Staying Power

The career experiences and strategies of UK Black female professors

Nicola Rollock

February 2019

Contents

Acknowledgements

Many years ago, when I worked as a research assistant, I was appointed a mentor. She was an older white woman. Aware that, as a Black woman, considerations of representation and marginalisation would likely be a feature of my career journey, I told her how many Black female Professors there were in UK universities. She took my sharing the figures (at that time there were just 17) as a sign that I was demoralised and disheartened and persuaded me not to give up. Her response could not have been further from the truth. In fact, my curiosity was how – given that there were just 17 – had these Black women managed to negotiate a path to Professorship. What were their strategies? How had they been able to navigate a system which was relatively silent about both race and gender? How was it possible that there were, in comparison, so many white male Professors? As I have progressed through my career, the desire to carry out a piece of research examining the career experiences of Black female Professors has stayed with me. This is partly because the figures have barely improved and, in part, because wider higher education initiatives on gender, which I have seen increase during my time in higher education, have failed to take seriously experiences at the intersection of both race and gender.

With these considerations in mind, I would like to thank UCU for funding the research and, in particular, Angela Nartey for recognising its value to debates about justice and representation within UK universities. My thanks also to David Gillborn a long-term mentor and friend for his comments on an earlier draft of the report and to Angelique Golding for research assistance.

The report's title 'Staying Power' pays homage to Peter Fryer's well-known classical tome of the same name, which documents the history of Black people in Britain. This year – 2019 – marks 25 years since the book was first published and just as Fryer sought to give an "account of the lives, struggles and achievements of men and women" (pxi) in carrying out this research on Black female Professors, I too seek to make my small contribution to the recording of Black history by making visible our experiences. I express my heartfelt warmth to each of the Professors who contributed to this study. I fully recognise the challenges on your time and the pressures of being a Black woman in the academy and appreciate that you made yourselves available to me to share what were in some cases painful and difficult experiences. Thank you for your tenacity and your support.

To borrow from Dr Angelou: 'And still we rise!'

Nicola Rollock
Reader in Equity and Education in the Department of Educational Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London
February 2019

Executive summary

- This research is the first known UK study to exclusively focus on the career experiences of Black female Professors and their efforts to reach professorship.

- The study examines, through one-to-one interviews, the experiences of 20 of the 25 UK Black female Professors. Black in this context refers to those of African, Caribbean and other Black background.

- **The profile of UK Black female Professors**
Findings indicate that this is a new and emerging group of academics with the majority (60%) of those interviewed having been appointed Professor within the last five years. Only two of the sample had been a Professor for 10 years or more.

- **Culture of higher education**
Respondents describe higher education as characterised by excessive workloads, which often requires them to work unsocial hours. This is particularly the case for Professors who are described by one respondent as "the mules and donkeys of the workforce". This working culture impacts negatively on their social and personal lives.

  A culture of explicit and passive bullying persists across higher education along with racial stereotyping and racial microaggressions. Respondents shared accounts, for example, of being ostracised by colleagues (including Heads of Departments) during meetings and social events and, unlike their white counterparts, of needing to go out of their way to demonstrate their competence, experience and knowledge. This resulted in some respondents feeling a need to over-prepare for meetings, spend time accruing additional outputs as evidence of their suitability for promotion and limiting the time they spent in their office or the university.

- **Promotion and progression**
Black female Professors experience a messy, convoluted and protracted path to Professorship that is characterised by a lack of transparency and fairness. Specifically, respondents report:

  i. being over taken by less qualified and less experienced white female colleagues in appointments to new posts and in the promotion process

  ii. that feedback on applications often lacked detail leaving respondents with little understanding about what to improve in future applications

  iii. a lack of rigour and transparency in the promotion process being asked repeatedly, for example, to provide further evidence in support of applications for promotion

  iv. delaying applying for promotion as a result of unsupportive or bullying Heads of Department. One respondent described waiting at least 10 years before applying because of the obstacles presented by her Head of Department.

- **White female academics**
Some white female academics were seen to contribute to the exclusion of Black female academics despite an expressed commitment to feminism. One respondent described, for example, how white women kowtowed to the views and opinions of white men while ignoring the contributions of women of colour

  Some white female academics were seen to be jealous in the light of the achievements of their Black counterparts. One respondent described how a

colleague, having not been successful herself, responded to her successful application for Professorship:

She never spoke to me in the corridor. She wouldn't even chat to me in the toilet (…). If we were ever round a buffet at an event or seminar or anything like that, she would just walk away if I walked in. If I walked anywhere near her, she would just walk away. And it became really quite difficult for me because she was Head of (…) [Department].

(Pauline)

● **Self-care and strategies for survival**
Respondents have developed a range of responses to help them cope with and navigate higher education. These include careful, forensic-like analysis of situations with white peers to detect, avoid or manage undesirable or challenging workplace behaviours. However, there was acknowledgement that maintaining this hyper level of vigilance and analysis was exhausting and stressful.

Some respondents engaged in specific activities to maintain their well-being such as yoga and exercise and also relied on friends and family members for an understanding and supportive ear.

In some instances, respondents were able to point to an individual white colleague who advocated on their behalf or acted as a champion for them introducing them to opportunities or directly supporting their progression. Sometimes these relationships became formalmentoring arrangements.

● **Advice to future generations**
Respondents' advice varied and was largely shaped by their personal experiences of the academy. Examples included seeking to minimise exposure to racism and learning to be strategic about which battles to take on. Future generations were also advised to be open to whom might provide them with advice and not be solely directed by ethnicity as well as prepared to move to different types of institutions as well as take up roles across the UK in order to progress.

● **Recommendations**
Recommendations are aimed at UCU as the main union for the sector but also at higher education research and funding councils and bodies which help inform and regulate the cultural norms and expectations of the sector.

The focus is on creating a work environment where policies and processes are deployed in a fair and transparent manner to enable Black female academics to progress and succeed. Particular attention is paid to increasing awareness of passive bullying and racial microaggressions and implementing initiatives to eliminate these behaviours at each stage of the career trajectory.

Introduction

Latest figures from Advance HE indicate that there are 85 UK Black[1] Professors[2] within UK higher education institutions. This group make up 0.6% – the smallest proportion of the UK Professoriate. Only 4.6% of all Black faculty occupy this senior level role compared with 11.2% of white faculty who hold this position (Advance HE, 2018). In other words, white academics are almost two and a half times more likely to be Professors than their Black counterparts. This corresponds with findings from the UCU that White academics are approximately three times as successful in their applications for Professorship when compared with their peers from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds (UCU, 2012). The data is starker when disaggregated by gender. Just 25 UK Black Professors are women. Indeed, when the School of Oriental and African Studies in London appointed the first Black female university leader Baroness Valerie Amos, in 2015, it had to look outside of the higher education sector to do so (Rollock, 2016).

When asked about their experiences in UK higher education, Black and minority ethnic faculty report being undermined, marginalized and their knowledge and experience frequently called into question (Leathwood, Maylor & Moreau, 2009; Shilliam, 2015). These findings were mirrored in a recent UCU survey which found that 72% of its' Black and minority ethnic members, working in higher education, had been subject to bullying and harassment from managers (UCU, 2016). Perhaps unsurprisingly, academics from these backgrounds are more likely to consider leaving UK institutions to work overseas compared with their white counterparts (Bhopal, Brown & Jackson, 2015) believing the opportunities for recognition and progression to be greater.

While the Race Equality Charter, recently introduced by the then Equalities Challenge Unit, seeks to encourage higher education institutions to take seriously issues of race inequality, institutional and covert racism, there is no single sector-wide initiative dedicated to improving the retention and progression of UK Black faculty. Black Professors remain few in number and Black female Professors, a rare breed.

---

1   That is Black African, Black Caribbean and Other Black background.
2   In the UK, Professorship is the highest academic position available usually following a progression from Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader (or Associate Professor) then Professor which is the equivalent of Full Professor in the US.

Methodology

Research methods

Semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out with twenty UK domiciled Black female Professors. The focus on UK domiciled academics is important as their entry into, representation and thus experiences of the academy is likely to differ from their international counterparts (Leathwood et al, 2009; UCU, 2012).

Potential respondents were invited to take part in the research through invitations posted on email groups such as the Higher Education Race Action Group (HERAG) and the British Black Studies list. Calls for respondents were also made via social media. Respondents were also identified via listings cited in the directory of Black and minority ethnic Professors produced and published by the Black Female Professors forum. Where the researcher already knew respondents, they were contacted directly and invited to take part.

The invitation email briefly explained the focus of the research and asked for involvement from those who met three key criteria: 1 they were UK-domiciled, 2 currently in employment at a UK higher education institution as a full Professor and 3 self-defined as Black African, Black Caribbean or other Black background.

Several interviews were carried out in person and the remainder via Skype. Interviews lasted between one and two hours. Each was fully transcribed by a transcriber who had worked with the researcher during previous projects and had signed a confidentiality agreement relating to the handling and disclosure of data. Each transcript was password protected and soundfiles deleted on completion of transcription. Each interview was then analysed partly by hand and partly through use of the qualitative software programme NVivo to identify broad themes, areas of dissonance and similarities in experience.

The research sought to explore the career experiences and strategies of UK Black female Professors. Specifically, it sought to examine the following questions:

1   What are the career pathways of these academics and, specifically, their experience of attaining professorship?

2   What strategies do Black female Professors make use of to support their career advancement?

3   What advice and guidance are these academics able to offer to future generations of Black female Professors?

The intention of the research is three-fold. First, it seeks to lend visibility to the experiences of a group, which is under-represented in higher education and about whom little is known. Second, it seeks to highlight the ways in which progression, recognition and promotion – currently an opaque area – operate in UK universities. And finally, it seeks to expose the barriers restricting Black female academic progression and reveal the strategies deployed by this group to overcome them.

Ethics

Ethical approval for the research was granted by Goldsmiths' research, ethics and integrity committee and the study carried out in line with the ethical guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018).

Each respondent was provided with information about the research and signed a consent form. The small number of Black female Professors in the UK meant that there were a number of careful considerations in terms of ensuring respondent confidentiality. While pseudonyms were adopted and names of institutions changed, additional sensitivity was necessary regarding basic descriptor information that would normally provide context to respondents' accounts and experiences. For example, while this information is known there is no mention of university type in the summary table shown in the next section (e.g. Russell Group, University of London; post-92). Instead distinction is made only between what are described as elite as opposed to standard institutions. For similar reasons, no detail is provided as to whether the respondent's host institution is based within or outside of London.

A considerable number of respondents had a career before entering academia. The nature of those careers provides, in some cases, useful insight and comparison to the culture, norms and expectations of academia. However, describing these professions could potentially compromise the confidentiality of individual respondents. Instead, this information is documented only as 'previous profession'. In the same vein, the duration of professorial appointment is subsumed within three time periods: five years or less; 6-10 years and 11 years or more.

Finally, a note about quotations taken from the interviews and used in this report. In some cases, the language or phrasing deployed by a respondent may be sufficiently unique to them to reveal their identity. The default has been to err on the side of caution and in such instances the text has been edited out and replaced with more familiar terminology. This is depicted within the quotation by the use of square bracket around the inserted words. Where text has been deleted, to facilitate coherence or succinctness for example, this has been depicted by three full stops within parenthesis as follows: (...).

Findings

In line with the objectives of the research, the interview data revealed a range of themes relating to Black female Professors' reasons for becoming an academic, their pathway to Professorship and their experiences once appointed. Respondents provided detailed accounts of their attempts to successfully navigate recruitment and progression procedures that, in turn, revealed often concerning insight into the cultural norms, practices and expectations of higher education institutions. Respondents also spoke about how they responded when faced by barriers or injustice drawing, as the data will show, on social and cultural forms of capital at their disposal. And it is through a lens of reflection about their own career journeys and a determination to be agentic even when confronted by adversity, that these Black female Professors offer advice and recommendations to future generations of scholars of colour seeking to pursue a career in academia and achieve professorship.

This finding section summarises the main themes from the research and begins by setting out contextual information about the respondents as a group.

Who are the UK's Black female Professors?

This research documents the accounts of twenty UK Black female Professors. The below table captures basic demographic information about each of the respondents with a view to offering context to their accounts while also retaining individual confidentiality.

Figure 1. Demographic information for UK Black female respondents

	Pseudonym	Born in UK	Age Group	Previous/ concurrent profession	Time as Professor	Salary
1	Angela	yes	50-59	yes	5 years or less	80-89K
2	Christina	yes	60+	yes	5 years or less	80-89K
3	Constance	yes	50-59	no	6-10 years	90-99K
4	Deborah	no	50-59	no	5 years or less	90-99K
5	Elizabeth	yes	50-59	no	5 years or less	70-79K
6	Ernesta	yes	50-59	yes	6 -10 years	70-79K
7	Felicia	no	60+	no	5 years or less	80-89K
8	Germaine	no	40-49	yes	6-10 years	90-99K
9	Jenny	no	50-59	no	5 years or less	60-69K
10	Karen	yes	50-59	no	6-10 years	80-89
11	Kathy	no	60+	no	5 years or less	60-69K
12	Lorraine	yes	40-49	no	6-10 years	70-79K
13	Lola	no	60+	no	6-10 years	60-69K
14	Malorie	no	60+	yes	5 years or less	60-69K
15	Maureen	yes	60+	yes	10+ years	60-69K
16	Maxine	no	60+	yes	5 years or less	70-79K
17	Pauline	yes	60+	no	5 years or less	60-69K
18	Roberta	no	40-49	yes	5 years or less	60-69K
19	Rosemary	yes	50-59	yes	10 + years	80-89K
20	Victoria	no	50-59	no	5 years or less	60-69K

This study involved interviews with twenty of the UK's 25 Black female Professors. The table shows that this is a new and emerging group with the majority (60%) of those interviewed having only been made Professor within the last five years at point of interview. Only two (10%) have occupied this role for 10 years or more.

Almost half (45%) of the respondents had pursued a different career prior to entering higher education. These careers shaped the direction and specialism of their academic work and, in some cases, the two – the academic and original career – ran alongside each other.

Nine respondents worked at newer education institutions. The remainder were split across Russell Group and red brick universities. Seven respondents moved to a different university in order to gain professorship. The remaining thirteen progressed within the institutions at which they were already based. For reasons of confidentiality, this information is not documented in the table.

Half (50%) of the Professors were born overseas. While the research did not explicitly consider how being born and socialised in the UK or elsewhere might have shaped career experiences and strategies, there were several examples where an overseas born respondent evoked a discourse of cultural resilience, a grounded and unambiguous identity and historicity as undergirding their capacity to draw strength and determination in the face of institutional bullying and racist harassment. This is discussed later in the report.

The variation in salary is interesting. While one respondent suggested that variations might be informed by professional salary scales (for those who had trained in a primary profession), there was no discernible indication from the data collected that this was the case. In general terms, respondents tend to be paid more at elite institutions. This is perhaps unsurprising given that these universities tend to be better resourced. The data suggests that the amount received in salary is not associated with length of service as a Professor. One respondent who we will call 'A' is based at a Russell Group university, for example, has been a Professor for five years or less and is paid at the higher end of the salary scale (£90-99K). (No respondent indicated that they received more than £100K, which was the highest salary category available). By contrast, another respondent 'B', who is also slightly older, has been a Professor at a post-92 university for over 10 years and receives approximately £30K less than A. There are also variations within university type. Despite both attending post-92 universities and having been a Professor for five years or less, there is an approximate £20K difference in the salary two of the respondents take home. This data corresponds with findings from the UCU that pay for professorial staff is not consistent across the sector (UCU, 2012).

Pursuing an academic career

As mentioned above, 45% of respondents had a profession before entering academia. In some cases, they continued to pursue this work alongside their academic career. Given the unpredictable nature of some of these professions, academia was seen to offer financial stability and the opportunity, in some cases, to raise a family. For example, Jenny who has a concurrent profession related to her academic role describes teaching in higher education in relatively mechanistic or functional terms "as a kind of tool that would be part time" that would "just keep me eating". Another

respondent Angela, who also trained in a primary profession, echoes this sentiment while also emphasizing the importance of that profession in enabling her to maintain distance from what she regards as highly competitive and inward facing academic culture:

...the difficulty is trying to learn a system, which I think takes years (...) even getting used to the students really does take years. But I think the positive thing is that [having a previous career] you see it in perspective (...) you lived without it (...). It's great to have the income (...) [but] your identity is not wrapped up in it and, for academics their identity is completely wrapped up in the institution (...) so when they're having their competitive little jousting periods between each other at meetings, that's really important to them.

Angela's experience of higher education is considered more closely in the section examining the culture within higher education institutions but what is worth noting here is her sense of professional and cultural dislocation and how she sees herself as outside of the academic context. She works to distance herself from her academic colleagues through the repeated use of pronouns such as 'their' and 'them'.

The majority of respondents described entering academia by chance or not being aware that it existed as a possible career route. This was the case for 17 of the 20 respondents. Germaine admits that she "didn't even know that academia could be a job" even when she was an undergraduate student. Maureen's explanation of "falling" into academia mirrors this:

I saw a post advertised at [name of] University for a Lecturer in [subject area] and I can't remember the detail – whether it was in the application or not, but they seemed to have an interest in [a form of] politics. (...) and so I applied for it and I got it. So that's how I came into academia, it was kind of not ever part of a plan ever. It was almost something I fell into...

Similarly, Karen describes entering teaching only because she offered to stand in for a friend who worked in the sector but had been forced to take time off for personal reasons. It was not as she explains "something that I had a plan or intention to do". Ernesta's experience is similar. Initially pursuing a separate profession, her entry to teaching (and later academia more fully) was in her words "a case of following my nose".

Christina, Felicia and Maxine were exceptions to the experiences outlined above. Christina had trained in her primary profession first and then, finding that she enjoyed the research element decided to enter higher education. Felicia and Maxine were both born overseas and had studied in a context where they had been presented with a clear pathway to academia although neither initially pursued this route. However, Felicia later returned to the sector due to dissatisfaction with her initial career choice and Maxine returned because of a change in personal circumstance.

The culture within higher education institutions

Being able to work from home and manage individual workloads with relative autonomy was cited as one of the most attractive features of an academic career. One respondent spoke of her excitement, given the nature of her managerial responsibilities to shape the pedagogic direction of her department by providing a broad learning experience for students with employability at the fore. Another described her keenness, though largely thwarted by colleagues, to diversify the curriculum by introducing content published by authors from ethnically varied backgrounds. However, these factors paled in significance in the context of the detailed and often shocking accounts about respondents' career experiences and efforts, albeit ultimately successful, to progress to professorship. Given the wealth of data centred around these themes, they are explored under two broad headings: 'the culture within higher education institutions' which seeks to provide a general overview of respondents' experiences of the sector and, 'Recruitment, progression and success' which provides insight into institutional employment practices and the impact of these on these Black female academics' ability to progress. These headings serve merely as a heuristic device to organise the content in a meaningful way for the reader but there is overlap and continuity in the issues described in each.

Workload and work pressure

While higher education is seen to offer some degree of flexibility and autonomy over individual working hours including the ability to work from home, it is largely regarded as a profession that is time-consuming and extremely demanding. The need to perform in line with sector specific outputs and measurements [see also Being a Black female Professor] was seen as detrimental to work-life balance, wellbeing and, in some cases the possibility to pursue intimate personal relationships. Victoria who describes feeling "guilty if I don't work on a weekend" articulates how the REF (Research Excellence Framework) became a point of contention for her having missed the institutional target for her publications by just one point and having not been offered any feedback or guidance about what she might have done to improve. She ended up being excluded from the REF submission:

I didn't feel I was thriving there. I felt that I was so stressed there. So it was, kind of, like, a vicious circle. I was stressed and I wasn't producing and because I wasn't producing, I was stressed.

Lorraine admits that due to work pressures she too is not overly enthusiastic about higher education. Noting that this might have been her enduring sentiment during the course of the interview she attempts – and fails – to provide a more positive perspective:

I think I've been quite negative [during this interview] (…). I think I haven't talked about some of the positive aspects [laughs] of being, not just a Professor but just being in academia. (…) there's a lot of privilege involved. Yes the time constraints are really, you know, second to none now but if you've got a (…) research interest you can do that (…) if you get funding for it (…). And where else do you have a job [in which you] can do that really? If you don't like the nine to five, it can be good but then of course the downside to that means that unless you put [in] those boundaries,

you're never off so, you know, the weekends, the evenings – you're constantly working. There's no demarcation between work and home. (…) The higher up you go… actually it's a really greasy, slippery pole and so you go higher up and you think "oh life will be better". It just gets worse actually.

Lorraine

Maxine and Jenny corroborate Lorraine's sentiment, lamenting how difficult it is to strike a balance and healthy separation between work and a personal life. Jenny who is single, observes:

It's almost impossible. I have no personal life. I work all the time (…) And that's got to stop. I work all the time. I work weekends. I work… you know… my personal life and my work life, the lines are blurred.

Jenny

She continues, in a moving moment of candour, to describe how she feels about this admitting that such an existence is lonely and how, in a perverse "addiction of avoidance", she works to fill that lonely space. In a continuance of this theme and noting the impact her academic workload had on a past relationship another respondent doubts whether it is, in fact, possible to maintain a relationship as an academic given the demands of the role:

…it doesn't get spoken about and it's important in terms of career women (…). I do wonder though whether if I was married I would have been able to stay in a relationship anyway because of the demands of academic work (…). When I was teaching, I thought I was with somebody I was going to settle down with (…) I thought we had a really good relationship and he just hated the fact that I used to come home and mark books in the evenings (…) that's how we separated.

[Not attributed]

Conversely, another respondent's partner is also an academic so there is understanding between them about how time intensive it can be although she concedes that perhaps this makes for an unhealthy existence. Kathy's acknowledgement of the demands of academia are compounded, she feels by, her hope to settle down with a Black man. She reflects that to find such a man within higher education would be difficult but sees his working in the sector as a necessary requirement given the need for that person to adequately empathise with the expectations of academic life. Poignantly, she describes the absence of a relationship as more challenging than even dealing with the racism within her university:

… I mean most of my weekends during term time I have to work and I'm working every Saturday and Sunday in order to keep ahead (…) that personal side is the loss. (…) I can cope with the racism or whatever but that side for me is a big loss…

Kathy

A different Professor conveys a slightly different but nonetheless equally sobering perspective as she reflects on a conversation initiated by a white female friend who she had expected to also pursue an academic career. Dissuaded from doing so by her reading of the workload expectations, her friend asked her whether she felt it would

have been possible to become a Professor had she had children. The realisation that she may have been advantaged by not being a mother leaves this particular Professor with an uncomfortable sense of privilege:

...when you're living with somebody you care about, a child or a parent, you want to be with them; a child or a partner, you want to spend time with them. In addition, women have more (...) [child-rearing] responsibilities (...) you want to spend time with people in the evening and not go off reading an article or doing 50 emails (...) I'm incredibly slow [when it comes to writing] but I was able to use up the week in the way that many of my fellow colleagues [with children] were not able to. So unfortunately, I would have to say it [my having become a Professor] was a lot to do with being single and not having – as in really single, not having children, but being single.

From these extracts, the pressures and demands of academic life are made evident. While not all respondents spoke in this way, the tone of those who did reflected an element of sacrifice, compromise and loss. When such accounts are read in the context of the rest of the findings set out in this report, it becomes difficult to consistently regard a career in higher education as an attractive option.

Bullying and racial harassment

There were two instances, within the twenty accounts, of legal cases initiated by respondents due their experience of unfair treatment and bullying. For reasons of confidentiality, these are not described here. However, they should be understood as representing the extreme end of a continuum characterised by passive aggressive acts, avoidance, undermining and exclusion. I note one respondent who had been slightly less talkative than the majority of interviewees who contacted me after her interview to ask for literature on race and the workplace, so keen was she to give a vocabulary to negative experiences she had hitherto thought only affected her.

Two further Black female Professors employed at different universities mentioned witnessing or directly experiencing bullying from the same white female colleague who had been employed at each institution at different points in time. Taking the two accounts together, this academic appears to have a history of making unsubstantiated accusations. One respondent described how "you only had to look at her or do anything and she'd report you for something". This academic also undermined peers and intruded on other people's physical space and when challenged, was prone to defend herself by making further accusatory claims. It was not clear, in either account, how the institution reacted to eliminate this bullying or indeed protect other staff members and students.

While these reflect more extreme forms of bullying, several Professors detailed examples of what might be conceptualised as passive aggressive behaviour or passive bullying. According to Oade (2015) passive aggression may feel as aggressive, alienating and upsetting as more overt forms of bullying despite its subtle and indirect nature. She lists the following as examples:

● Make insulting comments with a smile, in an attempt to patronise their target.

- Only oppose the viewpoint of the target but do so using an understated and apparently reasonable tone.

- Use the influence available to them to ensure that proposals or plans put forward by the target are rejected or become subject to heated debate, not because those plans are unreasonable or ill-thought out, but simple to thwart the target's wishes.

- Undermine the target's reputation behind their back by inventing slanders about them that are put forward with such apparent innocence that they are widely believed.

Oade (2015)

These examples speak directly to those shared by respondents. One Professor, for example, describes being warned by a Black female student about a "very problematic" white male Head of Department who was alleged to have an issue with Black women despite working in an area of scholarship that centred on issues of ethnicity. The respondent explained how she sent him feedback by email on a department proposal and how "the following term he introduced my changes and he never mentioned me and he just looked straight ahead, never mentioned me, and he introduced [the ideas] as if they were his".

In a similar vein, Maxine describes her experiences of trying to win support for decisions as being like a "battle" or "power tussle". She offers an example of needing to make calculated, strategic decisions for what she considers a basic and necessary initiative to support the successful functioning of the Department:

I went on holiday and she [white colleague] rejected it [the proposal]. I mean I had to come back and write a long email explaining using (...) [formal policies] to (...) [reinforce] my explanations. I copied in the Head of School and then the Head of School said it should be approved. It's actually not the Head of School's job to approve it. The (...) [female colleague] is supposed to approve it and she refused. (...) I don't understand why everything has to be a battle and I know that it's because I'm a Black woman. (...) ...it's not just being a Black woman. [It's about being] a Black woman who doesn't fit the mould of what a Black woman should be like...

Maxine proceeds to draw similarities between how she has been treated and the treatment of the African American tennis player Serena Williams who has been stereotyped and caricatured for not fitting into prescribed notions of (white) femininity. In this way she is acknowledging that certain gendered and racialised cultural norms persist in academia that shape the content and direction of personal interactions. This is an important and common analysis that is explored further in the section *The experience of being a Professor.*

Emails and meetings

Several professors spoke of a culture of elitism, competitiveness and isolation in the universities they had worked in. Those who had entered academia from a different profession described the challenge of learning sector specific acronyms, which were not necessarily explained by those using them, and learning to write their CV and applications for progression in prescribed (or prescriptive) academic ways. Emails and

meetings, in particular, were identified as sites in which problematic cultural norms surrounding power and hierarchy were played out:

I came (...) into what was quite a hostile environment really (...) it was a very male Department, very... I just thought academics were so arrogant and ruthless and all these fights going on and these email exchanges that you were kind of cc'd into and I'm like 'oh my god this place!'

Angela

Emails need to be managed because of the sheer number received but also because they are used as a method of control and bullying. Pauline, for example, describes a situation in which a white female colleague had applied for Professorship at the same time as her but had been unsuccessful. This colleague was later appointed as Head of Department and, on taking up the role, proceeded to send Pauline a series of tersely worded emails about work but refused to speak to her or acknowledge her when in the same physical space:

She never spoke to me in the corridor. She wouldn't even chat to me in the toilet (...). If we were ever round a buffet at an event or seminar or anything like that, she would just walk away if I walked in. If I walked anywhere near her, she would just walk away. And it became really quite difficult for me because she was Head of (...) [Department].

Pauline

Roberta details how the emails she received from her Head of Department were so unkindly worded and unsupportive that she became fearful of receiving them. She recalls a particular incident in which having been told yet again by her Head of Department that she could not pursue a consultancy opportunity which would have been beneficial for her CV and also would have brought income into the university. Despite repeated requests that they intervene, the university only took action when it considered its reputation was at risk.

Emails also hold power as a silencing or avoidance device. Two respondents spoke of not receiving responses to emails in very specific circumstances. In one of these, a white male Professor took umbrage at not having been granted sabbatical leave and simply stopped responding to emails and supervising students. In another situation, the respondent asked otherwise communicative colleagues for guidance about a Fellowship process only to be met with silence and an odd instance where she was told "they're really hard to get. I wouldn't worry if I were you".

Even when respondents are themselves authors of emails, this can present problems. Maxine uses emails in an agentic way to document the contents of face-to-face exchanges with colleagues in order to minimise the possibility that they will renege on what has been said but the consequence of this is that she is criticised for sending too many.

Like emails, meetings can act as sites in which power and exclusion are operationalised. Both Felicia and Germaine detail the careful, thoughtful ways in which they prepare for meetings not just because they are committed to their work but also

to subvert possible and actual subjugation by white colleagues. Consider Felicia's observation of meetings at her workplace:

In my job right now there is racism (...) I don't go into a meeting blind. I know exactly what I want out of the meeting and you provide your reasoning, why and how (...). As soon as a white man opens his mouth, he can turn that meeting. You see them [white women] all flocking. You see them all flocking. It's very funny to see (...) And these are the women who say maybe that they're feminists or these are the people who [are] enlighten[ed], who are not racist. It's unconscious. It's within them. They can't help it (...) you (...) see it all the time.

Felicia

Important to note here is the multifaceted way in which subjugation can take place. In this instance it is exemplified not by explicitly directing undesirable behaviour toward Felicia (as a Black woman) but by white women deferring to and venerating the acts of white male colleagues. Intersectionality is key in this account as it enables an understanding of white feminism as sometimes superficial and as reinforcing a gendered and racialised hierarchy that leaves Black women at a disadvantage and privileges white men.

Kathy shares a similar example of putting her hand up in a meeting being chaired by a senior white male colleague only to be ignored:

...there was one incident with a [senior white male member of staff] actually, where I had my hand up for about half an hour. The debate was going on and I just kept it up and everybody was looking at him and eventually everyone was looking at him, looking at me. He had to ask me (...) he just didn't want to hear what I had to say. (...) Or they cut you short. And one of the things I noticed this guy has cut other women short. (...) he stops them, as soon as, you know, they open their mouth and he immediately cuts them and starts talking...

The following extract from Germaine's is lengthy but the detail important:

...let's say I'm new, (...) [my first few months] in the job and I'm attending a (...) [faculty] meeting and the chair of the (...) meeting sees the agenda and he can see that there's two new people joining (...) [the faculty]: Professor somebody and the student rep and he opens the meeting by introducing people. So he turns to me and says "and here's our new student rep" and I can see somebody next to him nudging him to try to explain to him that "no, no, I'm not the student". (...). I'm not the student rep. I'm the new Professor. And then the rest of that meeting, which I have prepared for a lot, I have to be careful, because I'm going to have to work with this person for the rest of the time in that institution. I don't want him to have even the slightest sense of hostility from me, so I've got to both pretend I haven't noticed that he's assumed I'm the student rep or not act in any way offended or put out or anything by that but then overcompensate by being super knowledgeable. (...) as it happened, we were discussing introducing a new [degree programme] (...) and I was

able to say 'well (...) [drawing on my past experience] we did this and we did that and we did that and I notice page 17 of the 30 page report suggested this. I would suggest we do this instead'. So by the end of the meeting, he's either forgotten about his slip or he's so at ease that it's not [an issue] ...I mean, I'm conscious that there are other ways of dealing with it. I could have said stopped the room, stopped the meeting and said "actually by the way I'm the Professor and I notice you made that mistake" but so again this is my kind of awareness that I make choices about how I perform in the room.
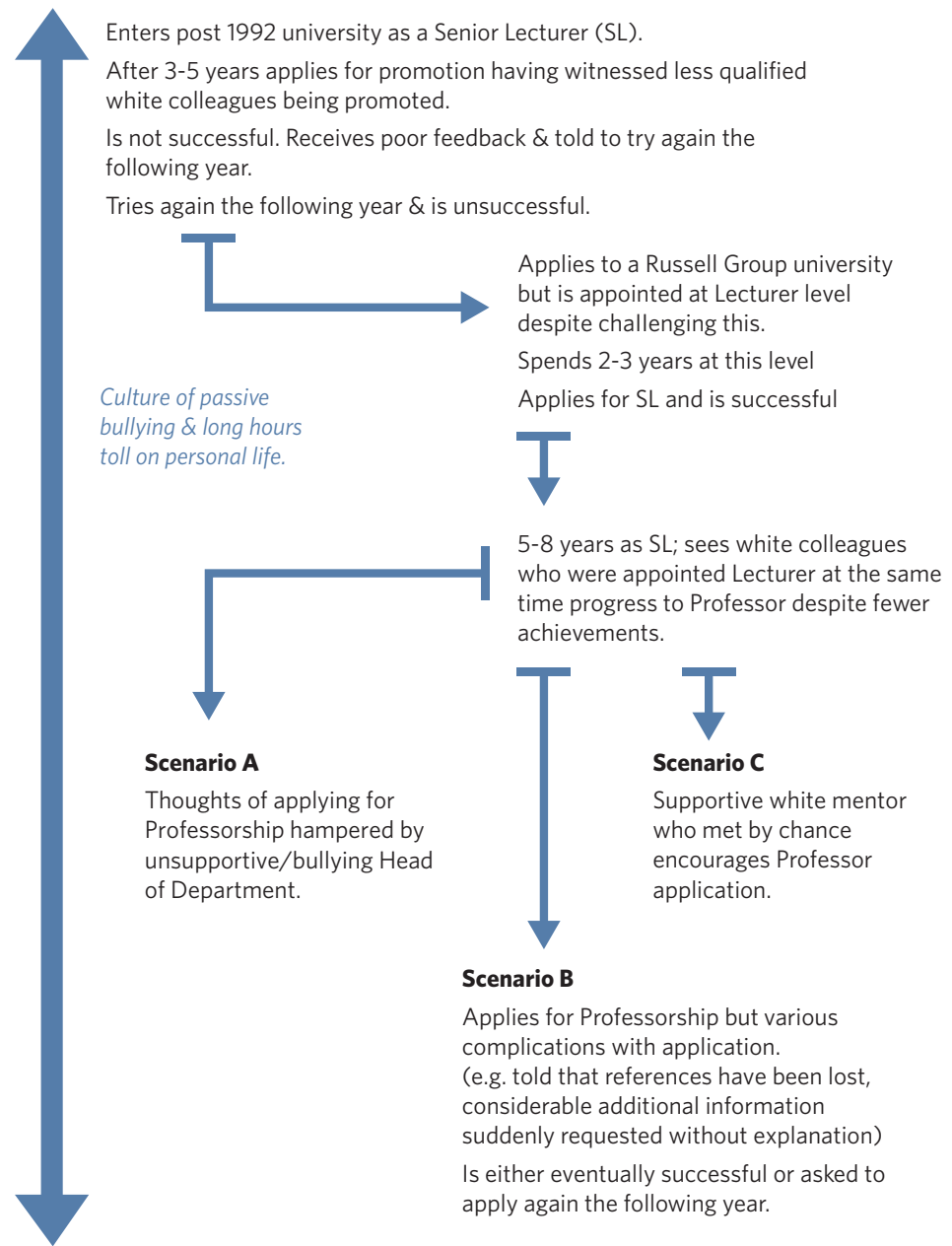
Germaine

There are several points worthy of note here. As a result of the chair's clumsy stereotyping, Germaine engages in a series of micro-calculations and analyses which on one hand we might regard as shrewd and sensitive but which is, at the same time, an extra burden on top of the perceived requirement to over prepare. This perception is not without foundation as reflected later in this report in the seemingly haphazard way in which decisions are made about which achievements are recognised as worthy of promotion and who gets promoted [see Recruitment and Progression]. Later in the same interview, Germaine describes how "exhausting" it is to have to think in this way; a sentiment that resonates with views expressed by other respondents about whether it is possible to be oneself in academia. However, most resounding about this incident is its unfairness. In her endeavours to protect the relationship with her colleague and not disturb the tone and momentum of the meeting, Germaine is compelled to suppress her actual feelings – "I don't want him to have even the slightest sense of hostility" – and the person (a white male colleague) who actually caused the offense, remains oblivious to the consequences of his actions and thus sustains no stress, inconvenience or potential learning from it. This is a textbook example of racial microaggressions. The impact on the respondent is evident yet the perpetrator may either be unaware of the distress and offense they have caused or, because there was no direct or explicit mention of race refuse, if called out, to accept that race played a role in their mistaken attribution (Sue, Capodilupo & Holder, 2008). This incident provides a powerful example of how the politics of race, gender and power are performed, albeit covertly, in the academy.

Recruitment & progression

In seeking to explore and better understand the route to professorship, the career trajectory of each Professor was mapped. The aim was to capture, where data was available, the approximate year of entering academia, the level and duration of each career stage and when promotion or movement to a new university occurred as well as understand limitations on this process. Drawing on this data, Figure 2 seeks to provide an illustration of a typical career pathway.

Figure 2: Illustration of the typical career trajectory for a Black female Professor

Enters post 1992 university as a Senior Lecturer (SL).

After 3-5 years applies for promotion having witnessed less qualified white colleagues being promoted.

Is not successful. Receives poor feedback & told to try again the following year.

Tries again the following year & is unsuccessful.

Applies to a Russell Group university but is appointed at Lecturer level despite challenging this.

Spends 2-3 years at this level

Applies for SL and is successful

Culture of passive bullying & long hours toll on personal life.

5-8 years as SL; sees white colleagues who were appointed Lecturer at the same time progress to Professor despite fewer achievements.

Scenario A

Thoughts of applying for Professorship hampered by unsupportive/bullying Head of Department.

Scenario C

Supportive white mentor who met by chance encourages Professor application.

Scenario B

Applies for Professorship but various complications with application. (e.g. told that references have been lost, considerable additional information suddenly requested without explanation)

Is either eventually successful or asked to apply again the following year.

This mapping exercise reveals a messy and often convoluted pathway to professorship. In other words, there is no definitive template or route to becoming Professor. While this fluidity might suggest an openness and willingness, on the part of institutions to recognise and embrace diverse career paths, in reality the interview accounts reveal a rigidity and fixedness in the competencies seen to characterise the role of Professor (e.g. certain forms of knowledge are lauded) and unevenness in the ways in which appointments are made. These tensions are further compounded by the continued operation of hierarchy between established or elite institutions and those former polytechnics that acquired university status following the implementation of the 1992

Further and Higher Education Act. Felicia's description of her career path provides a useful insight into this convoluted route and the compromises described by some respondents:

I joined what was [name of post 92] University (...) and I was there for (...) [over 10] years. I was a Senior Lecturer. Yes, I was a Senior Lecturer there. I left there as the Head of Department. I became the Head of Department and I left and I went to [another post 92 university] as a Principal Lecturer and I spent a year there. I did my PhD at [elite institution]. I took a salary cut and went right back to the bottom as a Lecturer. (...) I just worked my way up. I was a Lecturer for four or five years [at the elite institution]. Then I became a Senior Lecturer...

The Black female Professors in this study found these processes frustrating and unjust. This stands to reason since, as will be shown, there is an opaqueness and lack of transparency surrounding the decision-making processes that underpin appointment and progression outcomes causing this group of respondents delays by several years to attaining professorship. This lack of transparency applied both in relation to their own career trajectory and the way in which they saw these policies applied unevenly to prospective employees and to peers.

Roles prior to Professorship

Early experiences of applying for posts or promotion are marked by a lack of transparency with less qualified colleagues – usually white women – being promoted in advance of some of the respondents. The unfairness of these incidents comes to shape respondents' views about race and racism and the extent to which higher education institutions are genuine in their proclamations to advance change on this front. In some cases, respondents also report that even the feedback they received on unsuccessful applications was inadequate and unhelpful and, in some cases, presented an arena for further bullying. Felicia describes applying, unsuccessfully for senior lectureship:

I didn't get it [senior lectureship] the first time round and you had to go and get feedback and the feedback I received was shocking: 'you people think you can come here, just because you've got experience elsewhere and that means you're ready to jump the first hurdle.' And it was quite vicious. It was quite vicious – from another woman, a female. So yes, there's racism.

Felicia

The promotions process is an exercise of power as much as it is about recognising achievement. Kathy acknowledges, for example, that "it's not always the person who is the most qualified (...) who is either shortlisted or appointed", that sometimes it is a question of who is perceived to best "fit" in the Department. Felicia's options, therefore, to challenge the racism she experiences when seeking feedback have to be weighed up against considerations of who might be reviewing her application in the future. Malorie was equally unimpressed with the poor feedback she received following an unsuccessful application for senior lectureship:

...the first time, the (...) [male colleague] who gave me feedback [on my senior lectureship application], you know, somebody from the committee gave me

feedback, which was totally useless. (…) he had nothing to say apart from 'yes you had a typo on your application', you know, that's all he said, there was no 'to improve, you need to probably do a little bit…more publications. You need to do more of this." There was none of that, you know. I still get angry about that…

Malorie

Malorie's career trajectory is marked by a series of repeated attempts for promotion at the level of senior lectureship and Reader. She remained a senior lecturer for approximately 10 years before applying for Readership. However, the feedback she received on an unsuccessful application for Readership from a white female manager was constructive. Malorie explained how the manager "went through with me" and gave her "a much more kind of rounded set of feedback (…) in terms of what I needed to do more of".

Lola has been a professor for between 6 and 10 years. She describes an early academic career characterised by not being shortlisted for roles even when, on one occasion, it was for a vacancy in the institution in which she was already based. The feedback she received was also of poor-quality revealing, as the following extract indicates, unjust methods in determining how appointments were made:

… I had a colleague – we were going for the same position [at the university we worked at]. I had a lot more publications, been teaching much longer than she had and we were in competition for the job. She got the job of course and I was told 'well yours is a kind of promotion because you're going from part time to full time' – [laughs] – 'and besides, she's got a baby and she needs the money'…

Lola proceeds to explain that she was on the only Black woman at the university and the above role went to "a younger white woman with fewer years' experience teaching and not as many publications". White women were mentioned in at least twelve of the twenty interviews. While in some cases, they were identified as providing support, encouragement and mentorship as respondents progressed through their career, they also acted as a barrier to promotion or retaliated when appointments were made that they did not agree with. Earlier, I mentioned how Pauline's Head of Department ignored her when Pauline was appointed a Professorship and she was not. Angela recalls a very similar encounter when she accepts a new role within a university department where she shares subject specialism with a white female member of staff:

…she didn't want somebody who she saw as this younger person coming in and kind of stealing her thunder. That's how I saw it because certainly the first few years, she didn't talk to me. She'd walk past me in the corridor (…) If I was young, I could have been knocked back by that but of course I wasn't because this was just a job, I'd come into having had a career (…) [prior to this] so, you know, I could deal with her.

Angela

In other instances, white women served as a comparator, with respondents exemplifying how white c were treated more favourably in recruitment and promotion rounds. Consider this extract from Roberta's interview as she explains the reasoning behind her decision to apply for Senior Lectureship:

...quite a number of my colleagues were promoted to Senior Lectureship because [name of university] is an old university, so Senior Lectureship is also a big deal. And I was looking at...I'm making comparisons: I'm thinking, (...) [Rebecca], for instance she's a Senior Lecturer. She has a first degree. She doesn't have a Masters.

She's never published. She's not doing a PhD. She's a Senior Lecturer. I'm doing my PhD now, I'd already had a publication. I've got (...) [several] Masters. I'm managing a huge portfolio. I am a Lecturer. So, I decided let me apply for Senior Lectureship because I could see there was quite a few of them – white colleagues, who were Senior Lecturers. (...) So, I applied for Senior Lectureship. I was not successful.

Roberta pursues this with her Head of Department and despite evidencing how considerably more experienced she is than Rebecca, is told that she has not met the criteria and to try again the following year. In discussions with Black colleagues also based in her university, she learns that she is not alone; one colleague had been there for over 12 years and never been promoted.

The data consistently points to the role of the Head of Department in shaping and determining academic career progression and development. Consider, for example, Malorie's overview of her attempts to gain promotion:

I've had several Heads of Department over the years, so I met the criteria, but I wasn't sure what sort of support and statement the Head of Department would be writing but (...) I'd always got through the second round because references were sent out for, so I was never turned down at the first round (...) but the Head of Department at that time never sat down with me to say 'oh in your PDR[3], let's look'. Nobody had ever said in your PDR "oh aren't you thinking of going for SL and this is what you might need to do in the next year." There was none of that. And [it was] always very competitive, you know, "oh they get so many and they only allow so much and there is a backlog anyway people who've been waiting", you know, that was the kind of language that I was always being told. But I always applied every year because I thought I want my name to be there so that I'm not disappearing...

Malorie

Malorie's description of events at her university suggests that there are a limited number of places available for senior lectureship. If this is the case, then securing promotion becomes predicated on competition based not only on predetermined measures of achievement but is also based on a comparison with others who happen to be applying that same year. Coupled with what Malorie points to as a lack of encouragement from various Heads of Department, this might in part provide context to her being a relatively new Professor relatively later in life (she is amongst the older group of women in the study).

---

3   Professional (or personal) Development Review similar to an appraisal or review of work performance during which objectives are also set for the forthcoming year.

Applying for Professorship

As indicated in Figure 2 (page 17), the route to professorship is far from linear or straightforward. We are beginning to establish how central the role of Head of Department is in determining whether promotion might be encouraged, deferred or indeed simply rejected. This is especially pertinent at the point of professorship where the Head of Department is usually required to recommend or otherwise endorse applications. Kathy evidences this most powerfully:

...if I didn't have those two Heads of Department I probably would have applied earlier. (...) I think, as my colleague said, yeah, probably (...) [ten years earlier] I would have applied. (...) and also the other thing I thought about is that I had a book out but I needed more, right, and it's taken me a long time. I have about three manuscripts to work on my books, so I thought I'm going to get the next one out first, so that they can't say (...) you know, to make sure they can't say no. But then there are people who were going through [being appointed to Professor] who didn't have more than one book, or some didn't even have a book but they were getting the title.

Kathy

Again, we note unevenness in the criteria used to inform Professorial appointments. Cognisant of this injustice, Kathy describes how she works to mitigate such injustice by having three book manuscripts to her name. This echoes earlier accounts, shared by Felicia and Germaine, about the extra work required and need to prove oneself and demonstrate competence in the context of meetings. It also connects with earlier observations about needing to be better than comparable white colleagues in order to succeed. To be clear, it is the experience of previous unfairness that compels respondents to carry out this additional work and this, combined with unsupportive Heads of Department that has the potential to delay securing Professorship.

Lola has had similar experiences. Frustrated by previous attempts to progress and the subsequent delays, she defiantly makes the decision to take completely different course of action at the point of considering professorship. She refuses to wait for Head of Department endorsement and simply takes matters into her own hands and submits her application herself:

I'd had to fight the education system all the way so, in a way, by the time I'd come here I'm used to fighting and I'm used to seeing that nobody else is here, you know. It's what, 2017 when we have let's call it a first proper appointment [of someone of African/Caribbean heritage] (...) So to go back to my applying for promotion as a Professor. I knew perfectly well that I could wait forever for someone to say 'hey, Lola, I think you've been doing all this work, you should go...you should apply or think of applying or prepare to apply'. Of course, the conversation did not come up. So I had read (...) [the requirements] and I thought, do you know what, I spent ages when I was a Senior Lecturer doing this...I have been gaining experience of all kinds of things in the meantime. I am not waiting any longer. So I – and this is why they find me very difficult – so I applied and I submitted my application, I gave it to my Head [of Department]. I said 'I have applied'. He was a little bit shocked.

Lola's observation about the appointment to her Department, as recently as 2017, of the first academic from an African/Caribbean background is telling and informs her assessment of the institution's lack of commitment in supporting faculty of colour. The shock shown by the Head of Department implies both that her actions represent a break from protocol but also that he is taken aback by her forthright assertion of her abilities. She refuses to be satisfied with her current role and accept that she cannot become a Professor.

When asked about her career trajectory Constance believes that her journey, characterised as it is by a non-linear route, is unusual. However, her experience is not overly dissimilar to those described by other Professors in this study. Constance speaks of studying the criteria for professorship and of being "twice as qualified as any postholder" at the time she applied. Like Lola, she observes the relative lack of Black academics in the university "dotted here and there" and the fact that no Black academic at her institution had "applied for anything close to professorship". Despite detailing in her application a string of achievements including international markers of esteem, teaching and research excellence, supervision of postgraduate students and particular successes which had helped place her institution in high regard in her area of expertise, Constance describes an inexplicably protracted application review process:

… I had to face a lot of questions, more references, more evidence, more this, more that, more that. (…) I never really invoked in the end the Freedom of Information Act which, you know, I could have if it continued. (…) they needed extra evidence, needed some more with this referee, maybe they not find the right referee. It was one thing or the other until then I had to send a couple of letters. 'Can you tell me exactly what more, what kind of information you need, what more do you need?' (…) 'what's the context for all of this?' So, yes I got it [the Professorship] first time, you can say I got it first time round but I don't recall it being something that was just so smooth…

Constance

While pleased to have eventually been appointed Professor, the delay and additional scrutiny, carried out as it was without a clear explanation, tainted her anticipated joy and excitement of success. Unable to identify a clear reason for the extra scrutiny and delay, she finds it difficult to conclude that race was not a factor in shaping the institution's actions but also acknowledges that institutions value only particular, prescribed forms of knowledge and esteem.

The experience of being a Professor

The data suggest that the journey to Professorship is challenging and so too is the actual role. Angela is impressed that she has been able to achieve to this level. However, she points to a distinction between her expectations and the reality. She had prepared herself to foreground teaching and research but instead found herself acting as a kind of "managing director (…) in a very, very hierarchical system". Given this, some respondents express dissatisfaction and a lack of fulfilment with the role. Kathy describes Professorship as "cheap labour" a point evocatively elaborated upon by Lorraine:

I call us the mules and donkeys of the workforce. And it's not getting recognised, you just become good old whatever, good old [Lorraine], she can just...but you don't get the promotion. You don't get the recognition with it – the salary and whatever. So this notion of working hard and paying it fair – it's not a level playing field. You don't play fair. It's all about who you know and it's this unknown...so it's about getting knowledge into the unknown.

There is no joy in her comment. The imagery of mules and donkeys implies a culture of inconceivable workload and stress (see also section on Workload and work stress) infused with a lack of recognition or value in a system that operates unfairly. Success, Lorraine intimates, is about one's social networks rather than actual contribution. Felicia who holds a significant managerial role conveys a similar sentiment as she laments the days when she had the opportunity to carry out research:

... there are days when I wish I wasn't in this job, you know. There are days when I wish I was just an ordinary academic just walking around and doing my research. I would love to be doing what you're doing [referring to me as the researcher]. (...) because there's a lot of sacrifice. I've got a very good (...) friend, she said '[Felicia] why are you sacrificing your research for this?' and I told her, 'I'm doing it because I want them to see Black people can do it too'. I told her. She's the only one I told, 'now look, Black people can do it too, that's why I'm doing it'.

Felicia

There is, for Felicia, a weighty sense of responsibility that extends beyond merely doing her role efficiently but also has a racial dimension. Victoria feels similarly: "I feel, especially because I'm the only Black female Professor in the whole university...I feel this... like I can't let the side down!" Silent though present in both comments is the sense of a critical white gaze that stands in quiet judgment over their actions. It is important to place these assessments in the context of the experiences and comments already made so far. The lack of fellow Black academics within universities, especially at senior levels, along with the challenges, delays, racism and passive bullying they have experienced, means that these respondents are attuned to the ways in which power, whiteness and racism operate in higher education institutions. As the following section elucidates further, the very fact of their existence at the level of Professor is therefore inevitably politicised. It is not neutral and it is in knowing this that engenders in these two women a wider sense of responsibility to other Black people.

Being a Black female Professor

I think as a Black woman in academia, we're all constantly suppressing how we feel, you can't...the way that you respond is not always your immediate response, you have to think about how you say something, how you may come across, how what you're saying may be perceived. Even with your tone of voice or even the tone... to the point where you think about your tones of emails as well.

Lorraine

Lorraine's comment speaks to a wider consideration of the cultural norms and expectations of being an academic in UK higher education institutions, what Jenny

describes as "the performing of the academic". And this performance is predicated not just on the challenges that have been detailed so far in this report but on an understanding that certain forms of achievement, knowledge, ways of being and identities are valued and given priority. Malorie speaks to this when she says, "I was never fully inside the club". Constance provides further detail:

...we're all forced to be a particular kind of academic, to produce only a particular kind of knowledge. (...) the different forms of exclusions that take place in the academic space because we've been...you know, I've had to learn a number of things. We've been taught that only a particular kind of knowledge...form of knowledge or knowledge production works, is of high quality, only a particular form of publication or publishing, you know, ethos or pattern works, not the other kind. And I think that's why we [academics generally] struggle with impact making and so on in the academic space.

Her comment speaks to what Delgado Bernal & Villalpando (2002: 169) describe as an "apartheid of knowledge" in higher education. Describing the system in the US but equally relevant in the UK, they argue that academia is founded on:

...a Eurocentric epistemological perspective based on white privilege and "American democratic" ideals of meritocracy, objectivity and individuality (...) [which] presumes that there is only one way of knowing and understanding the world and it is the natural way of interpreting truth, knowledge, and reality. p171

This lens helps give salience to Germaine's view that "...institutions require you to prove yourself if you don't immediately fit a particular pattern" and Lola's dismissal of the imperative – "all this business", she calls it – to publish in certain journals. She questions who those journals are aimed at and who will read them:

 ...we haven't worked it out enough to understand that this is what we need to do. I mean, my colleagues in the US have that outward facing thing built into their system, so they go out, you know. We don't have that here, so you have to know that it's important to do certain things, no matter what your Department says, you know, yes you can publish a couple of articles in a journal that's only going to be read by a few people and if somebody turns it down, or if you publish elsewhere, actually it doesn't matter, because if you get enough hits on it now, guess what, it's going to count, even though it's not the prestigious journal that your Department thinks you should be publishing in. So there's a kind of lag that we don't talk about, nobody recognises and certainly in the fields that some of us are interested in, [it] becomes very significant.

Sector specific norms and markers of achievement are seen to be restrictive, as lacking in fluidity and an understanding that different approaches might need to be embraced to engage both a diverse academic staff and speak to the diverse populations academics work with. Constance recognises this tension when she acknowledges "... sitting in a space in which the pedagogy rarely present[s] the experience of the very people that we claim to be helping". This analysis helps us better understand the way

Angela strives to distance herself from her academic colleagues as not just borne from her actions and reading but also from the perspective that it is the acts of the institution and white majority culture and norms which have conspired to other and alienate her. Jenny, who also has a concurrent profession espouses a similar view when she says "I don't really think of myself as an academic, I think of myself as a (...) [practitioner] who's found a home in academia..." which enables her to maintain the work she truly cares about.

Awareness of the dominance of this epistemological norm requires careful navigation for those not able to or interested in subscribing to it. Recall, for example, Germaine's careful handling of her white colleague in a meeting where he misread her role. She spoke of how exhausting it was to have to think and operate in this way. So too, Constance confesses that she is not her full self at work. How she presents is based on a studied assessment and awareness of how she is positioned by others:

I'm myself a little bit but not in the way that I would be outside University. And I still think I'm something of a...you know there is a curiosity value to me. People want to see this woman. So what is it? Who is she? What's...? So you feel like you're constantly performing. (...) I also feel that I'm not just representing myself, I'm representing all of us, you know, that look like me because there was no [senior management role] that was Black before now, you know. There was no Black woman Professor. So (...) I can be my professional self and be clear but that playful, (...) happy go lucky self? I can only be it in other places.

Constance

Like Victoria and Felicia, Constance also shares a sense of responsibility about how she presents, how she performs on behalf of a wider Black community. She notes that to be a Black female Professor is sometimes perceived as an oddity, a rarity that attracts the undesired gaze and interest of others though sometimes, as Rosemary finds, this can mean being seen as a source of inspiration to Black students:

...it always used to make me smile when I'd walk into a class and (...) see the look on students' faces and then the look on Black students' faces particularly, sort 'oh my (...) there is a Black woman in front of the classroom who's going to be my Professor!'

Black women's hair and physical embodiment are caught up in this gaze as symbols of racial and ethnic difference[4]. To protect their anonymity, the names of individual women and their particular hair styles are not mentioned here. However, it is worth noting that some of those with natural hairstyles spoke of embracing their look with a pride and a sense of defiance. For these women, their remarks about their hair epitomised a confidence to embrace an identity of their choosing and the ability not be influenced by the normative culture of the academy. Germaine offers her view on the subject more broadly:

4   Note that quotations from respondents in this section do not necessarily speak to how they personally wear their hair. In some cases, respondents are making general observations or speaking about how they wore their hair in the past.

...it shouldn't be challenging for an institution if a woman wants to have her hair in cornrows. It really shouldn't. And I think what's going on with those institutions...so if I'm talking very traditional institutions (...) academia is also very orthodox in many ways, it's what's going on. Is the institution signalling really, in spite of what they might say in equal opportunities policies, that only if you kind of conform to a certain way of manifesting your intelligence or certain way of being articulate, will you be a (...) good academic?

Germaine

Christina makes a similar point, stating "I feel that some people maybe do avoid wearing their hair in a natural style for fear of not progressing in the system". As such, being an academic can be understood as a performance not just of certain forms of knowledge and behaviours but also of appearance and embodying a particular form of being. Constance recognises this but centres her energies elsewhere:

I lost all of that [need to consider appearance] a long time ago. Even at [an institution outside the academy] I was told 'oh you're going [to find it hard] here'. I'd (...) [worn my hair in a natural style] at that time. 'Oh you can't [wear your hair] like that!', '(...), I'm not wearing my hair any other way for anyone'. These days I don't even bother (...) the performance for me is being alert, listening, you know, picking [up] what people are saying: what is it that has been not said, you know, [what] the silence is about, what is it about? (...) it's difficult to completely be yourself because you would lose...I have to be alert.

Constance

In some ways, these cultural norms and expectations which retain weight and bearing despite not being written down as formal policy, place Black female academics in a bind. They sit in intersectional opposition to a majority culture and norms which are informed by white masculinity and white femininity. Even attempting to be yourself garners rebuke. Maxine describes how a white friend labelled her as "very strong" and "very assertive" though admitted that she would not have called her this if Maxine had been the white female VC of the university. For Maxine, this represented an example of how stereotypes and low expectations work to the disadvantage of Black women.

For Kathy, the strategizing, the delays in being promoted, the undermining and passive bullying culminates in a sense of isolation. She talks candidly about wanting to run away from it all:

...what is it [I want to run away] from? It's probably [from] being constantly undermined and (...) it's the atmosphere in the place. It's my colleagues. It's the people who you have to encounter all the time who are brilliant, but they might be brilliant in some area, in area of their research, or science or whatever, but very narrow minded of, you know, or [they] will come out with the most conservative view about something or about race (...). You can see them trying to block you (...) and it's as if you're not allowed....they won't allow you to thrive...

Her ambition would be to leave this version of academia behind and embrace a different reality. It would be great, she says, "to be in a community of like-minded people – a politically progressive and a reasonable sized caucus of Black academics".

Strategies, self-care and survival

While the findings speak primarily to the challenges experienced by Black female Professors as they navigate through the unspoken norms and requirements of higher education, attention must also be paid to the ways in which they are purposeful and agentic in their engagement with the structures, procedures and people around them. There is, however, a balance to be struck here. In many ways, they have been compelled to fight, to work out strategies for survival given, that is, the context in which they have found themselves and given their commitment to their subject specialism. Their strategies can be witnessed by the very fact that they did wait a year and apply again for that role; they persisted despite the poor feedback, the unkind emails, the deliberate avoidance by colleagues and some took a pay cut or a step backwards in the career structure in order to ultimately get ahead. However, it is also useful to explore which strategies Black female Professors themselves identify as having helped them. Regular exercise and a balanced diet are mentioned in one or two instances and one respondent speaks of the "nourishment" books by established Black feminist writers give her. However, there is for this section, a particular carefulness required given the personalised nature of some of the responses. One respondent, for example, describes the importance of having a therapist with whom she speaks "a lot". Others emphasise the importance of self-belief and self-confidence although as we saw with Maxine earlier, there is a risk that this becomes reframed by white colleagues as being very assertive or "very strong".

For some respondents born overseas, there was a strong sense of cultural identity and heritage that served as the foundation for inspiration, affirmation and determination in the face of adversity. Maxine and Felicia express this most evocatively speaking, in one case, of their elders and the respect they garnered back home:

(...) self-confidence is so important. Being confident and being sure of who you are is very, very important. It's very important. I think that's why I like to talk to students and to show them (...) There will always be racism. My father used to tell us that 'remember you guys, you're superior beings'. When we were kids he drummed into us 'you are superior beings'. I didn't understand a word but the mind-set was don't let anybody push you down, you know, don't let anybody push you down.

Felicia

Others stress the importance of a supportive family network and friends. One Professor who had been involved in a legal case emphasized the role of her family in lending support in the lead up and throughout the process: "...my struggle became their struggle. They embodied my struggle. It became theirs and we became intertwined and it became one...". Constance echoes this in relation to some of her friendships: "I have to say that I've had a couple of great friends in my life (...) a place where I can go and have a good cry, a good moan and just really talk...". Lorraine also mentions family and being able to talk with her siblings. For her, it is also important to create a separation between work and personal space:

I've got my (...) [siblings] as well, but I try to...it's not always easy, but I do try to... when I'm not at work...try to switch off. And when I have my annual leave (...) I'll have all of August off. I'm not contactable. Don't contact me! I'm not checking my emails, you know, and two weeks off at Easter again. I know some people, even though they're on leave they'll be checking emails and responding. I need to be able to switch off and it takes me at least a week to switch off, so blocking out times.

Rosemary also raises the topic of emails. In the below extract from her interview she offers an insight to the nature of undermining she experiences and how she manages it:

I think colleagues might say and email things to me, which they'd always write, some of the things they'd always write to any [senior leader]. They're just upset about something, but sometimes I think there's a (...) [tone] to it that they might not have written to a white man. [It's] easier to write the ways that are a bit more disrespectful to [a Black female leader]

NR And how do you manage those moments? How do you feel about those moments?

Well I get pissed off at them but, you know, I mean, life is what it is, you know, I live a very privileged life, so if the worst I have to deal with is, you know, (...) [rude tone] in people's emails, I can cope with that. (...) it shouldn't happen but like really, my life is not one of a great deal of difficulty and sometimes it just makes me laugh, right. I mean, usually it makes me cross for a minute and then you draft the email response that you keep in your draft folders and then two days later you draft the email that you sent, which is always conspicuously polite in my case. I work very hard on my communications (...) I work very hard on them to manage my mood, but I think colleagues [do not] (...) take as much care to manage their mood as they might with a white male [senior leader]...

This text reveals the ways in which Rosemary works to reframe a situation which has annoyed her. We observe how she moves from annoyance to laughter but this requires deliberate or explicit work and effort on her part. Note also, how she handles the email. It is read, she drafts a response and then she goes back to it a few days later and edits it so that it is "conspicuously polite". While we might acknowledge her endeavours as a strategy, it nonetheless takes time and also takes energy. Rosemary remarks, perhaps wryly, at the privilege held by white colleagues who do not have to manage their mood and the content of their emails in the same way.

Other respondents speak of distancing themselves when possible from their university. One respondent explains how she feels undervalued by her institution so seeks support and affirmation amongst her networks outside of the university. Malorie talks of the role that mentoring and coaching play in providing her both with a space to vent and also as an arena to learn strategies to better cope with incidents where she was undermined at work:

[I] talk about mentoring and coaching as a form of resistance. It gave me a space to actually talk about those passive aggressions, those micro aggressions, those…when you're managing a group of white females and males who think they know more than you and the struggles to assert your authority and those sorts of thing. It just gave me a space to talk about that and it gave me some tools to be able to navigate that, is what it did for me.

Several respondents mentioned mentoring. This tended to take the form of an informal arrangement where a senior white academic offered guidance, encouragement and support to the respondent. Often these relationships emerged organically when the respondent was a PhD student or relatively early on in their academic career and sometimes these relationships developed into long-lasting friendships. Rosemary, for example, recalls: "there were white male colleagues I respected and who would be very good at letting me sort of talk through the challenges I was facing…". Jenny also spoke of a white male who had been the Head of Research as being "a consistent support and encouragement" helping to provide her with the "academic tools" she lacked. Despite the challenges at key stages in her career, Constance also remembers the significance of the support she received:

I've had a couple of key individuals in the system that had my back, now retired, you know. They're now retired. They had my back. Had they not had my back, honestly I don't think I would be sitting here like that. They gave me the space (…) to at least start to prove myself.

<div align="right">**Constance**</div>

What is striking about these relationships is the relatively fortuitous way in which they came about leaving unanswered questions about how respondents' careers would have progressed without this support. Roberta ruminates on this very point:

I had a champion very early on in my career who was able to provide me with an opportunity of being in a leadership position. I've got Black colleagues who were never given that opportunity and by the time they retired, they retired as Lecturers and not Senior Lecturers (…)

Advice to future generations

I see so many Black women academics struggling with everyday racism that they face and (…) it takes a bit out of you and a bite out of you and a bite out of you and before you know it, your self-esteem is knocked. Ultimately it affects your mental health. It affects your physical health. You've [now] given them a reason not to promote you or not to whatever. And it's a self-fulfilling prophecy. You've got to find positive. And if positive means I lock myself in my room, I dedicate myself to my work, to my students and then I get my support outside of this environment, that's what I'll do. I'll be strategic with the battles I fight. Don't ignore them, fight them, but be strategic. Take on what you want to take on and what you don't take on, give yourself permission, you don't have to carry every battle. You don't have to fight every battle. Give yourself a break. You're not there as a representative of the

Black voice. Whatever anybody says you are not. Don't take it on because that's one burden too many.

<div align="right">

Not attributed

</div>

Respondents were asked what advice they would provide to future generations of scholars of colour who were considering a career in academia and how they might reach professorship. Given this focus, this advice is presented in a list form but it should be understood that the advice is borne from their own experiences and reflections on their career trajectories or, in some cases, informed by the advice they provide mentees. As with previous sections, where a quotation might reveal the identity of the respondent it is not attributed to an individual.

1   Have a plan and think ahead (Lola, Karen)

2   Line up opportunities to help you execute that plan (Karen)

3   Put yourself in situations where you can learn about the rules of academia and what it means to be an academic (but work out what works for you) (Lola)

4   Just be the best academic you can be and that will help you become a Professor (Maureen)

5   Avoid negativity and try to minimise your exposure to racism

6   Be strategic about which battles you fight

7   Get a mentor or coach

8   If there are no Black female role models or mentors, get advice from whomever you can. Ethnicity does not matter.

"The people who are most useful to you don't necessarily look like you"

<div align="right">

Karen

</div>

9   Do not restrict your options i.e. be prepared to move or work at non-elite institutions

10   Recognise your value or your worth

...as Black women in this society where we don't have a sense of   entitlement. Where you're coming up against all kinds of barriers, it's really important to develop your sense of self-worth, to tap into your power, to be organised, to always give 100%.

<div align="right">

Angela

</div>

11   Know what your deal breakers are when at the point of deciding whether to accept a position.

12   Negotiate before you accept a position and be prepared to walk away if you do not get what you want.

13   At Professorial level recognise your needs and your worth to help you negotiate the salary you want

14   Consider having therapy

15   Read books that will help you learn about yourself (e.g. self-help, professional development, books by Black writers)

16   Surround yourself with people who have a positive mental attitude

17   Develop your connections. Make use of social media. (Angela)

I joined Twitter last summer and it's amazing. I just didn't know. There's just so many people out there, so many Black people out there, I didn't know that!

Not attributed

18   Work out what you want to say and when it is useful to say it. In other places, keep your ideas to yourself.

19   Have support systems – family, friends – that you can talk to

20   The institution may not be a comfortable space to be in. Be prepared to look elsewhere for that support and nourishment.

Discussion

I've got friends who are at [an elite institution], quite senior, where the head of the college says 'if anyone insists I have to do unconscious bias training I'll throw them out of the window'. (...) it definitely is the case that the institutions we work in are, because they're public sector institutions, are reasonably good at having paperwork on those topics of dignity at work or whatever, but it still hasn't been internalised by a lot of people.

Not attributed

There are just 25 UK Black female Professors working at higher education institutions across the UK. This research has sought to explore the carer experiences and strategies of twenty of these Professors. The findings make for dismal reading. They reveal a culture in which the route to professorship is challenging, lacks transparency and fairness and in which only certain forms of knowledge and achievement are valued. Respondents often mention white women either as a comparator or barrier to progress. Respondents note that white women (and white colleagues more generally) seem to progress despite having less experience and fewer achievements than them. While respondents report some instances of explicit bullying, most shocking is the pervasive culture of passive bullying that characterises the day to day experiences of these Professors. This is evidenced by continued attempts to undermine, stereotype and limit the opportunities available to respondents ultimately causing delays in their progression. The passive and covert nature of this bullying should not be understated. As well as having an emotional toil and requiring respondents to engage in careful acts of strategizing and negotiation, it ultimately leads to a sense of isolation and exclusion. Black female respondents discuss not feeling completely able to be themselves in their places of work and of needing to look for support and reward outside of the institutions in which they are based. Much of this strategizing remains invisible to white colleagues and universities although some instances where respondents sought to highlight these injustices they were met with inaction.

Heads of Department are frequently cited, in this study, as a barrier to progression or as simply not being supportive. This is a significant finding in the context of the role they tend to play in endorsing professorial applications. However, in the context of the recent study by Business in the Community and researchers at the University of Manchester, which shows that line managers are often a barrier to the progression of women and Black and minority ethnic employees (Ashe & Nazroo (2016), the findings from this current study come perhaps as little surprise.

Yet, even in the context of the injustices detailed here, it is important to draw attention to the defiance, resilience and determination conveyed in respondents' accounts. These Black female Professors have continued, despite the barriers, to publish, to attract grant income and to excel (though not always highly valued by their institutions). Positively, some are able to point to one or two white men and women who have acted as mentors at key points in their careers offering encouragement and advice as well as opportunities to progress. That these relationships seem to have developed at random – through meeting fortuitously – speaks to the tenacity of these respondents in making good use of this support but also make it difficult to

avoid asking what would have happened if these random forms of help had not been available

In sum, the fact that Black female Professors interviewed for this study have been subjected to and obliged to manage continued injustices speaks to a failure of the sector to take racial justice seriously and to provide workplaces which are safe and based on fairly implemented policies. It is worth noting that these twenty respondents (and the five not included in the study) are those who managed to reach Professorship. There could well be many more if transparency and fairness in the process were improved and the culture of passive bullying and racial microaggressions were addressed.

Recommendations

The response to this report should not be to simply introduce the odd session of unconscious bias training. Indeed, a recent assessment of such training, published by the Equality & Human Rights' Council, has revealed an uneven picture regarding its' effectiveness (Atewologun, Cornish & Tresh, 2018). This contrasts, however, with a recent evaluation of AdvanceHE's two day programme entitled 'Achieving race equality in higher education' which saw respondents improve their understanding of race and racism and, particularly, of racial microaggressions (Aldercotte, 2018). The Advance HE programme, which I helped devise, comprises activities centred on themes such as power and whiteness which are seldom discussed within the higher education context and which are pertinent to the findings of this research on Black female Professors.

Higher education institutions and those bodies which support them need to evidence an explicit and demonstrable engagement with racial justice that extends beyond what is written in policy statements and which serves to radically transform the experiences and success of Black female academics. This requires a fundamental shift in how race and racism are understood. Rather than starting from a de facto position of assumed fairness, institutions must recognise that how they engage and treat Black female academics at each stage of the career trajectory has the potential for unfairness and bias and, in turn, affect their ability to progress successfully to Professorship. That is to say, the under-representation of Black female Professors in higher education must be understood as a failure of the system to support them.

In this section, I make a series of recommendations that institutions can employ to help move toward the radical transformation that is required. Some of these speak directly to UCU, the funder of this study and the union to the sector.

Dissemination and engagement with the findings of the current study

1   UCU should work with Advance HE to disseminate the findings of this research on Black female Professors to universities across the UK focusing in particular on VCs (or equivalent), Directors of Human Resources and Equality Leads or sponsors

2   UCU should facilitate a roundtable discussion of the policy implications of the research with relevant higher education bodies and race equality thinktanks.

Recruitment

3   Institutions should establish and support dedicated initiatives for Black female academics that provide financial stability and career support from postgraduate study through to the early stages of their academic career

4   UCU should fund research to review the way in which recruitment to academic positions takes place across higher education institutions and consider the extent to which these processes are transparent and fair

5   UCU should work with Universities UK, the Russell Group and other relevant bodies to encourage a system of transparency about salaries and to support processes which enable individuals to effectively negotiate a salary increase. This recommendation corresponds with the current government focus on narrowing the gender pay gap and publishing data on the ethnicity pay gap.

Progression

6   UCU should work with Universities UK to establish a clear and transparent progression criteria for each of the steps toward attaining Professorship

7   UCU should fund research to explore an alternative to the current requirement for line managers or Head of Departments to approve Professorial applications

8   UCU should work in collaboration with Universities UK to compel all higher education institutions to publish, annually, the outcome of promotion decisions by gender and ethnicity in the first instance. Where small numbers of under-represented groups prevent the disclosure of this information universities should, nonetheless, state what direct actions they are taking to increase the under-representations of these groups and publish, annually, their progress in meeting these actions

9   In collaboration with Universities UK, UCU should introduce clear, mandatory guidance about the nature and content of feedback during the recruitment and progression process. This should include guidance about how much and which information should be included and what specific actions the candidate must take to improve their application on resubmission

Bullying and harassment

This study pointed to a pervasive culture of passive bullying that served to undermine, ignore and pathologise respondents as well as cause mental distress and upset. In worse case scenarios, this directly interfered with ambitions for progression. The sector must take action to eradicate all forms of bullying and harassment.

10   UCU should, in collaboration with leading higher education bodies, establish a culture of no tolerance to bullying that speaks to explicit and subtle forms of harassment

11   UCU should work with, higher education bodies and institutions to create a culture across the sector where whistle-blowing is encouraged without reprimand

12   UCU, UKRI and Universities UK should fund a campaign with established race thinktanks and Black and racially minoritised groups to introduce a nationwide campaign showing how racism manifests, the impact of this on racially minoritised groups in higher education and the consequences of this to the sector

13   UCU should work with bodies such as UKRI, leading academic funders, research organisations, businesses, charities and government to establish an anti-bullying culture within research teams, institutes and universities

14   Working in collaboration with Advance HE, UCU should call on higher education institutions to introduce mandatory racial justice training for all academics with managerial responsibilities.

    a.   Such training should be a requirement for those wishing to take on a managerial role

    b.   Such training should revisited every three years and should include a focus on white privilege, power and racial microaggressions

    c.   Progress should be determined by an independent examination of the career progression and experiences of Black female academics working under their management

15 UCU (as the principal union to the sector) and Advance HE (as the body supporting the sector on equalities) should lead by example by publishing data on the number, gender and ethnicity of their staff, their progression and attrition over the last five years and their actions for redress.

Cultural norms and research knowledge

16 UCU should encourage greater awareness amongst the sector that the workplace is not safe or comfortable for every academic. Non-attendance, for example, at social events should not be penalised

17 UCU should carry out a consultation with the sector about initiatives that encourage improved understanding of individual working styles and team dynamics. These are practices commonly deployed in other sectors but not currently in higher education. This consultation should include an examination of the feasibility of initiatives such as 360 reviews where employees can provide – without penalty – constructive feedback on the behaviour and practices of line managers and senior staff

18 As union to the sector, UCU should encourage institutions to recognise in workload allocation models, appraisals and other formal and informal time-recording mechanisms, the extra contribution made by Black academics in providing support to each other and to Black students. Where such work is carried out, Black academics should be explicitly recognised and rewarded for such contributions as part of promotion considerations

19 UCU should consider working with learned societies to introduce a dedicated award for Black British academics who have excelled in their area of specialism

20 UCU should work with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and Advance HE to ensure that HR training incorporates detailed and specific training on racial justice and that this training is revisited and updated on a regular basis

21 In order to foster a more culturally inclusive definition of academic knowledge, UCU should consider funding research, in collaboration with the sector research and funding bodies which seeks to capture the diverse range of research activities, broadly defined, currently carried out by academics but which do not sit within current determinants of 'research excellence'. Such research should take account of the purpose of these activities and the profile of academics leading such work.

References

Advance HE (2018) *Equality in higher education: staff statistical report 2018*. London: Advance HE

Aldercotte, A. (2018) *Research Insight – Evaluating the 'Achieving race equality in higher education' programme*, London: Advance HE **www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/ research-insight-evaluating-the-achieving-race-equality-in-higher-education- programme/** (last accessed 11 January 2019)

Ashe, S. & Nazroo, J. (2016) *Racism at work,* CoDE & Business in the Community, Manchester

Atewologun, D., Cornish, T. & Tresh, F. (2018) *Unconscious bias training: an assessment of the evidence for effectiveness*, London: Equality & Human Rights' Commission

Bhopal, K., Brown, H. & Jackson, J. (2015) *Academic flight: how to encourage Black and minority ethnic academics to stay in UK higher education*, Research Report, London: ECU **www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ECU_Academic-flight-from- UK- education_RR.pdf** (last accessed 4 April 2018)

British Educational Research Association (BERA) (2018) *Ethical guidelines for educational research*, 4th edition, London: BERA

Delgado Bernal, D. & Villalpando, O. (2002) An apartheid of knowledge in academia: the struggle over "legitimate" knowledge of faculty of colour, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35 (2); 169-180

Gabriel, D. & Tate, S.A. (2017) *Inside the Ivory Tower: narratives of women of colour surviving and thriving in British academia*, London: Trentham Books

Leathwood, C., Maylor, U. & Moreau, M-P. (2009) *Experiences of Black and minority ethnic staff working in higher education: literature review*, London: Equality Challenge Unit

Oade, A. (2015) Active and passive aggression in workplace bullying, *Life Labs Psychologies*, **https://lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk/users/6695-aryanne-oade/ posts/3730-recognising-active-and-passive-aggression-in-workplace-bullying** (last accessed 11 January 2019)

Rollock, N. (2016) David Cameron's focus on Black and minority ethnic student access is a modest but welcome first step, *Birmingham Brief*, **www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/ thebirminghambrief/items/2016/02/cameron-bme-student-access.aspx** (last accessed 12 November 2018)

Shillam, R. (2015) Black academia: the doors have been opened but the architecture remains the same, in C. Alexander & J. Arday (Eds.) *Aiming Higher: race, inequality and diversity in the academy*, London: Runnymede Trust

Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M. & Holder, A.M.B. (2008) Racial microaggressions in the life experience of black Americans, *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39 (3), pp329-36

Universities & Colle Union (UCU) (2016) *The experiences of Black and minority ethnic staff in further and higher education*, London: UCU

Universities & College Union (UCU) (2012) *The position of women and BME staff in professorial roles in UK HEIs.* London: UCU **www.ucu.org.uk/media/5559/Report-The-position-of-women-and-BME-staff-in-professorial-roles-in-UK-HEIs/pdf/ The_position_of_women_and_BME_staff_in_professorial_roles_in_UK_HEIs.pdf** (last accessed 14 December 2018)