



Black Members Annual Conference

Saturday 30 November 2024

**Nominations for the
Black Members' Standing Committee**

Extract from Standing Orders relating to nominations

Nominations submitted by branches/local associations must have been approved either by a quorate branch meeting, or by a properly constituted meeting of members from the relevant constituent group, or by a quorate branch committee meeting. The secretary of the branch/local association will confirm that nominations submitted have received such approval.

1.7 Elections The election of standing committee members will be determined by a secret ballot of all voting delegates present during the relevant annual equality conferences. Voting will be in a single ballot conducted by single transferable vote. Should there be a casual vacancy or an unfilled vacancy at the time of the annual conference it will be filled by the candidate with the next highest number of votes after members have been elected to the full-term vacancies.

1.8 Co-options. The standing committees will have the power to co-opt members where an insufficient number of nominations have been made to the committee at any annual conference, or in the case of a casual vacancy arising between annual conferences. Members co-opted must fulfil the criteria for eligibility outlined in paragraph 1.4 above. Co-options will only occur in these circumstances and will cease at the annual conference following co-option when the vacancy can be filled through the process of election. When co-opting, standing committees (other than the BMC) shall take gender balance into account.

Vacancies to which nominations are sought

- **Five vacancies for a term of two years**
- **1 vacancy for a term of one year**

and the following 5 nominations have been submitted:

Nominee	College / University
Shivanti Lowton	The Open University
Gargi Bhattacharyya	University College London
Nitin Rajyaguru	Cardiff & Vale College
Shiva Sikdar	Keele University
Jak Peake	University of Essex

Name **Shivanti Lowton**
Branch **The Open University**
Word Count **137**

My interest in being involved in the BMSC stems from 28 years of Union membership (UCU and NUT) and my proud identity as a disabled woman of colour. I am an Equalities Rep for the Open University branch and the UCU rep for the TUC Race Relations Committee.

I am passionate about grass roots collaboration and wish to focus on local issues affecting Black Members and working to address the wider concerns of racism within UCU.

I believe I can make a valuable contribution to the BMSC, prioritising members concerns and their needs whilst contributing to the proposed and much needed work on tackling institutional racism at all levels within the union. Collective action and the belief that we are stronger when we stand together forms the basis on which I wish to apply for this committee.

Name **Gargi Bhattacharyya**
Branch **University College London**
Word Count **123**

I have been a trade union activist in UCU, and previously in AUT, for nearly thirty years. I have held the roles of: NEC member (AUT and UCU), Equality committee chair (AUT), Branch chair, delegate to UCU congress and to TUC congress, Member of TUC Race Relations Committee, BMSC member.

The crises across tertiary education are likely, once again, to lead to even greater racism, bullying and exclusion for black members. At the same time, the far right are gaining ground and the political mainstream is no longer embarrassed to embrace racism. I would like to work with BMSC to prepare UCU to meet these urgent challenges, including through creating an online forum for black members to prioritise areas of work between conferences.

Name **Nitin Rajyaguru**
Branch **Cardiff & Vale College**
Word Count **150**

I am deeply committed to equality and have spent my life confronting both misogyny and racism. Throughout my career, I have consistently raised the concerns of Black members within our union, advocating for broader awareness within the wider trade union movement. My goal now is to support the Black Members' Standing Committee (BMSC) in moving forward to ensure that the significant challenges facing Black workers in education are fully addressed.

Having been an active member of the BMSC, I have participated in all meetings and contributed to running several training events for Black members, helping them prepare for disciplinary processes using the experience I've gained from representing Black workers.

With over 35 years of teaching experience, I currently chair my local UCU branch and have served as the Wales Equality Officer and Chair of the Equality Committee for UCU Cymru. I also represent UCU on the TUC Race Relations Committee.

Name Shiva Sikdar
Branch Keele University
Word Count 150

As a longstanding active union member, I have always participated in industrial action called by UCU and have been a local UCU committee member. Not only do I mentor colleagues myself, as elected Keele BAME staff network lead, I promoted career progression mentoring within the network. I worked with the network and HR on policy issues. I also facilitated meetings with the university senior management team, raising the network's concerns to SMT. I am part of the team that monitors the Race Equality Charter data and actions. For many years, I coordinated Keele's Race Equality lecture series, working with different schools to bring in speakers and arrange events focusing on issues of discrimination. As school EDI lead, I conducted staff surveys, resulting in policy changes. My focus, if elected, would be to ensure the implementation of equality policies and holding those in power accountable to members. I welcome your support

Name Jak Peake
Branch University of Essex
Word Count 95

I am a Senior Lecturer in US and Caribbean Literature at the University of Essex and have been a UCU member since 2011, when I attained my first post as a lecturer. Over 2021-2023, I served as Acting President, Vice-President and President of my branch and have participated in UCU forums locally, regionally and nationally.

I am committed to anti-racist, decolonizing work and contributed to my institution's bid for Race Equality Charter status.

I served as Co-Chair for the Black Members' Standing Committee in 2023-24 and am standing as ordinary BMSC member in 2024.

While the committee has been focussed on world politics, I believe the committee should refocus its efforts on UK workplace matters affecting our black and racialized members. World conflicts and natural disasters in Israel-Palestine and Gaza, the Sudan, Morocco and Libya have had tragic consequences, but the BMSC must aim for attainable goals within its remit.