



Meeting of: Black Members Equality Conference

Location: INNSiDE Manchester, 1 First St, Manchester M15 4RP and online

Date: Friday 17 November 2023, 2.00 – 5.30pm

Unconfirmed minutes

Present

Eiman Abdel Meguid	Queen University Belfast
Cynthia Akwei	LJMU
Naseem Anwar	Scottish RMB
Miriyam Aouragh	University of Westminster/Harrow
Gargi Bhattacharyya	University of the Arts
Julie Blake	University of Birmingham
Judith Bruce-Golding	University of Southampton
June Campbell	University College London
Ray Campbell	Royal Holloway, University of London
Dharminder Chuhan	Sandwell College of FHE
Holly Cooper	University of Oxford
Anne-Louise Crichlow	Birmingham City University
Lorraine David	University of Bedfordshire
Abdul Elghedafi	University of Aberdeen
Kirstin Forkert	Birmingham City University
Paul Houston	Bury College
Dotlin Kesler	Bradford College
Lubna Khan	Bradford College
KP Lam	Keele University
Zoulika Lamamra	University of Teesside
Berrisford Lewis	York St John University
Aasiya Lodhi	University of Westminster
Maxine Looby	Oldham College
Shivanti Lowton	Kingston University
Rubi Mahmood	University of Derby
Steve Mardy	Leeds Beckett University
Paula McLean	Sheffield Hallam University
Justine Mercer	University of Warwick
Themesa Neckles	University of Sheffield

Lorraine Neil	Capital City College Group
Jak Peake	University of Essex
Shondelle Quarshie	Kirklees College
Nitin Rajyaguru	Cardiff and Vale College
Saleem Rashid	The Sheffield College
Shirley Searchwell	Walsall College
Shiva Sikdar	Keele University
Abdul Sobratee	Sheffield College
Vivek Thuppil	Bangor University
Carol White	Novus
Wendy Yarde	Capital City College/Kings Cross
Abdullah Yusuf	University of Dundee

Online

Aysha Choudhury	SOAS
Benjamin Ajibade	Northumbria University
Gaverne Bennett	University of Leicester
Harjinder Kaur-Aujla	University of Wolverhampton
Lyle Odendaal	Sheffield Hallam University
Rashida Vora	University of Leicester
Simran Kaur	University of Strathclyde
William Ang'awa	University of Sunderland

In attendance Jane Atkins minute taker
 Sharon Russell, Equality Support Official
 Jenny Sherrard, Head of Equality

1 Welcome and housekeeping.

- 1.1 The Chair Jak Peake introduced himself, Chair of the Black Members Standing Committee and warmly welcomed all members to the Conference both online and in person to the Conference.
- 1.2 The Chair reported that Miriyam Aouragh, from the Black Members Standing will be co-chairing the conference and then introduced the members of the Black Members Standing Committee on the platform; Themesa Neckles, Aasiya Lodhi, Kirsten Forkert, Zoulika Lamamra, Benjamin Ajibade (online).
- 1.3 The Chair reported that Rhiannon Lockley (chair of the Equality Committee) and Justine Mercer (President) had requested to join the conference as observers. This was AGREED.
- 1.4 The Chair reported that he agreed with the General Secretary on the Sewell report findings that in denying institutional racism that this is an insult to all those in Britain who experience racism every day of their lives. He reported that if any members are facing any discrimination that they must talk to the

Committee.

2 Role and Function of the Conference.

- 2.1 Miriyam Aouragh reported on the role and function of the Black Members' Standing Committee. The committee is elected to work around Black members' issues such as diversity and inclusion which has an input into UCU policy.

3 Adoption of Standing Orders

- 3.1 The Chair asked delegates to adopt the Standing Orders for the Conference. This was AGREED.
- 3.2 The Chair reported that the Conference is a safe and respectful place for discussion. No discriminatory language would be tolerated; if this occurred the Chair would ask for an apology and if persistent, the person would be asked to leave the Conference.

4 Minutes of the Black Members' Annual Conference 2022.

- 4.1 item 6.1 2) was corrected to 'EDI and Black Workers- Kirsten Forkert and Abdullah Yusuf.
- 4.2 Item 8, was corrected to 'Dr Benjamin Ajibade'.
- 4.3 The corrected minutes were AGREED as a correct record.
- 4.4 It was reported that Chris Nicholas is not well and that Sharon Russell is supporting the Conference. The Conference proposed a message of best wishes to Chris is sent with a note that he is always professional and helpful.

5 Motions to Black Members' Conference.

- 5.1 The Chair reported that no motions had been received.
- 5.2 Discussion took place on the lack of motions to the conference this year. Also discussed was how UCU defines blackness. The Chair reported that this is an ongoing discussion and that to change the title of the Committee, branches would need to put a motion to Congress.

6 Nominations to the Black Members' Standing Committee.

- 6.1 Sharon Russell reported that all four members nominated had been elected for two years: Dr Benjamin Ajibade, Dr Abdullah Yusuf, Dharminder Chauhan and Saleem Rasid.
- 6.2 This leaves a vacancy for a one-year co-option to the Committee.
- 6.3 Sharon reported that application form for the one-year co-option needed to be returned with qualifying employment details to Sue Bajwa and that the deadline for this is 23rd November. All forms would go to the Committee in January for decision. Forms are available at the Conference and online.
- 6.4 Gargi Bhattacharyya reported that the Committee meets four times per year, and it was confirmed that whoever is co-opted can attend the first meeting.

Sharon Russell reported that forms for attending online will be emailed.

7 Report to Black Members' Conference from the Black Members Standing Committee.

- 7.1 The co-chairs of the BMSC for the coming year are Juliana Ojinnaka and Jak Peake and the vice-chair of the BMSC is Miriyam Aouragh. The Chair took delegates through the report and confirmed actions that had taken place as listed.
- 7.2 Under item 7 on a planning an event on the co-option of EDI and the marginalisation of Black members, has had to be put back and this will be revisited.
- 7.3 Under item 11, on reviving Black members networks, it was reported that this had gained momentum in the West Midland region with additional members joining and that this work will continue in all regions.
- 7.4 Under item 10, on the broad-based anti-racism survey, discussion took place on an accurate list of Black members. Asasiya Lodhi reported that she had not received the survey. Maxine Looby reported that individual names cannot be identified on the lists. Discussion took place on communication with Black members, Maxine reported that she would look into the recent comms list and find out dates when these have been sent out.
- 7.5 Under item 12, the BMSC statement on Palestine/Israel (Oct 2023); this was not posted by UCU. It was agreed to circulate the link (<https://ucublackmembers.wordpress.com>) to all Black members. It was reported that statements are drafted by the BMSC, the consensus for the BMSC statement was 10:12. Discussion took place on procedures for issuing UCU statements and circulation and could the Friday email be used. It was reported that the Black Members Committee secretary has access to all Black members.

8 Keynote Addresses

- 8.1 The Chair reported that Riz Hussain, TUC Race Equality Officer is unable to attend.
- 8.2 **Arun Kundnani:** Gargi Bhattacharyya introduced Arun Kundnani, author of 'What is Anti-racism and why it means Anti-Capitalism'. A video was shown of a discussion between Gargi and Arun on the issues arising from his book; including structural racism, diversity and unconscious-bias training, racism and economic resources; trade unions; British history; Palestine and translating international solidarity; Black lives matter; policing in USA. A copy of the video can be obtained from Gargi.
- 8.3 There followed a Q&A session.
- 8.4 **Aviah Sarah Day Sisters Uncut and Hackney Co op Watch.** Aviah is a Black community organiser and a lecturer in Criminology at Birkbeck University. The

Chair reported that Aviah had lost her voice, and that Aasiya Lodhi will read out her speech. This concerned her reflections of being Black, anti-zionist and Jewish. A copy of her speech is available to read.

9 Reports from Workshops

9.1 Workshop 2: Academic Freedom, anti-racism in the workplace and the protection of Black staff.

9.2 Saleem Rashid (Sheffield College) and Nitin Rajyaguru (Cardiff and Vale College) presented with some of the following points:

- Not all branches have Black reps (Cardiff and Vale College has no Black staff)
- Strategies: with a show of hands most delegates have experience issues at work. Prepare for a disciplinary on day one. Always prepare. Inappropriate use of NDAs: they do not apply to racism and unfair treatment. Collect evidence and avoid 'chats' with HR, take notes and a rep into any meeting.
- SARs (to access own personnel file) a way of getting evidence in case of an Employment Tribunal. There are guidelines on recording meetings. Read the capability and disciplinary procedures and the Data Protection Act.

9.3 During the Q&As and discussion the following issues were also raised:

- Make your own folder of achievements.
- If suspended your work email may be blocked, so keep copies.
- A SAR has to be replied to in 30 days – otherwise a ICO complaint
- Issues of Academic Freedom was raised, members surveyed on support for Palestine.
- Issues on mechanisms used against Black members.. the 'student voice', customer is always right, complaints etc.
- Issues on work related stress and reasonable adjustments; victimisation of union reps was also discussed.

10 Closing remarks

10.1 The Chair thanked all delegates for their attendance and for a productive Conference.

10.2 The Chair reported that members can get in touch with the BMSC via Committee Secretary, eg for the survey, motions to Congress and the next Black Members Standing Committee and he encouraged delegates to take an active role.

10.3 Maxine Looby also thanked delegates and that is she available to support as

well.

- 10.4 The Chair thanked members UCU staff and would pass on the Conference best wishes to Chris Nicholas.
- 10.5 Zoulika Lamamra reported that there will be an additional workshop on academic freedom and that she will circulate the details.
- 10.6 It was AGREED to provide more time for the workshop feedbacks at the next conference.

11 AoB

- 11.1 National Demonstration on Palestine on Saturday 30th December 2023.