



DOWNING COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE

## ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT

*July 2020*

We recognise that there is a persistent problem with the under-representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students at Cambridge. We also acknowledge that there are educational and social structures and practices that perpetuate the unequal distribution of privileges and resources which particularly exclude already-marginalised groups.

In recent months Downing has been reflecting on and reviewing our institutional practices in order to address the structural issues that discourage many talented students from applying to Cambridge, and which impact the experiences of students already here. We are supporting the University's Legacies of Enslavement Inquiry in addition to carrying out our own research to establish whether the College has any historical links to slavery. We have implemented mandatory unconscious-bias training for all employees, and we have initiated student workshops on racial awareness. We have tried to give prominence to voices of BAME people in our support for student and University events.

But we are not yet the community that we want to be. BAME students have continued to experience racism and racialising micro-aggressions that cause pain and distress. They tell us that they do not always feel fully accepted and welcomed. And they do not see themselves adequately represented in the composition of the Fellowship or staff.

We therefore make the following statements of principle:

- We declare our solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. We want people from BAME groups to feel confident that they will be seen and heard, that their talents will be recognised, and that they will be able to thrive in a supportive and healthy community.
- We recognise the multiple identities of BAME students and the intersecting oppressions they face, on campus and off. As we move forward, we are informed by the ongoing public debates about race, racism and decolonisation.
- We acknowledge that as a privileged institution we have a moral debt to BAME and marginalised groups of people that we must seek to address.

But we know that statements of principle are not enough. They must be backed by firm commitments and action:

- We therefore pledge to educate better our students and our staff about race and racism. We will include racial awareness in the induction of new students and organise events and distribute materials to remind the whole Downing community of the importance of racial equality.
- We will listen harder to the concerns of our BAME students, to recognise the distress they feel when their experience at Downing falls short, and to work to address this. We will ensure that the formal and informal routes for reporting incidents of racism and micro-aggressions are clear. We will take remedial steps and if necessary disciplinary action against those found to be responsible for such incidents.
- We will work with the student body to create practical resources to help deal effectively with instances of racism, xenophobia, and discrimination.
- We will strongly encourage supervisors to undertake the training we provide to deal effectively with issues of racial justice and equity in the classroom.
- We will build on our existing provision of needs-based scholarships to students from under-represented groups.
- We will explore opportunities to decolonise the curriculum and the academic resources available to students in College. We will use our exhibition spaces to reflect BAME experiences.
- We will re-examine our recruitment and retainment practices to increase the diversity of our academic and non-academic staff and their professional growth within our community.
- We will seek to ensure that the counselling staff deployed by the College have the training and experience to address the specific psychological stress suffered by BAME and other marginalised students.