

## Email from the Vice-Chancellor, 17 June 2020

Dear Student

The recent Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests have highlighted the continued global challenges presented by racism and injustice. As an international community of learners and researchers we have a responsibility to challenge and address all forms of racism, injustice and discrimination.

As President and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's, I wish to reassure the University community that we are completely committed to dealing with all forms of racism, injustice and discrimination. We will do so by listening to our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and students, and taking concerted action. Our commitment to equality and fairness is enshrined in the University Charter and Statutes and, as a University community, we will be guided by these principles at all times.

We recognise the years of pain and suffering endured by the global Black Community. At Queen's, we translate ideas, academic teaching, research and professional expertise into action, resulting in impact that serves society at home and across the world in life-changing ways. We can, and must, use our role as a University to educate others around racism and injustice, thereby making a valuable and meaningful difference to the lives of our black colleagues. We must also ensure that our own practices and behaviour as a University reflect our commitment to the eradication of all forms of racism.

On 7 April 2020, the University Senate approved a [new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Policy](#) restating our commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity and to creating and sustaining an environment that not only values equality and inclusion, but also celebrates the diversity of its staff and student body, which so enriches our society. This new policy specifically outlines the provision of equality of opportunity to and fair treatment of all including race equality, and makes clear the University's **zero tolerance approach** to discrimination or bullying and/or harassment against any other person.

In the context of the ongoing BLM protests, a number of our students raised concerns directly with many colleagues across the University. Indeed, the student-led African-Caribbean Society (ACS) contacted me directly to highlight their experiences. Before setting out the University's position, we considered it important to listen to, and understand, the experiences of our students. Members of our leadership team met with representatives from the ACS, and the Students' Union, last week. Following on from this meeting, I want to communicate the University's absolute commitment to continued engagement with BAME staff and students as we take forward meaningful and timely actions in areas such as: ensuring robust and effective processes and practices regarding the reporting of racism; ensuring appropriate diversity in the curriculum; publishing and monitoring data relating to BAME staff and student progression; and responding appropriately to other important issues raised by our BAME community.

In undertaking this work we will build on current support mechanisms, such as iRise, our first BAME and International Staff Network. This important and impressive network plays a vital role in ensuring that the University is a welcoming place to work for BAME and International members of staff and specifically provides a forum for networking and a means of peer support between BAME and International staff, with other groups and networks across the University.

We will also take forward our application for membership of the Advance HE's Race Equality Charter (REC), which aims to improve the representation, progression and success of BAME staff and students within higher education across the UK. I believe that this commitment will be particularly helpful in both setting a clear challenge for us, and ensuring that we are developing our policies and practices in a structured manner. Further information on the REC can be accessed [here](#). As part of our commitment to REC, in autumn 2020, we will work with our BAME colleagues to undertake a comprehensive self-

assessment of race equality across the institution and develop solutions to the issues identified through this work.

Medical students have also been in touch to raise some particular issues. Colleagues in the Faculty and School will be writing to students, to highlight ongoing practical interventions already underway in the undergraduate medical programme in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences. This communication can be accessed [here](#).

In summary, I wish to affirm the University's absolute commitment to working with our BAME staff and students in addressing their important concerns. As a major civic university, we have a particular responsibility to set a high standard for ourselves and we are committed to that. We recognise that we have a way to go, and we will learn from recent positive collaborations such as our Black History Month in November 2019, where iRise, the Students' Union and the African-Caribbean Society organised a range of highly successful events to celebrate Black History Month.

I look forward to continued close collaboration with our BAME staff and students as we take forward specific actions, which will have a meaningful impact and address the very real concerns of our BAME community.

Best Wishes

Ian

Professor Ian Greer  
President and Vice-Chancellor