



# Anti-Racism Forum

Minutes of Forum held on 02<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

## Attendance:

Megan Robertson (Host), Jack Mapston (Host), Isobel Ford (Actions), Sarah Dawes, Karolina Urban (Minutes), three students

Introduction	Action
<p><b>1. Introduction to the forum</b></p> <p>Meg and Jack are hosts and moderators for today. The Anti-Racism Forum project was created back in June 2020 so that students, especially BME students, can hold Sabbatical Officers and Students' Union accountable, and be updated on their actions and efforts to represent students as best as possible and provide the best experience possible. First forum was held on 12th June 2020, where an action plan was created. The same plan is available for students at all times and it is constantly being updated (including during/ after every forum each month). <a href="#">LINK</a></p> <p>MR introduced the forum and thanked everyone for attending. She explained what is the purpose of those forums and presented a plan for this meeting. This time, the Sabbatical Officers decided to not go over every point from the action plan one by one, just to save some time.</p>	

Items for discussion or review	Action
<p><b>2. Update students on what progress has been made</b></p> <p>JM went through the spreadsheet named "updates before Nov forum". He explained its content and how it is set up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>What was said:</b> the ACS needs more support for the Sabbs and SU. <b>What has been done:</b> financial support was provided, same as more visibility from their committee on social media. <b>What still needs to be done:</b> make funding more accessible for all societies. <b>Student feedback:</b> JP asked if there is any way to measure the success of the actions taken and ensure the feedback loop is closed and see if it is working. JM said this is a very good point but admitted that he has not been checking in with them. MR, however, speaks to them regularly (so is GB) and she thinks that the most important thing is that they know SU is there for them and is able to provide support needed. JP asked how will the support like that be given going forward. MR mentioned she is presenting a paper to the D&amp;S committee about creating more of a network support rather than the Rep system we have now. JP is very interested in it and thinks it could be a good idea. SD mentioned that bylaws are being reviewed and tidied up a bit right now, to ensure better support for all students. JM also mentioned that this includes constant review to include gender neutral wording in the documents.</li><li><b>What was said:</b> students would like SU to start sharing their diversity stats. <b>What has been done:</b> Remit to the Appointments committee. SD explained that the remit needs to be approved by D&amp;S now and it gives the Appointments committee more power to influence and challenge not only the recruitment process but also when it comes to</li></ul>	

encouraging students to take up leadership roles. She also talked about a new external trustee (Russell J. Thomas) and how the SU will benefit from his expertise.

**What still needs to be done:** find out actual diversity stats from staff of SU. SD about staff survey and equalities form.

**Student feedback:** JP ensured that this information will be indeed made public after it is gathered. JM confirmed. Results should be published after the staff surveys and equalities forms, in 3 weeks time or so.

- **What was said:** students would like to see more training available (white allyship, unconscious bias etc).

**What still needs to be done:** JM will talk to GB and CC and other staff members to utilise this second lockdown to carry those out for staff and C&S committee members.

- **What was said:** students would like to see SU representation at BUCS.

**What still needs to be done:** we do not need to worry about this until February time, however after that, if the games are on, JM and CC will attend as many as possible. JM also explained that this is to ensure there is a witness in case something happens and SU can take action if needed (in case of racism, verbal abuse or any other incidents that might happen).

- **What was said:** students would like to see more tips for the student body on how to be better allies.

**What has been done:** SU and Sabbs have posted resources for students to check out on the website and those were also highlighted during the decolonising forum on 29th October 2020.

**What still needs to be done:** update that list and check it constantly, to ensure accuracy and more resources.

**Student feedback:** IF mentioned that the list of resources may not be on the website anymore, as it was posted for October in relation to Black History Month events, however that can be changed. JP agreed that one, permanent list that is easily accessible would definitely be useful. MR said about creating a campaign (a point from the decolonising forum) and that it may be useful to promote this resource list during that (there will be a meeting about it soon between Sabbs and SU staff).

- **What was said:** students would like to see actions taken about diversifying the curriculum

**What has been done:** there was a decolonisation forum, where some good ideas came up and there will be a meeting between Sabbs and SU staff to create a coherent strategy for this project.

**What still needs to be done:** the project needs to be finalised and presented to the student body to receive their feedback on it and start implementing it. KU mentioned she has sent out the slides from the forum to all attendees and JM said we will look into having future forums as well.

JM explained that those are more long-term goals for now, which obviously will mean it will take some time to implement. However, these forums are very useful to keep on top of that spreadsheet and check with it constantly to ensure every action and point brought up is followed up on.

### **3. Open discussion for the students to respond to actions and bring up any points**

JM mentioned that the turnout for these forums has been decreasing so it may be something we want to look into (it needs to be assessed if it was an abnormality or are people losing interest). JM said that talking about raising awareness of these forums and similar events will definitely be helpful. He will talk to C&S about attending them in the future. IF agreed that sending out invitations through emails will be useful. JP mentioned that creating networks like MR mentioned before, will probably be beneficial in raising the engagement. They mentioned that people attending those events are usually already working with SU, so they are already involved and they know what will be happening, so having networks that reach outside of that group of engaged students might help. JP also mentioned that

people tend to choose what they are familiar with, so students that have already been engaged in one way or another are more likely to come back and having those networks will be a good way to have regular attendees as well. JM suggested involving Reps in raising awareness for Anti-Racism forums. JP said that this could be a good idea, as they were a Rep themselves in past years. JP has been thinking how well the Reps are reaching different groups of students and how some groups may not be reached and how it presents itself with who is engaged in the event SU is putting on. Therefore, targeting the Reps and C&S may widen our reach. JP suggested that if we want more creative (or wackier) ideas, it may be worth focusing those around campaign promotion (i.e. instagram contest). MR mentioned that the first forum maybe had the momentum from BLM movements and events, and how she said we may want to think how we would be able to get that back. IF agreed and suggested going through ACS and asking them for help in reaching BME students. SD and KU suggested asking ACS or Dee to chair some future forums or be involved in them. JM pointed out that we need to make it clear that it will not be expected of them to be the educator in those scenarios, just a representation of their communities and provider of a different perspective. JP said that maybe asking them to review the forums and their structure might be useful from ACS and once again said that networks MR mentioned might be really useful. JM and MR talked about reaching students and how easy it is for them to delete the emails without reading them first and ignore it. KU agreed and suggested maybe a calendar or 'save the date' invitation would catch student's attention to get them engaged with the forums. JM said that engaging the non-engaged ones can be tricky but he can give a good perspective from his personal experience. IF asked how he got engaged. JM said that 'getting the foot in the door' definitely helped him understand how SU works and get interested in it, as he has seen from working as a committee member for C&S. JP agreed that people may not read emails but still said that it should be a main way of communicating however make emails more personalised or make it a separate email and monitor the engagement (how many people open them, read, click through etc). JP mentioned that it needs to be grabbing as well and quick to read, which is why newsletter may not be effective. JM agreed that it can be tricky to satisfy students (some will like the newsletter and some will say that information gets lost in it, some will like separate emails for everything and some will call it spamming). JP mentioned that trying out different things may be useful to see what gets students engaged.

MR added that we are accepting opinions about how to go about decolonising forums and how to run future events.

JM asked how everyone present got engaged with SU. BG said that she joined societies to meet new people but she is here to make equal opportunities for minorities as a committee member and how to be an ally and get educated. JP said they were really engaged before coming to university (they were trying to make a change at student council), but overall it is a personal thing for them, they are very aware of the benefits of doing things 'just because' and how it may be useful in the future. JM suggested highlighting benefits for everyone to attend forums in the future. JP agreed, even though that strategy would not work for them. KU agreed that most people are unfortunately selfish, so highlighting how they are going to benefit will most likely be useful. CH said that he joined this forum today out of curiosity more than anything else. He said that finding a starting point for conversations may be difficult for some people, as they do not want to seem silly or without experience. Therefore opening the discussion and encouraging everyone to speak and creating that safe environment for the conversation is really useful. As a POC, CH found people are often hesitant or afraid to speak because they are worried about saying the wrong thing.

JP added that they think the anti-racism and decolonisation campaigns could be a really good way to involve people, introduce them to relevant conversations, and get them engaged with SU overall.

#### **4. Opportunity for students to co-host future forums and Google Form for students to bring up any additional points**

There is always an opportunity for students to co-chair/ co-host future Anti-Racism Forums to ensure they are as accessible and inclusive as possible. It can be arranged by contacting Sabbatical Officers or SU staff, as well as through [Google Form](#) at any point of the year. Same points of contact can be used in regards to any matter students may want to take up with the Students' Union.

5. Thank everyone for coming	
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Meeting Conclusion	Action
<b>6. Any Other Business</b>  None.	

**Date of Next meeting: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 11am**