive trends, such as the continued increase in the proportion of female professors and decrease in the attainment gap between White and Black first-degree undergraduate qualifiers with a First/2:1 degree. However, even when the direction of change is positive, the pace of progress remains slow.

Student mental health and wellbeing – strategy and campaign launch

A student mental health and wellbeing campaign launched this week, to coincide with the publication of the University's new Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy. [Wellbeing at Oxford](#) is jointly run by the University and Oxford SU, raising awareness about the University's mental health and wellbeing support for students. The campaign promotes the new strategy, which was approved by Council at the end of Trinity term. The strategy outlines the institution-wide approach the University will take to supporting students during their time at Oxford, and the additional measures that will be put in place. Find out more on the [Staff Gateway](#).

Oxford Against Sexual Violence

The University has outlined additional steps it will take to support students affected by sexual harassment and violence. New measures include increased staff numbers at the Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service; the appointment of specialist staff to handle students complaints; and changes to disciplinary procedures to make them more transparent. The Support Service is being promoted to students through the [Oxford Against Sexual Violence](#) campaign. Find out more on the [Staff Gateway](#).

Upcoming dates

Black History Month: October - <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

Anti-Bullying week: 11-15 November - <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week>

Trans Awareness week: 12-19 November - <https://www.glaad.org/transweek>

Disability History Month: 22 November – 22 December - <https://ukdhm.org/>

LGBT+ History Month: February - <https://lgbthistorymonth.org.uk/>

International Women's day: 8 March - <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

International Day of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: 21 March - <https://www.un.org/en/events/racialdiscriminationday/>

International Transgender Day of Visibility: 31 March - <https://www.hrc.org/resources/international-transgender-day-of-visibility>

With all best wishes,
Catherine

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Planning and Equality Manager

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Please note I finish at 2pm on Friday.



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THE BME STAFF NETWORK INVITE YOU TO THE 2019 BLACK HISTORY MONTH LECTURE

PROFESSOR PAUL GILROY

HOW SHOULD WE WRITE THE HISTORY OF ANTIRACISM IN BRITAIN?

25 OCTOBER 2019, 5:30PM, PEMBROKE COLLEGE

[BHM_PGILROY2019.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK](https://bhm_pgilroy2019.eventbrite.co.uk)



**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**