

Building a successful team or network to transform institutions: a discussion panel with change experts

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Transcript

RUTH: Welcome everybody to today's webinar. You are all very, very welcome to join us. My name's Ruth Wells. I'm the membership and network services manager here at Advance HE. And I'm just here welcoming everybody to the session and keeping, just going through a little bit of housekeeping. To start with today, the session is being recorded. That will start when we formally start the session. The chat for participants is not activated. If you would like to ask a question today, there is a Q&A icon, at the bottom of your screen, if you're using a desktop, and at the top of the screen on a tablet. If there's any technical problems, raise your hand and one of my colleagues will get back to you on chat. They will be able to hopefully sort anything out that might be a problem. We will be posting links to resources and other events in the chat. You'll be able to use them. Again, the session is being live captioned. You can either press the closed caption button or there's a link that's appeared in the chat. Everybody is very welcome today. We have an event panel. I'm really looking forward to hearing what they've got to say. And everybody is incredibly welcome. We would like to go through technical and housekeeping information. You are using Zoom today. Microphone is camera are muted and turned off. You don't have to worry about that. We have the Q&A button at the bottom of the screen, if you're on a desktop. It's at the top if you're on a tablet, which is an opportunity to be able to ask questions. Our chair, Dom Jackson-Cole will be able to ask our panellists. The session is being recorded. If you have any technical problems, please do raise your hand. One of the Advance HE team will be able to get to you to ask any questions. We will give it another 30 seconds, as the numbers haven't quite settled yet. This is our first member benefits session of 2022. There are lots more planned throughout the year. We will be posting links to the other events that we are hosting through the year, but everybody is very welcome to join them. They're on all sorts of topics, including some regional-specific and event, if you're not based in the UK and having listened to our panellists today, I can tell you Art is based in Toronto. It's minus 17 Celsius today! That seems a bit mind blowing if you're based in the UK. I think now the numbers have settled. I will pass over to Dr Dom Jackson-Cole. I hope that everybody really enjoys this session. Thank you very much.

DOM: Thank you Ruth.

DOM: Welcome everyone. Thank you very much for coming. This panel discussion is entitled - building a successful team or network to transform a situation. It's a discussion panel with change experts, hand-picked change experts, which I'm very happy to be hosting. My name is Dom Jackson-Cole, I'm the senior adviser at quality and diversity and inclusion at Advance HE. This event is part of the Advance HE connect benefits series. It's under the theme of leading change through teams and networks and as Ruth said, this event is being recorded. This event aims to support leaders and institutional change makers by diving deep into the best examples and practice of managing change through building effective teams and networks. So the aspect of social capital, of teams and networks is what we are highlighting today. We have four fantastic guests and panellists today, who will talk about their projects, their experiences and they will share tips on building and managing and using teams and networks. So how will the event run? First of all, I will introduce the guests and ask them questions about their projects, their learning from, the engagements and tips about managing teams and networks. Then this will be followed up by

questions from you, from the audience. So please do not hesitate to pop your questions in the Q&A section. My colleagues and I will be monitoring the Q&A box for questions. Our guests are Professor Art Blake, Professor David Richardson, Maryane Mwaniki and Dr Meera Sabarwal. Professor Art Blake is a Professor in the department of history in Toronto Canada. Art is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research publications and teaching address the issues of belonging and connection through US urban and cultural history, with particular interest in race, gender, communications and sexuality. Art is the director of the dimensions programme at Ryerson, which he will talk about. My first question is because the audience may not know exactly what the dimensions project is all about, so my understanding of it is that it's a project to help diversify research in Canada. Could you tell us more about this and your role with it and successes so far.

ART: Thanks so much, Dom. Thanks for the introduction and good afternoon to everybody in the UK or further afield. So, the Dimensions Project is a programme that is run by the Canadian federal government. It's sponsored by our three major academic research granting agencies. It has developed over many years of people looking at programmes like sea change and Athena swan, other programmes in some of our partner countries that we're in touch with in terms of research networks across the world. And seeing the efforts that have been made to initially address the underrepresentation of women in stem disciplines. And most of those programmes started out in that fashion. They have since become more diverse themselves. So, the dimensions pilot programme, we're at the end of the two-year pilot phase, of a Canadian version of addressing those issues of equity, diversity and inclusion in university and college based academic research. What's difference with the Dimensions Programme is that it isn't just focussed on STEM. It's focussed on every discipline, every area of research inquiry. We also are committed to focus on all five of what are referred to in Canada as equity deserving groups. That is indigenous people, women, racialised people, people with disabilities and LGBTQ plus people. It's a very ambitious programme. So, I am the director, my university, of our pilot team. So, that's what Dimensions is. Some of you who have been involved in efforts like equity charters Athena swan will have a rough idea what's involved in that. One of the differences in Canada is that the research funding that most of us academics in Canada apply for is all federal government money. But education itself is run by the provinces. Sort of the equivalent in the US of the states. Sometimes there are complicated relationships about what the federal government can say or do, but having to be mindful and respectful of the provincial government's control over education as a whole. So that's what Dimensions briefly is about.

DOM: Thank you. A follow up question, if I may. Do you already see certain changes and successes of the programme?

ART: Yes. I do. One of the things that has been really excellent about the running of the pilot stage of the Dimensions Programme is that there is a discreet cohort of institutions that applied to be part of the cohort and were accepted into the cohort. So, Ryerson is one of those universities. The Dimensions team in out Ottawa, so people, I think Natalie here today, they work at one of the major granting agencies. What they've done is that they have kept the cohort in touch with each other. So, one of the major benefits that I think all of us have immediately found is that as the cohort of institutions from coast to coast to coast across Canada and across different types of institutions is that we already feel that we're a team, which is quite an achievement. So, 17 institutions isn't too many. Each of us have been able to share through different cohort events some of the challenges that we've come up against some of us are in areas of the country where

there is a great deal of demographic diversity and a large population like me in Toronto. Other institutions are trying to address diversity and inclusion within catchment areas that are quite homogeneous. So that's just one example of the different circumstances in which pilot institutions find them. But that building of a sense of a team, working together to build something that we hope will be a permanent fixture in Canadian higher education is already, I think, a major win for the pilot.

DOM: Thank you. Our next guest is the vice Chancellor of the University of east of Anglia and a member of the Advance HE board among many other duties. David's academic background is in micro biochemistry. He will talk about institutional and sector wide work with harassment. My question to you is for you to describe your involvement in this work, the anti-harassment work. I know that you started with anti-sexual harassment at your university and moved to sector-wide movement. Can you talk about this work and the successes of this work? If you could unmute yourself.

DAVID: Thanks very much Dom and great to see you. Yes, we've worked together before. Yes, I will talk in the change in the culture work tackling violence against women, harassment and hate crime. Then I talk more about tackling racial harassment. After becoming vice Chancellor of UEA in 2014, I became aware of what I thought were difficult experiences that particular at my university were experiencing, stupid and talking to students and talking to students of sexual harassment and violence against women. I pledged that as the new leader of the university, this was something that I wanted to tackle and actively tackle and lead and work with them in partnership on tackling. But this was endemic across universities. It's challenging for all sectors. But I felt like universities needed to call out this problem. Fortunately, so did some others in the higher education sector. Universities UK put together a change in the culture taskforce precisely to produce guidance for the sector around tackling violence against women, harassment and hate crimes on university campuses. Relatively young vice Chancellor at the time. I think you used the word "change expert". I was far from that! I'm not sure I still am a change expert. We're always learning about how to bring about change. I was very clear that to bring about cultural change, the vice Chancellor leader in the institution has to lead and think about the teams to develop and put in place to do that. So as part of that group, we advocate aid whole institutional response led by the leadership, by the vice Chancellor, but working in strong partnership with the students. We did put advice out for the sector. That was published in 2016. One of those was to acknowledge the problem only by acknowledging the problem and lead change and be brave about that and put in place better reporting systems. I think I would see that as one of my successes because we did and many other universities did. And had to prepare the governing bodies for the possible reputational hit when you did that. When you put in better reporting systems, that people feel safer with, inevitably the universities that lead the way on, that will see reporting numbers go up. Helps you identify the scale of the problem and then bring about the change that you want. My university was at the forefront of that. Sure enough in the league table of reported incidents, later on, we were very high. My governing body became nervous about this. That's when the power of partnership helped. The students said no, this is important. This shows that we've now got a good reporting system in place. Now we can know the extent of the problem and lead change and use this as the baseline. So, I would see that as a success. I would see areas where it wasn't so successful. It became associated with entirely a focus on tackling sexual harassment and violence against women. But it was providing guidance for tackling other forms of harassment. I would say that the violence we see on university campuses against women, even up to now proves we have a long way to go. But

what was clear when we did a review was that we needed to do more work about racial harassment in particular. I reached out to universities UK and said that there's real big issues. I've been on record, including on BBC One, as calling out the sector for being institutionally racist. And I believe that we need an action-based approach to tackling that. So, as you know, Dom, with the help of University UK we founded a group to put in place of how to tackle racism in an active anti-racist action, not words way. The guidance has helped other vice Chancellors have the confidence, white vice Chancellors unfortunately most of the leadership of UK universities is white. That needs to change. But it's not going to change overnight. But those of us who don't have the lived experience of racial harassment need to step up and lead the culture change. I think that guidance we've given is helping others do that. My sense is the feedback I get from vice Chancellors is that we are beginning to see the universities embracing that and governing bodies brave enough to embrace it. I think a success there is actually helping other leaders recognise their role in leading change and stepping up to the plate to do that. But challenges, if I just put in challenges. I think what I have learned is what a difficult area this is and how many people, people of influence, including who have political power, deny that these issues exist at all and there can be very toxic environments you find yourself in for those that simply deny things that I think we need to acknowledge, such as white privilege, the need to decolonise universities, particularly their curricula and the need to understand and understand critical race theory. But these are things that I advocate, that we need to do to bring about change. But there are many organisations who actually are really quite opposed to that sort of language.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you very much. That will allow us to talk about these issues and how to tackle them through teams and networks. Our next guest, Maryane Mwaniki is the head of the employer engagement at London school of economics. She is responsible for strategic leadership and engagement of organisations across multiple sectors. She's also a very successful therapeutic coach. And she will talk about her work with the embrace staff network, which she chairs at LSE. Could you tell us about the network Embrace Network. How it has evolved and what has been its achievements and particularly the role it played in the culture at LSC since 2020 since the Black Lives Matter movement?

MARYANE: Yeah, sure. So, it's the staff network that's really focussed on addressing racial inequalities within the institution. So really looking at that across the key pillars in terms of people. These are staff, from academics through to our professional services staff. Then looking at it from a research stand point. Also looking at it from the stand point of actually within the classroom, within the experience for the students, how can we tackle racial inequalities within the institution. So for us, it's an exciting, challenging time. Because especially in 2020, with the murder of George Floyd and then the whole BLM, Black Lives Matter, movement and then Covid 19 - we had to grapple with several pandemics. As in racism being a pandemic. Then Covid itself. So for me, my job was one, what is our purpose, as a staff network? What does it look like in the current climate? And how do we ensure our message is clear at a time where there's a lot of noise? And there's a lot of noise mentally, psychologically, in all sorts of ways. And so, I had quite a tough time because it's when I stepped into the role of chair, for this staff network. I had a volunteer base of staff of 20. Each with their own responsibilities and different levels of seniority. Some of them managing huge teams. Some of them not managing any teams. Yet, I had to take on that role of leadership. And knowing that within this climate of this staff network, I'm leading thighs individuals to be able to volunteer their time to tackle something as big as racism that essentially, they shouldn't be required to tackle it. But yet they are putting their passion, their talents to be able to achieve this

huge goal. For me, one thing I recognised was actually we need to be clear on what we're trying to achieve. And how much we can achieve. How to align purpose with actual capacity and resources. And so, we had to spend a lot of time in being able to come up with just a clear set of objectives for that year. For us, we were able to pin point our focus as a staff network was around really looking at staff recruitment. Looking at staff progression. And looking at staff retention. There were many other things we could tackle such as bullying and harassment, decolonising the curriculum, Covid 19, student experience, staff experience. All of that. We had that on the list. But we thought where can we start? And we'll pick at this slowly. With that, we had to think about well who are our allies and who are our enemies? And how do we start a conversation with both and how do we start to build visibility in terms of us as a staff network, what we're trying to achieve? And so, we thought, we're only human. And the best way for us to start building visibility and to speak to our allies and also those who consider themselves as enemies of our staff network is just to have conversations. So, actually, we divided the pie and we started to find ways of building our power bases. So, talking to our pro-vice Chancellors, our senior management team. Going in to talk to staff at the very bottom of the organisation and then those at the middle. And starting to hear their thoughts and their views and all of that stuff. Then finding a way of articulating the need for the institution in a way that everyone could understand. So, that's what we did. My role as a leader was to recognise one, these are volunteers. They're not getting paid. So actually, passion seems to be the currency and how do you keep that passion going? I had to spend a lot of time getting to know each individual. Getting to know how this volunteering opportunity would support their own individual needs and desires. And also, what we could do to ensure that they could continue to contribute at whatever capacity was possible for them. So, one policy we had was let's just be transparent. If you're burnt out, say you're burnt out. You can step out. You can do you and there will be a place for you when you're ready to step back in. Having that policy of - we can only do as much as we can do. So that really helped. I think also recognising when you have a big volunteer base of 20 staff, recognising that although we're all passionate about tackling racial inequalities it doesn't mean that we're all going to like each other to the same capacity. Because we're human beings. So, I had to recognise the process of getting used to each other, understanding what we liked and didn't like. Then set tolling a point of actually we do have a shared identity here. It goes back to the typical models of team norming and storming and then eventually performing. Taking that consideration. Doing all this with the back drop of the George Floyd murder. The back drop of Covid 19. The back drop of everyone learning to talk about race and to feel comfortable about race. What really brought us through that time and what helped me as a leader was just about being real. Let's be real about what's frustrating about being in this team. Let's be real about what's exciting. Let's be real about what we don't quite know. Let's just be real. I think that's a true marker of leadership in terms of that true authenticity, but also providing the team the opportunity to be real about what they're struggling with as well. I think that really helped us. It also meant that when we're going out to people of influence, our allies or our enemies, we were able to take that authenticity out there. It meant that we could be curious about their struggles in being able to work with us. And also finding more flexibilities around the way that we work. That's the journey that we've had. It's been exciting, but also very challenging leading a volunteer base that's supposed to be a team, supposed to drive big institutional changes without pay. Yet driven by a currency of passion through that.

DOM: Brilliant. Thank you very much. There's definitely a lot there to unpack and talk about your successes how you have managed this to make people listen to what you have to say. Our last but not least guest is Dr Meera Sabarwal, who is reader in international relations in Soas university of

London. Meera is interested in questions of higher education policy and practice particularly with racialised inequalities and academic governance. She was the lead of decolonising Soas learning and teaching tool kit, which has been influential in the sector's efforts for equalisation of the curriculum. I will ask Meera about this. Can you tell us about the impact of the decolonisation group and the tool kit both inside the institution and the sector and your role with this.

MEERA: Yes, thank you Dom. Hi everyone. Nice to see you. And Dom, if it's OK for me to mention. Dom was very much part of the working group during his time at Soas and it was great to work together on that. So, the decolonising working group became active in about 2016/17. Initially at quite a low base. Actually, it was an initiative of our incoming pro-director for learning and teaching. So, the equivalent of a pro-vice Chancellor in a different institution. Pro-director for learning and teaching. She was responding to demands from the incoming students' sabbatical officers to decolonise the curriculum. This was the Oxford movements, groups in UCL, asking why is the curriculum white. This was being discussed at Soas as well. She initiated the working group to just kind of try to figure out what all of this would actually mean, like what would it mean to put this into practice. I got involved because I was interested in the research, in it from a research angle. But I hadn't thought about it a lot. So, I - similar to David, I was not in any way experienced with this whole thing began. But of course, it gathered a lot of momentum. I ended up helping to shape the decolonising vision. That was eventually accepted by our academic board in 2017. The board of trustees became aware of the programme and endorse today broadly as a direction of travel. Then it became strategically front loaded into what the institution was doing. Then we were able to get resources to support the development of the tool kit, some funding for the group. And we ran the group as a network of staff and students from across different areas of the school. Membership was open to all. It was just a Google group that you signed up to. All of our documents, minutes, budgets, plans, assisting were available on a Google drive, open to the whole university. We had regular meetings. You know the agenda was open. People would bring different things. Probably the high point of the work of the group was in achieving that level of funding, the resource, the development of the tool kit, which we led along consultative process on. And the sharing of that tool kit with other institutions. So, in my capacity as chair this afternoon group between 2017 and more or less 2020, I did a lot of talks, lectures, presentations on the tool kit. Dom and I were involved in delivering a lot of training to staff. So, alongside the materials that we were developing, certain things were embedded, if you like, into the institutional structure of Soas. One was compulsory training around this and some disabilities issues. Another was the changing of the questions in student evaluation of modules to include questions about how included students felt in terms of the curricula and pedagogical aspects of their courses. Another was a change to quality assurance in asking programme convener, not telling them what to do with the tool kit, but asking them whether they had engaged with it and how that conversation had gone in the programmes. So, that reporting function has now been embedded into some of our quality assurance mechanisms. So, our quality assurance committee receives regular reports from departmental learning and teaching coordinators, for example, on this wider question of decolonisation. That's also rolled into the racialised awarding gap and other things. So, I would say, of course, it sounds moderately successful in terms of what we've done. We are all aware of the reach of the decolonising the curriculum campaign I suppose, campaign maybe isn't the right word. That's partly an odd conjuncture in so far as the biggest publicity for the campaign was negative. It was seized upon by the right-wing press as part a culture war and a moral panic around the loss of knowledge in institutions. But actually, at the institutional level, there's been a lot of receptivity to it, from three major constituencies - students, particularly students of colour, who are interested in

learning more about the world and understanding the roots and the nature of the forms of discrimination they encounter. Also, their own histories and those entanglements. Staff, who are interested in this from both intellectual and pedagogical angles. And the academics seeing the links between the pedagogical expectations of what we have and relations between the larger historic structure. I feel like we've had a moderate amount of success. As always things in universities, the conversation shifts. It moves on. A different configuration of people leading the institution now. The work evolves. The group exists as a network and has a dedicated core of staff from across the institution.

DOM: Brilliant. Thank you. You are very modest. But actually, I think your work has had ripples across the sector or in large parts of the sector. Last year, I did research on to what extent universities were engaging with the decolonisation agenda. And comparing that to 2020. In 2020 only 19% of universities engaged with that. By the second half of 2021, it was as many as at least 76% of universities. A lot of them quoted the Soas tool kit. It has had its ripples in the sector. Brilliant. So, thank you very much for your introductions. Those are all I personally feel that those are all very important projects that you're working on. But you have been - there's a lot of interesting projects in the sector. Why we have chosen you is because of the network you've been building, the teams you've been using to progress those projects. And so, my next question to you is about if you could tell us how you have built, how you have developed and used those teams and those networks, both those official networks and unofficial networks, how you have curated the social capital to make the projects successful? So that the role of those teams in making the project successful, because it can be just one person. But it's a kind of a team effort. So, that's my question to you. Is there anyone who would like to start? I very much welcome you having a discussion, bouncing off ideas with each other. That's absolutely fine as well. Is there anyone who would like to start? Or shall I nominate you? I can nominate you, I will go in reverse order then, even though Meera just stopped talking. I will ask you to talk again.

MEERA: Sure. Well maybe I will just elaborate a bit more. I think we were particularly fortuitous at Soas. I will talk about the team and the network. There were different factors that came together at once that made us particularly effective. So yes, there was the wider historical context, things going on in South Africa and that sort of thing in the air. We had our pro-pro-director for learning and teaching who was interested in it and committed to it and open to it. She was really open minded from the very beginning about what it could mean. She wanted very much to turn it from a slogan into practical action. Without her, particularly as part of the senior management, it was in a very intellectual sense very interested in it, I don't think we would have progressed in the way we did. We had a senior leadership team at the university more generally who, they were initially hesitant. I think they understood that it could become part of our positioning, let's say in the sector. And once they understood that, they worked much harder on incorporating it into wider parts of the institution. Some of this caused discontent amongst the students, who perceived it as a more radical agenda. One of the tensions we were constantly navigating was has this agenda been co-opted. Is this part of the marketisation of the neoliberal university or is this a bottom-up driven activity? We also at Soas, our area is about the legacies of empire. A lot of staff were well versed in a number of the debates, theories, issues pertaining to this and had been thinking about these for quite a long time. We had a diverse, committed group of students who were very on the ball. At least from my own part, I felt like I could do things in this area, because I had a research background in it. I had been thinking about what it meant to decolonise international relations and research in this area for a long time. I felt personally comfortable handling the terminology, its

baggage, all those issues. And understanding, I suppose, some of the pit falls that I anticipated would come up. And which did manifest. So that was a very specific kind of conjuncture. I know that when I have spoken to colleagues in other universities, trying to do similar work, they may have one or more of these elements but sometimes they've struggled because the senior management isn't interested. Or the students aren't that interested. Or other colleagues maybe are not fully on board. So, I think you need a bit of luck really to get these things through. I think the other thing is that we also tried as far as possible to manage the group horizontally. Although it was staff leading it, and I managed to get an institutional buyout. Because in a way at one point we refused to do it on a voluntary basis and that was critical. We tried to ensure along the way that every document, every policy, every statement was consultative. It was released to everybody as a Google doc. They could comment on it. Whilst not loads of people did that, they knew they could. The tool kit, we work shopped it four or five times before we published it in different departmental groupings. We did things with the students. Maybe it's a document that took a long time to come out in bureaucratic terms. But I did feel that it reflected a sort of consensus position about what it was that people were prepared to sign up to, and what they were prepared to do. And so on and so forth. I think those things, apart from some really great individuals, such as yourself Dom and Carol, and we had colleagues from disability and well-being, libraries, all really involved. That was good, but I would hesitate to say that would be easily replicable on a different level.

DOM: There's a lot to unpick, but what's interesting is the idea of luck. I wonder if this resonates with others. I will ask Maryane to tell us how you work with the network, built it up and use today and also maybe comment on the aspect of luck?

MARYANE: Yeah, so, I guess just to give a quick overview, so the staff network, what we've been able to achieve in the space of one academic year has been that we've gotten HR to actually take forward a race equality pay gap review across the institution. It's a huge win, because we know that any form of review like that will inevitably show serious gaps in there. It would then lead to some form of action needing to be taken. We've also been able to really review the recruitment process. So, at LSE, I, which is the case with most higher education institutions, we have a massive underrepresentation of black minority ethnic staff. I won't say senior, middle to senior positions. And then, a massive overrepresentation specifically, very specifically, of black staff in the lowest positions. So, bands one onwards. Right? And so, we as a staff network really wanted to address this. And wanted to start some sort of tangible actions towards change. In the course of one academic year, we were able to establish a fair recruitment adviser scheme, where we would have a black or minority ethnic member of staff who would sit on recruitment panels for bands 7 upwards, within LSE. That's a huge change for the institution. It requires buy in from all the recruiting managers, department managers, to allow that to happen. And also, we were able to establish a BME mentoring scheme to support staff in terms of their sense of progression and also retention. So that's something that we established as a voluntary staff network. As I mentioned, it's all running on a currency of passion, rather than actually being compensated in any way or remunerated. The way that we achieve that, because there's not that much in a day and we all have our core work. It was recognising what is it that we all want to do, so that if our friends or children came into the institution, they would feel a change. So, we had to be clear around what does our legacy look like. That was the thing that drove us wanting to do this. But also, I guess what contributed to the success was actually recognising that you know what - this isn't our responsibility. Yes, we are the ones who are passionate about doing this, but actually, it's the senior leadership and everyone in the institution that needs to achieve this. So actually, we need to

go out there and say to everyone - tackling racism is everyone's problem. So how are we going to do that? And so, as a staff network, we really created an environment where everybody could come and they could find a little thing that they could do to make a difference. So, we opened up and had coffee mornings and coffee breaks to have conversations, quizzes and all that fun stuff. But also, we created opportunities where we could help to run focus groups on behalf of academic departments or divisions, who didn't quite feel they had the capacity or the language to start talking about race. So, we said you know what - let us run the focus groups for you. You still do the hard work, but we will be the visible faces that would be comfortable in taking forward those conversations. We invited people to allow us to sit on different meetings and provide that cultural lens to be able to support it. So, it meant that we could be there during HR discussions. We could be there during meetings with the comms teams. We could be there during meetings with the directorate just to lend a voice. By doing that, that really meant that everyone started to understand that we were friends and not foes. Everyone started to understand well, how do we link this race thing to our everyday piece of work? And how could we get to the stage where actually we're not filled with this idea of guilt and this race thing is something that we all feel guilty about. Let's just spend time talking about the guilt and shame. There's time for that. But in the middle of the guilt and shame what's the tangible work we can do today so support this piece of action? That process of being visible, talking about things, and facilitating discussions as a voluntary group has been something that's been at the core of us being able to achieve all those things that we've achieved. But also, us ensuring that we had buy-in from senior leadership. So as a staff network, we were able to have our COO, who was actually our senior management sponsor. That really did the world of good for us. If you got the COO saying that I am backing this staff network, it means that it opens doors. People are willing to listen to you. That massively contributed to our ability to be heard. Because it's not that we were saying anything different. It's just that when you have that backing from senior leadership, it does make a difference. It meant that we could be connected with other directors across the school as part of that. I think just timely on that, also just recognising the importance of visibility. For my staff network I wanted to ensure that we were visible as possible so people could see us as a credible staff network, a staff network made of people, rather than just a network that just sheltered and said, please we need change. But they are normal people who work with us. This is my colleague who does this. This is my colleague who does that. So, actually we made sure, LSE have LSE staff news that goes out every week. So, we said you know what, we need to make sure that every now and again, we just feature in staff news. We make sure that someone in our network just features in staff news. So, LSE have a thing they called 60 seconds with. In those 60 seconds you talk about who are you, your favourite pet, your favourite holiday. We would make sure regularly one of our committee members featured in there. People could see oh, this staff network would keep going on about racial equality, they are normal people who enjoy walks in the park and a coconut chai latte and go on holidays. They're just like us. That really helped to facilitate the conversation because people could just see us as people. I think that did go a long way. It made it a little bit easier for colleagues to want to talk to us about the thing that they never talk to us about as well.

DOM: Brilliant. Thank you. I can already start seeing some themes emerging from what Meera and Maryane said about the importance of leadership and openness. Meera said about the Google docs available to everyone. And you have penetrated the institution to make sure that people are just normal people invested in this. It doesn't take a superhero to fight for the cause. I wonder if that resonates with you David?

DAVID: It absolutely does, Dom. It's actually worked out quite well to go this direction round. Because in some ways, I was coming in from a different place when I was trying to do. Maryane and Meera have talked about getting senior leadership to lead and that's what they should do. I was coming in as a senior leader trying to gauge my university and get them all to work with me to change the culture. And by the way, I think we mustn't lose that point about when you change culture that culture change must survive leadership change as well. That's point of what we're trying to achieve. That's what I want to do. So, there were opportunities and challenges there. There was some good practice in some places on the universities. Good initiatives on decolonising the curriculum. Good initiatives around blame ambassadors. Many more I could name. But very often they were just in parts of the universities, not in all the university's areas. In some schools but not others. There was denial of the problem and need to do anything about it, if you deny the problem, self-evidently you don't want to be active. And you have more important things to look at, so said some of the people at the time. I was trying to convince the board that this was an institutional priority. Convince my executive team that it was an institutional priority. Work with the senior leadership teams, the heads of school, heads of professional services to get them to align with the sorts of things I wanted to do. And work closely and in partnership with the students. Taking a few of those, obviously, you know, now in my eight years of vice Chancellor, those early days. These were teams that I inherited. They weren't shaped to tackle these issues. So, I did have to evolve teams. There were blockers. People who were never going to come on board with this. You needed to find ways to, well, recognise that. First two months to bring them on board, but if they can't come on board, you know, candidly, you have to find ways of actually removing them from the team and getting in place a team that will take you to where you want and need to go. You need to recognise that there is not always the expertise. Certainly not at the start of this. When I was wanting to tackle violence against women in the first example I gave, I had an all-male executive team. That's not the place you want to start from. I don't actually. Now I've got more women on the executive team than men. But I have an all-white executive team. I need to evolve that. You don't have the lived experiences that you need either at senior leadership team level or at counsel level. One needs to actively address that. You do need to bring that lived experience in. You have to set up other teams that don't formally exist in the infrastructure of the university. I set up the vice Chancellor's tackling racism taskforce, which brought people from all over the university, staff and students, who didn't have that much experience of senior leadership actually. But great refreshing, full of ideas, full of good initiatives. Made them very prominent, you know, come in and address the senior leadership team. Giving them authority through the fact that I was co-chairing it with a colleague who has the lived experience of racial harassment. And then, working through what we wanted to work through, and implement. And people really then understanding around the broader senior leadership that this was an institutional priority because I never let it go. You know, senior leadership team meeting wouldn't happen without me talking about it and getting updates on progress and likewise with the governing body. I did have to evolve the HR division from what you might call an old-style HR division into what is now a people and culture division. I brought in new leaders. We have a director of people and culture and people who had experience of leading culture change. As I said, I haven't. I'm a microbiologist. I'm good at leading a university through Covid because I understand microbiology. But I'm not an expert in any of these other areas that I lead. But I know I can lead change and I need to get those people who can help me do that. That's how I work really. I have a sector leadership position. So that's just talking a bit about within the university. You know, I have tried to use the networks that we have access to nationally to lead that change. I mentioned trying to take vice Chancellors with me and get them to lead within their universities. Perhaps so that those that are trying to gauge senior

leadership teams that their vice Chancellors will get a better response from vice Chancellors. I do that through networks like the universities UK. But actively get on what is now the virtual platform. I get lots of invitations to talk on these topics and I accept them when I can, within limits. I get out there and use any pre-existing networks and hijack it, if you like, and start getting that message out there. I've even been invited by other governing bodies of other universities to talk to them about these issues. And how those governing bodies might engage with them. That's quite, you know, I don't think many vice Chancellors go to other governing bodies to talk about these issues, but they're there. You can invite yourself. So, that's the - you know, just the approach that I've taken, where you can use existing teams and evolve them, when you need to make quick progress and that evolution is too slow, get a taskforce in place. I've done that on more than one occasion for some of the challenges and culture changes that I wanted to bring about.

DOM: Brilliant. Thank you. So, I, if I can ask a follow up question to this. So, I think what I'm hearing is that bringing in the right people is very important. But what if you don't have the right people? What if they're an obstruction?

DAVID: Well, that's where you have to get into people management. Inevitably, not inevitably, it shouldn't be inevitable. There are people who provide obstruction. I talked about people often we think they're outside the sector who deny some of the problems you're trying to tackle. But certainly, you find people in the sector who at least don't want to give it the same amount of energy and resource that's you want to give it. At the end of the day, if this becomes an institutional priority, you have to talk to them. If they're not willing to sign up to that institutional priority and do what you wish, you have to have conversations about their position at the university. That's a difficult conversation you have to have as a vice Chancellor. It usually never gets that far. Teams can evolve. And someone just decides they want to step off the particular leadership position they're in and go and do other things in the university. But sometimes it does. If it is about changing the culture, that's the difficult side of change. The culture, where you have to rebuild a team if it's not got the right approach and culture in itself, that's going to bring about the wider culture change that you want around the entirety of the university. That includes the governing body. If you look at the governing bodies of universities of eight years ago, when I started off this leadership, they weren't prepared to acknowledge the problems that we know are in the sector. So, the governing bodies themselves had to evolve and become more diverse and understanding of these challenges. I don't think they're there yet. You need to be active about that and we're recruiting for three new members of the governing body. It's a chance to try to get people that will share your vision for the culture change that you want to bring about in your institution.

DOM: Thank you. So again, I think that resonates with the previous messages about this visibility. You said the taskforce was very visible. You mentioned the obstructions and Maryane mentioned enemies earlier on. I will ask Art how you've been building, creating, using your team, your self-assessment team and maybe less official networks. And maybe how have you been dealing with the obstructions?

ART: Thanks Dom. Thanks everybody. It's so interesting to hear these different experiences for sure. I think my context at my university, I shared some of, well Meera described the beneficial contacts of having certain people already in place and already keen to become institutional change. You mentioned your pro-director of teaching and learning and without her real, genuine commitment, it might not have all progressed as well as it did. I think, at my university, I benefit the

hugely in the team building that I've done around the dimensions programme from the work since 2012 of Dr Denise O'Neill Green, who was brought to the university originally from the US. She became our vice provost and subsequently our Vice President of equity and diversity and inclusion. That was by a prior provost at the university. Some of our names for our positions are slightly different. We have a university president and then the provost is the person that is really the academic lead. So sets the tone on all the academic leadership for the university. Back in 2012 we all someone who was one of our most senior leaders who created a new, very, very senior position, to address issues of, that fall under equity diversity and inclusion and accessibility. There's been a lot of work done on that front. But that work has been focussed on bringing about changes in mostly focussed on hiring. Things like providing evolving and increasingly up to date and effective training for faculty members serving on search committees, regular search committees. They're hiring a new faculty member of their own department. Other types of meetings that might be revealing people's promotion and tenure files. So, it's been a lot of focussed on that kind of piece of how the university works and trying to change the culture by putting new systems in place, providing training, so that people are more aware of things like, things that we're used to hearing about all the time now - unconscious bias, misogyny, you know anti-indigenous sentiment etc. I already that ground work to build on. But the dimensions programme, as I said before, it's a federal programme. It's an initiative of the three major granting agencies. So, the programme is solely focussed on academic research. It's about identifying the barriers within research, distance and cultures, that make people feel they don't belong, not welcome or people are actively discriminated against. It's identifying barriers around who succeeds within those established systems. Why they succeed. Why other people are set up to fail, perhaps. Or not encouraged. Where does larger amounts of research funding go to. What areas research are underfunded and how it's related to systemic racism, particularly anti-racism, anti-indigenous racism. Whole layers of decolonisation that need to be addressed. Of course, in the Canadian context, particularly in recent years, we have been needing to address the calls to action from the truth and reconciliation conviction, that was set up to address the history of genocide against indigenous peoples and first nations of the country, currently known as Canada. In the last couple of years, during this time when the Dimensions programme has been at the pilot stage, one of the challenging things for me as a team leader trying to lead a completely new programme in my university, that had no name recognition, in the context of truth and reconciliation processes, Black Lives Matter, and Covid, so as Maryane was saying, all these contexts mean that people have enormous personal, political and social and community challenges going on, that are really going to be front of mind. We don't need to discuss the impacts that all of us have seen from Covid. So, I have two contexts. One, where I think senior leadership is committed to institutional change around research, culture and systems. But a kind of broader set of challenges both within the university and outside the university that are thoroughly connected that mean it's a hard time to ask people to say hey, do you want to hear about this new programme called Dimensions, where we're going to ask you awkward questions about toxic work cultures that make people included from academic research success? It doesn't sound like something that people are going to jump up for. But I think what I decided to do from the get go was design a team structure that started out from the basis of acknowledging the different research cultures and systems within our knowledge organisation. Most north American universities and I think there are versions of this in the UK, we have faculties with a capital F. We have faculty to engineering and science. A faculty of arts, which is social science and humanities. These vary slightly across different universities. But basically, it's what we all know is an old-fashioned way of organising knowledge. It's like oh, this bit of knowledge goes in this box. But nonetheless you have to recognise that's how the systems work. That's how the

leadership models and department chairs, that's the structure you've got. I wanted to work with that kind of bureaucratic structure that's also based on knowledge organisation. So, I set up a team where each faculty, with a cap tall F, has its own dimensions faculty chair. I would have a leader in place within those different research cultures. Therefore, connecting to faculty members, students at all levels, as well as the faculty leadership, the Deans and associate Deans within each faculty. It meant that I was parachuting someone in, would was already respected in their faculty by their leaders and by colleagues, who was going to be able to work with their own local understanding of what are the major barriers. So, what's a barrier or a kind of diversity and inclusion issue in academic research and engineering does not look the same as the primary barriers and exclusion systems are in my own faculty. At Ryerson, the faculty of engineering and architectural science, the faculty members are majority racialised people. One of their big challenges is that there's low representation of women in the faculty members. There are extremely low numbers of LGBTQ people, indigenous people or people who identify as having a disability. If you look at other faculties, they have various demographic that translate into what questions gets ask, who ask them, which research areas get funded. In humanities and social science, where a lot of the language of EBI has emerged from social science, particularly from social science research. Those faculty members are pretty much evenly split between if you look at binary gender. But we have much less racial diversity amongst faculty members. So, within each of these different areas of inquiry, there are historic and disciplinary reasons why they look different in terms of simple demographics but they also work differently in terms of what are the assumptions and the systemic issues that are governing those particular areas of inquiry? That was the system I set up. Each of those dimensions faculty chairs has post-doctoral fellow, a gradual student, masters of PhD level and undergraduate student who work with them. The idea is that undergraduates can talk to undergraduates. Grad students to grad students. Post docs to post docs. The faculty chair is primarily leading the conversations which fellow faculty members are the research leaders. That was the model I developed rather than having self-assessment team that was just a committee that might have some of those people on it, but they weren't embedded in those ways. So, all the dimensions faculty chairs have developed events. Like, Town Hall events, workshops, so in engineering, where people's careers live or die by whether or not they get certain particular grants at different career stages. The inclusion by federal granting agencies of evaluating grant applications, increasingly by people's, the principal investment articulates through the application how they consider matters of racism, sexism, homophobia, ablism, all the things that fall under EGIA. They're being evaluated on that as well as their research ideas being evaluated. Your career can be made or broken by getting a certain grant, it now you need to have this competition. I'm an aerospace engineer, I study turbines, this has nothing to do with me. You have that level of resistance, which is more a lack of understanding. You can work with that. There are other forms of resistance, where academics, particularly in their research, they don't want to be told how to go about doing it. There are people that don't think that anybody should be asking them to consider issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion and accessibility in their research. But all of our salaries are paid by our fellow Canadians' tax dollars. All the universities are public universities. So that research money isn't exactly our money. So, part of the educational of the is when you come up with that resistance, is to try and get people either to change because their career and research funding depends on it. That's a major motivation in science and engineering. But as part of that, it enables you to have conversations about a sense of collective responsibility, kind of what Maryane was saying is that it's not the people who go through the lived experience of racism that are the ones who need to take all the responsibility. Particularly when they're doing this on top of all their other work. You want to build a culture of at least grudging sense of responsibility. Some

resistance can be helped by speaking to people's commitment to their students and their trainees. If we are going to bring about change, within research cultures and within research funding, then we need to change who it is that is working through that system, who will be the leaders in research and academic leadership of the future. They're not going to get there, if we continue to build, say, our research lab team in the same way. By recruiting students the same way, by not addressing issues of sexual harassment in group work situations amongst graduate students. All of those little things are all part of what each of those dimensions faculty chairs addresses based on their local culture. So I think, what's been great about that is that we've become a close team. We meet once a month for two hours. We're frequently on e-mail contact. What we do is that we learn from each other's experiences in different research areas about what's working, what's not working. Somebody will develop a good slide set or a set of work shop questions. That they've done in faculty or graduate student work shop on assessing EDI applications and someone else can use that. We share resources and adapt them to our local needs, as it were. Dom brilliant, thank you. I am hearing again a lot of things that resonate with previous speakers. You were talking about the passion of the team. But also talking about the fact that you made it not very centralised. There was a lot of delegation that was embedded in all the faculty departments which resonates with people. So, that's great. My last question from me before I hand over to questions from the audience is about tips. If I could ask you for your best tip on how to build a successful team that will help with transformation of an institution. I will start this time from the middle, so I start with Maryane.

MARYANE: I'm chuckling because I'm like oh, goodness, a tip. How do build a successful team. Well, I think for me, you need to have a team that's diverse and that's representative. The success of our staff network is that we've had people across the different bands and across the different job types and we know there's lots of research that goes into how diversity helps to create creativity as well. That is important, definitely. And I guess, also, how to build a successful team. The successful bit is based on people's skills and their ability to deliver. So actually, spending time recognising well what are the internal resources these people are bringing to the team. And what are the external resources that they need to support them and any of the gaps that then exist. So, for my staff network, really recognising actually these people have come from different divisions and academic departments. So, what are the skills that they're bringing, the insights sights that they bring. But what are the skills gaps. You might have a member of staff that's never sat on a committee before. All of a sudden, they're being asked to sit to represent the staff body in front of senior management. So, what are we going to do to make sure that they have the external resources that will match their internal resources so that they can turn up, articulate the points and feel confident to be able to deliver it. So, recognising the need to train and to support people, to be successful. That's definitely important. Then the other piece around building successful teams is recognising the fun in things, right? We have to do things. We have to find an element of enjoyment in what we do in some capacity or another. I think all teams need to have some sort of fun outlet. And thinking about what that looks like for your team that feels comfortable and not too cheesy has been something that we've had to think about as a staff network as well. At the end of the day, after all this work, how do we just enjoy each other? And how do we have that fun? And then, lastly, around successful teams. The well-being part. This is my therapeutic part that's coming into it in terms of how do we make sure that people are able to perform at a high level? But they're not burning out. How to create channels for teams to be able to say - I'm struggling. This is difficult. Can someone else take over? And that's particularly important when you are dealing with committees, networks, anyone that's volunteering and taking on anything that's mentally taxing,

culturally taxing. Taxing of any kind. That's what helps to build the success, because it ensures there's continuity. People are willing to continue or you have ways of people to fill in when someone needs to take a break.

DOM: Thank you. There's diversity, there's skills, fun and well-being. Thank you. Anyone who wants to follow from that? Or should I name them? I think David opened his mic. That's great. Let's go.

DAVID: Just start in the middle, I thought it might be my turn in any case.

DOM: It was.

DAVID: Everything that Maryane just said was perfect. I agree with everything. It really is important though to recognise that within the team it's likely that we're going to be working together in that team on really challenging problems. They can be taxing problems for our mental health and well-being, even when you're part of that team. Challenging problems that others are experiencing that you're trying to lead culture change around. That moment where you take the team away from that and find a way of having that down time, that fun, the other part of it is critical. It's been very challenging to do during Covid. Because it was easier to do that before or outside the meetings when we had them in person. So, I think we need to think about how we do that if we continue to run teams in the way that we have been historically. I'm sure we should be trying to get the teams to do in-person work together. I, for one, have missed that. You need trust. That's part of it to have trust within that team. Everybody in the team needs to be willing to put their vulnerabilities on the table and feel like it's a safe environment. Because we'll all have self-doubts. We will all have those moments when we might be a bit - am I able to do this? Are we able to do this? Only through trust will people put their vulnerabilities on the table. It's important to found a means of creating that trust. Common vision, you know, understanding why we've come together. Especially if it's a team that you've put together for a specific purpose. I mean, although oddly I call my executive team a team, it's actually there to run the university. It's been ever so. It will be going forward. That bit where you bring a new team together to do a specific piece of work, driven by a purpose and common purpose is a really important moment where you get to make sure you have everything in place. Things that Maryane said and things that I'm saying as well that I would add to that list. And if it is a team you've brought together for a specific purpose and it comes back to comments from earlier, make sure the people on the team have the time to commit to the work that you need to do. But in a way that doesn't mean they're working all night. Because that's not helpful whatsoever. We have to put genuine resource in and if they're doing other jobs for the university, in my case, you have to buy them out. Otherwise, you're being discriminatory, straight away, in your team as to who can be able to give that commitment and who feel they can't because they have too much work on work-wise or with caring responsibilities. If you want diversity, you have to think about what you need to do to support everyone on the team with the support they need so they can give you the time to be part of that team.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you. We're adding very sources and adding trust and hopefully the resources will help us build the trust. Meera.

MEERA: Thank you very much. Perhaps to build on what has been said about resources, joy and I think key things there. One thing that was characteristic of our group is that there were enormous

power differentials between different members. So, you had some students involved, some of whom were sabbatical officers, but others weren't. You had people all the way up to the pro-director, who was, they were on the mailing lists and in the room often. So, one thing which I tried to do as the chair of the group was try to make sure that nobody was embarrassed in the context of the group. So yes, you have to establish trust. If I had to talk to students about something, sensitive, or maybe the way they framed something needed to be discussed and so on, I always made sure I did that out of the room. I didn't want them to feel that they'd been humiliated. This is a very difficult political area. Students intensely feel potentially aspects of political shame. Similarly, I wanted them to understand that I didn't, you know, there were certain things they could say as students that I couldn't say as a member of staff. I was always self-reflective about and something that was picked up in the Q&A as well, about whether I was being co-opted as well. I always tried to check myself with other people in the group. So, I think having lots of those bilateral relations outside the group. Just to make sure that everybody was OK in the space, which was quite an odd space. So, people, I think, generally felt they could talk to me about things even if they didn't feel they could talk to each other. I could raise things to the chair saying that this is something we could talk about. One of my colleagues in the group, several colleagues, but one in particular, I often relied on as a sense check. We were talking about such fraught items. You know, there would be a lot of guilt in these things. I relied on them quite a lot. That was important for me to survive the experience of doing it. The other thing I would say is I think I've learned, I mean I tried always not to own the successes as an individual. That's not part of decolonising ethos any way. I remember one episode where a member of the group did something and I felt that they had taken and run with a set of ideas that I had developed and then they had kind of published it under their own name and so on. And I actually felt really conflicted about this. I was quite cross. You know, thinking about make a formal complaint. Then I thought you know what, actually this person is - just let it go. Just let them enjoy this, it's fine. Trying to make sure that there are opportunities for everybody to feel ownership of a project tender thing and that it's not seen as a platform for individual advancement. I do worry all the time that colleagues outside the group might see it as a platform for individual advancement. You do often platform yourself as Wehbe to reach people, to get in different rooms and try to get in people's faces. You will always get some of that push back. I think the other thing is I realised quite early on that there were going to be 30% of people who would never really get on board with this. I stopped worrying about them at a relatively early stage, in so far as, they weren't actively blocking what we were doing. But this is just, so many of the issues we're talking about are endemic to modern society. Violence against women, racism, we haven't even talked about class and resources and how all that plays out in university. Of course, this change takes the historic events like the protests and uprisings over the murder of George Floyd and so on. Just to try and be patient with people. I mean I'm not that old but I remember when we never, ever talked about these things. That was not very long ago. For some people it's still a kind of foreign country. So, I think you do have to be quite patient. When you talk to the young people, you get your hope and optimism from. They're already well ahead of you. They're teaching you a language that you didn't know. The language of microaggressions was not one that I grew up with. But it's now one, it's now an intellectual category which we can use to identify a set of problematic behaviours that we couldn't even name before. That's one of the ways in which the conversation is ongoing.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you. I'm taking from this the need to rose power relations and manage them. But also, on your own, for yourself, finding support, sharing ownership of projects, being patient and also being open to learning from all sorts of sources. That we wouldn't in this world normally

think. OK, brilliant, thank you. Thank you very much for all these answers. We will now move on to questions from the audience. I'm going to go in the order as they came through. First question is from Kim. That is to David. But if anyone wants to also add in, feel free to add. The question is - great story from David. Reflecting on grassroots problems right through to executive and governing body leadership. Was this the first time that you brought a culture issue to the board? And how did you contextualise this to fit with their strategic oversight role? That's from Kim from Advance HE with her interest in leadership and governance.

DAVID: So, I guess there's always a moment when it is the first time you've brought something, a cultural issue to the board. If I went right back to the start with the original change in the culture, where the answer to that is yes, it was. And you know, as a relatively new vice Chancellor it would be fair to say I was unsure about how the board were going to take this. Putting in place a new strategy as well, as you do when you come in as new vice Chancellor. We put in place a new five-year plan. I did not feel that we had a strong enough people and culture strategy historically. I mean I was clear that we didn't. So, I was co-opting this with me telling the board we had a big job to do with changing the culture of the university. I was changing HR into a people and culture division as part of that. This was going to be a big piece of work. We would bed it into the new five-year plan of the university, which would be a strongly people-focussed culture change plan. So, I suppose I immediately linked it to the university strategy and my vision for the strategy going forward. You know, often and in UK universities a vice Chancellor might change every four or five years. Sometimes more frequently than that. At UEA there had been I think five vice Chancellors in the previous 15 years. That had impacted on its culture. We'd not had a consistent focus on people and culture of the university. I was determined to change that. I set out a 15-year vision. I got the board to sign up to it. I made it clear that there will be a lot of things around changing the culture that would come into that. When I got them through that, and the fact that we're going to get some actually uncomfortable statistics coming out of this, when we put in place the anonymous reporting system. When I came back and said we need to do more work to change the culture around racial harassment. They were more comfortable with that because they'd been there before with me. I put in place a tackling mental health, a mental health and well-being taskforce as well, different kinds of issues. But many are still embedded in the need for cultural change in the way that we support staff in those areas. Basically, I set to the governing body what my ethos was as a vice Chancellor. They'd appointed me. It would have been curious if they immediately said oh, no we don't like that, off you go. They've stuck with me. Actually, the entire executive team has changed now in eight years, except me. And the entire governing body has changed, in fact I've got through, no I'm onto my fourth chair of council. So, I think the cultural change is surviving and the others, the way in which the council is looking now and the executive team are looking are evolving in a way that's consistent with that culture change. Sorry, that's quite a wordy answer.

DOM: I think it is. It says that, what I'm taking from this, the more you bring in the change, then and you work with those people, then the more they get used to the fact that there is a need to always be constantly changing and transforming. Brilliant. Thank you. So, the next question so for Maryane about the approach taken. Did you offer a framework for the conversations or leave them free flowing?

MARYANE: Kind of had a flowing? structure where we start off with insights. So, the conversation would be us providing insight overview of lived experiences of staff, overview of the challenges and the contexts that we were in at LSE. So insight. Then the next piece I would say was around learning. Giving people the opportunity to talk about any gaps in their knowledge and the standing

around race and ensuring that people could feel that they could ask questions. No question is a silly question. Ask away. It would then be followed by there has to be a form of action at the end of this conversation. We didn't just spend half an hour for you to learn. What are you going to commit to doing? Insight, giving an overview, then learning, what have you learned and taken away. And then what's the action that we can do, it can be small. So it could be, we'll have a follow up conversation to look at what that means for your department. Or we'll send you a piece of information and then you can talk to your teams. With all of that structure that we had for all these conversations that we went out with. And it did help. It helps to move beyond just educating, but actually let's do something, even if it's tiny.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you. I'm going to through the questions a bit, but probably come back to them. Because there's a question that I really like which is open to anyone. The tips that you might have for winning over those who are resistant to change, that you're advocating for? Would anyone want to jump in on this? What are your tips for winning over those who are resistant?

DAVID: I can say a few words. I mean, you have to give time to conversations and try to get an understanding of why they are resistant to change. Normally, you can change that resistance, you know, just get a sense of what their issue is with what you're trying to do. Help them understand why you believe it's better for your institutional community if we engage in this change and picking up points we said earlier on, that we all need to engage in it. If it's a culture change and we need to bring about, we need to own that change. And recognise that we might be asking, addressing something which the individual who is resistant to change has never experienced on a day-to-day basis. But others are experiencing it. So, it's that individual asocial toning change that as much as those having the lived experience. So really you have to spend time on the conversations. And most of my experiences you get there. There will always be a case where you don't. Then at that point, you have to say well, OK, you're clearly not going to be part of this journey and perhaps have other conversations as I alluded to earlier. On the whole that conversation can help. You can't - I try to have as many of those conversations as possible, but there's 23,000 people at the university. You can't have it with everybody. You've got to find other ways to cascade that down to help others have the conversations deeper and deeper in the organisation when they meet that resistance as well. Help them explain why this is an institutional strategy and you know, we want to move with this change.

DOM: Thank you. Understanding why the resistance is there is a very good place to start. Anyone wants to jump in? Meera.

MEERA: One of the things that I tried to, that came out of the experience of trying to train people in it is that I tried to work on two things. One was information and the other was empathy. And specific activities that would help share information and also help build empathy. I'm not sure either of these things was ever fully successful. Statistics stick with people. Dom I still remember you showing me a graph about awarding the gap in Soas and showing me a bump for white students that the other students didn't get around the pass mark rate. That piece of information was critical in making that issue very alive. Sharing information, ideally that is very closely located to where they are. So, showing people awarding gaps not just at national level, not just in the institution. But in their department. Maybe in their module. That's a wake-up call, I think for most people. Even if they're not necessarily around this kind of mentally yet, they take their teaching seriously. They take their students seriously. They believe that they are useful teachers. That's a good way to do

that. The other thing, on the empathy front. This is a bit more difficult to build. But sharing those lived experiences I think is critical. And trying to get people to understand that there are situations in which they've been discriminated against probably and that these things are actually quite similar. Like I actually, I mean I suppose my approach to these things, race, gender, class, disability, is that they can all be, at least for me, understood under a broader framework of disposability. Their feelings of being extraneous to the order of the society that you're in. Not saying that a guy in a room full of women is the same as being a woman in the room full of guys. It's trying to work on the information and empathy and then show what are the possibilities for action. These are the concrete things you can do right now to change. That's the sort of thing I pinned my hopes on.

DOM: Thank you. Art?

ART: I think, these are all really good pieces of advice. The only thing I would add would be it depends who the resistor is and what position they occupy in the hierarchy. Because if they are someone that you can have a conversation with, one to one, and try to work through what the issue is, as David was suggesting, that can make a difference, at least that person who is resistant has felt like you've heard them and you've noticed and not dismissed them. But very frequently we come up with resistance from people who are senior to us. That's much more complicated to deal with. I think, part of recognising and understanding what power the particular resistor has, where they fit and where they fit in relation to you, who might be the person bringing about the change, is you then need to find who your allies are that might help you navigate around that person. Or they might be better placed to have the conversation with the person. Or as Meera suggested, for some people, they want to see proof. You know I don't believe there's a problem with racism. Or I don't see how it relates to our research or curriculum. But then, if you have a peer reviewed article that talks about this or internal self-ID or other kind of demographic data that the university is using, sometimes people will be like, they will dial it back, when they see the proof. I think there are different strategies with people's sensibility around resistance. But also, you have to see where you and the resistor are at. If you're not equal, or if they don't recognise that you are or don't respect you, it's a problem. One of the things that's worked for me and my team and the way I designed the team that way is so that it's largely built on peer-to-peer relationships. Because one of the things I'd noticed when I was seconded to the office of the VP at community inclusion was, I was working as a lone faculty member with these senior and skilled professional staff in ECI. But when I would go with one of them to do some kind of training for a faculty search committee, the disrespect that they showed, that senior staff person who was an expert in the issue, that they need to be trained on, was pretty horrifying. I mean I knew that happened. But I really saw it play out in real time. When I spoke, even if I as a gay, transgender guy, who does cultural history, I'm in that room and I'm talking to a mathematician, a computer science or engineer, they still would take more notice and pay more respect to me because I had a PhD and I was their faculty equal in at least compared in their point of view to the usually female, often racialised person, who was the real expert in the room. I think these dynamics around resistance are also based on the power structures. I think that's an important piece. Recognise the resistor, see where you fall in the system and look for allies if you need them if you can't have a peer conversation.

DOM: Thank you. That's really good. I think that really complements understanding why the resistance happens that David mentioned. Understanding who the resistor is and how to go about maybe finding an ally and what Meera mentioned, just bombarding them with information. Maryane due want to add anything? No. OK. Then I have another interesting question. I love the recognition

of Maryane of being driven a currency of passion. I wonder how that can be used to leverage reward for the staff who are driving this work? And whether anyone on the panel has examples of how this passion has been used to further staff career development?

MARYANE: I'm happy to start. Yeah, I think we have to recognise that with a lot of these change and transformational projects, it can be taxing for the individuals who are taking it forward. Especially when it comes to any form of diversity like racial diversity, there is that cultural taxation, where the people who are experiencing the discrimination are called upon to fix the problem. And to use what little resources to be able to make that change. And that's something that we have recognised at LSE and as a staff network we've flagged that. Other networks have done the same thing. For us we've gotten to the point where we recognise that we need to call it out. So, I'll give you an example. We established the rare recruitment adviser scheme, where a person of colour would sit on a panel, a recruitment panel for any position that's band seven and above, which is senior positions onwards. We said well, this is staff taking out their time to sit on a recruitment panel, to read through applications and in a way, to have to be assertive to a panel if they think that it's being biased or skewed towards a particular candidate. So how are we going to in any way ensure that they are getting recognition financially or recognition to support career progression? It required back and forth conversations, difficult conversations. Conversations where people say if we do it for you, we have to do it for others. We say if there's a building that's burning, you send the fire engines to that building that's burning. You don't get them to go to all the other buildings that aren't burning. Just solve this problem now and deal with new problems later. Off the back of that we could ensure that any staff member that sits as a recruitment adviser is compensated for that time. And also, that they would have, it would be recognised as part of their title. They could have that in their e-mail signatures. And that could be recognised as part of the CDR yearly appraisal process, where they could demonstrate their citizenship, their organisational citizenship. It could be folded into conversations in terms of their contribution to the institution and how it supported a wider strategy outside of their work. So, that had to require us fighting for it. It wasn't something that was naturally recognised. So, I think it is an uphill struggle. But it requires people recognising that any form of extra work has to have some form of recognition. We're still at the stage where the people doing the doing are doing the asking also to be recognised in that way. Dom you're muted.

DOM: I always recommend people that it's great to unmute themselves if they want to speak. Obviously, I don't listen to my own advice! Would anyone want to comment on the possibilities of rewarding that passion? Art?

ART: Well, Meera also raised her hand. I'll keep it brief. We both raised our hands at the same time. I think the issue that we're addressing here is probably one of the most crucial ones in terms of sustainability of trying to bring about institutional change and making sure it doesn't fizzle out because people are doing it on top of everything else that they're already required to do. Particularly people who are not empowered to have a lot of autonomy in their workplace. Even those who are, there's lots of different pressure that's come to bear on people. So, when I designed the dimensions pilot at my university, I did not want anybody to be doing anything for free. So, the whole plan was based on the idea that these dimensions faculty chairs, the people embedded in their local teaching and research areas, they're all senior faculty members, active researchers, supervising grant students and on committees because they're tenured they have service requirements. So originally the compensation for the faculty leaders was \$10,000 in

research funds that was to support their own research. We have a system where the post-doctoral fellows and graduate students who are selected to be on the teams working with us, those faculty members, they each get an award of \$1,000 per term. We have two terms in our year. The undergraduate students working on the faculty teams are paid at their research assistant level. These are unionised, established positions. Their rate of pay now is something like \$19 an hour. That was the basis on which it was set up. In the second year of the pilot what we've discovered, of course, not surprisingly to any of you or anybody listening, is that particularly the work of the dimensions strategy chair is a very difficult position, a very time consuming. And because we have a diverse team, so representing lots of different areas of challenge, and lived experiences, these, as Maryane was saying, they're often already being asked to sit on committees or give advice, endless draw on their time and burden of representation. So, what I ask for in the second year's budget was that each of those dimensions faculty chairs be given one course release. So, some faculty members didn't feel that they could easily ask that of their dean, the person who would sign off on that. So, I represented them at their request to some of their deans. All but one Dean agreed to that. Some agreed very, very easily. Some took more persuading. Some made a point I'm like Maryane was saying, well, it's like, there's no system for this. If we do it for this position, we have to do it for that position. Yeah, yeah, yeah OK. Moving right along, this is a brand-new position. It aligns with every single public statement of the university. Your job as Dean is to move forward that university mission. This is one of our top statements on every bit of PR we put out. So, let's move forward. I think that compensation is another way to build sustainability. Once you've got that budget line in there and it's attached not to a person's name but to a role that has a name like dimensions faculty chair etc, it's harder for someone who comes in as the next Dean to take that away. Because it's now associated with an individual person, it's associated with a role. It's a role that senior leaders want to be seen supporting. It's about diversity and inclusion, challenging racism, challenging sexism. It's not going to be a good look if they come into that leadership role as a senior leader and say, that's where I'm taking away the funding. So, getting the resources if you can, it's your friendly Trojan horse that you're sneaking into the Dean's office or whoever's office you need to, and it's there. And then they can't get rid of it. But yes, as everybody is saying, it takes a lot of conversations. Some of them are a bit tricky. But calling people out on what they're supposed to be championing sometimes helps.

DOM: Calling people out or as I would put it, just making a business case for it. Because as you said, Art, this is the statement of the university, so it is in our case to tackle those issues, absolutely. All right, anyone else? Meera, yes sorry.

MEERA: I was going to briefly say that actually I do feel that my university has rewarded me pretty well for the work that I've done, particularly once we had the buyout. The university because of the leaders we have, have sought to update the promotions criteria to explicitly reward work on decolonising curriculum, particularly in the area of teaching and learning. It's not exclusively that. You don't have to have done that. That's proactively listed on the form as one of the things you could talk about. We also, you know, the training that you and I did, that was designed to be a requirement, before you applied for promotions. The other thing I would say is that the Advance HE accreditation has helped with that. A lot of people have talked about decolonising initiatives in the context of accreditation with the fellowship of higher education academy and that's critical too.

DOM: Absolutely. Maryane?

MARYANE: Yeah, I think it's worth noting, I think there is definitely a difference in terms of potentially faculty academic staff and how they are, this additional work sometimes is recognised as part of their roles and they are getting that buyout. But when it comes to professional services staff. I don't know it's recognised in the same way. There's a bit more expectation to do it as part of the citizenship and goodwill. I do think that is something that needs to be looked at within higher education. And recognised in contribution from all staff should be, in some way, remunerated to support the institution achieving its strategic goals.

DOM: Absolutely. David?

DAVID: Yeah, just to say this is really, really good points people are making. It's really just physical anyone were to go away and read the guidance that we produced for the sector on tackling racial harassment, we made it clear that you have to resource it. Again, it's aimed at the vice Chancellors who lead. They need to find the resource budgets to bring about this change. It's really important that those helped are rewarded for helping as I said about teams building earlier. There will come a moment in about two months when through universities UK we will review which that guidance has been implemented by universities. I will seek to remake that point. You can't do it without adequate resource. It was encouraging to hear also Meera talking about, someone mentioned evolving the career progression hand book to ensure that you build into the hand book recognition of the work that you're doing in these and other areas, of course, that helps with career progression for academic staff and professional services staff. It's important both are recognised in the way they make their contributions. It is written in the guidance. So, it will be important for those that want to engage their vice Chancellors on this, you can point to that. My colleagues on the tackling racism taskforce at UEA point out to me that this was something I wrote, well we wrote into the guidance. I can't get away with not putting that resource in.

DOM: Brilliant. I think I'm getting the time, one last question. I think everybody could have something o-to-say to this. The question I was inspired by Maryane's approach to the staff network that she set up as being real and adopting the approach. We can only do what we can do. So, the question here is: How do you adopt this open, being real approach while still leading? Is.

MARYANE: Happy to start. I think it's, for me, my background is in leadership development counselling and coaching. So, authenticity is everything that is close to my heart. When it comes to leadership, that transparent leadership is important. We can, I think it's safe to say that I think the pandemic has shaken so many things that people probably are exhausted into having to wear a mask and appear as perfect, that this idea of, this is who I am, this is how I do life, I can only do what I can do is becoming more a thing for everyone. Something that I learned in leading teams and also this staff met work, as a leader, what you do when you say, people do pick it up. I would always say it's OK to say you know what, it's been a challenging month. I feel really exhausted. Actually, I feel quite confused. Because then it allows those that you are leading to recognise that they can say the same. They can say, it has been hard. I am finding this difficult. And you're setting a culture of truth, of transparency, of authenticity. So, it really starts from the leader being brave enough to be vulnerable. It's not easy to be vulnerable. It's not easy to be vulnerable in a way that still is tasteful. Sometimes we can go so far that it's like whoa, why are you leading? You need to take timeout! There's a balance there. A little bit of honesty. You know a little bit of vulnerability can go a long way. How can that be done practically? Well, maybe when you have meetings, either every meeting or at key points, just starting in with a check-in - how is everyone? And being able to

share what the highs and lows have been for you as a leader. And then giving people a chance to do the same. That could be through all the meetings. Or you could have key points in the work that you're doing where you say you know what, we're just going to take time out to review progress. We're going to talk about what's working and what's not working. We're going to talk about who needs help, who needs support, I think just starting that culture of openness and checking in. That's a really good way of paving the path to that. So that's what I have learned in my time leading teams. But also leading this staff network as well.

DOM: Thank you. Would anyone want to comment on this ability or need for being real while still leading.

DAVID: I think it's a really important question. Actually, I have been talking about it today in meetings I was in earlier. There's an element, we can only do that we can do, that I need to be saying to my governing body as well. I know that we are experiencing what you might call a corporate long Covid in the university. I know the impact this has had on staff and students. My university is now two years late in developing the next five-year plan. I think we need just to recognise that for the next year, two years. Actually, do we need - that should be ringing in our ears. We can only do what we can do. We have to temper expectations of those who might want to push us too far too quickly. Focus on what it is we already had in our strategy, perhaps pre-Covid. You know go back to those and see where they are now. And what we can do to help move those forward. And just be a bit careful about rushing down and bringing too much more in to start over, you know putting too much on the shoulders of those that would need to lead implementation of new initiatives. I think we should have that ringing in our ears and just make sure that we are always considering that as we go forward. Particularly over the next two years.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you. Art, Meera?

ART: You know building on what Maryane and David are advising, and giving examples of yeah, I mean, all the meetings that I have with the dimensions team, we always start off with the check in. It was something that I learned from my Vice President equity and community inclusion, when I was seconded to her office. I learned a lot from her leadership mode. And appreciated the space that she gave for there to be sometimes a bit of silence. And sometimes you know, people feeling like it was OK to give some context of what their day had been like or what was going on. So yeah, amongst my team, three of us have had deaths of parental figures in the last 12 months or less. Other challenges have come up. And so, as we've created that culture of authenticity, the openness amongst us, we therefore know was going on with each other. And we've developed a system where if somebody is going through something like that, we all chip in and we buy them like, you know, grocery gift cards, that kind of stuff, like practical help to address those kinds of stress that's are going on. What we all recognise from that, is that this is so different from most of culture. We are supposed to only exist from the neck up and only a certain version of what's in here is supposed to be presented in the workplace. So, I think as Maryane says you have to have that balance. You don't want to be oversharing and making yourself as the leader seem too vulnerable and too much falling apart. But I think it's that good spot where you can encourage that type of openness and make it clear that it's not just talk, that there is support there. That you are there for each other not just say like oh, you know I'm thinking of you. That's nice and sometimes that is all that somebody can offer. If we can offer, particularly as leaders, some more practical support, or ways to reduce the burden of someone's work, in order that their lived circumstances

can take priority when they need to, you know, it's about knowing your team and listening to them I think that allows for the team not just the leader but the whole team to create that relationship of support amongst each other. It can be a much more relaxing environment than most academic teams or committees where it can just feel a bit awful a lot of the time.

DOM: Thank you. Meera?

MEERA: Quickly, I mean sorry to end on a slightly down note, one of the things that I learned though was that you can only do what you can do. There are some changes that are easy to make and some changes that are really hard. I think in the area of particularly racism and decolonisation hiring, curricula change and these kinds of things are relatively easy. What's much harder is actually holding people accountable for specific episodes that have happened. And trying to get there. One of the experiences that we had was raising people's expectations that things were going to be better and then still having episodes of really bad practice. That's the nut that I think was really difficult, that is going to continue to be really difficult to crack. So, I think, in a way, just trying to be really honest about what you're doing and what things it is contributing to and what things it isn't. I mean I was lucky in the sense that I'm just a regular academic. I haven't held any managerial positions. My position in the group was really a coordinating one. So, I feel a freedom to be maybe a bit more blunt about these things than someone higher up might be. Yeah, so it has been really positive. An amazing experience to work with these people. But it's also been very tough to look at the problem in a much more direct way.

DOM: Brilliant, thank you very much. It is now 4.02pm in the UK, so I'm going to finish there. I'd like to just very quickly thank our amazing guests, Maryane, David, Art and Meera and for the support from Susan, and Ruth and Sam who was live captioning. So, thank you very much to everyone. There will be a recording from this on the link that Ruth has put into the chat. Thank you very much and hope you found it as useful as I have. Thank you very much and take care.
Bye.

ART: Thank you so much. Great to meet you all. Bye for now.