

# Equality & Diversity

## Mentoring Scheme

# Black and Minority Ethnic Student and Alumni Mentoring Scheme

**In the aftermath of the BLM protests in 2020, members of the Governing Body, the MCR and the JCR engaged in a series of discussions on how to improve diversity within the College and in academia more broadly. An outgrowth of these discussions was the establishment of the College's Black and Minority Ethnic Student and Alumni Mentoring Scheme.**

This mentoring scheme connects current undergraduate and graduate students with alumni who have volunteered to provide personal and professional mentoring, to share experiences and advice, and to encourage and enable our students to fulfil their career aspirations.

In June 2021, after a year in development, the scheme launched with a virtual meeting. It was an inspiring event, and the keynote speech by Corpus alumnus Steve Douglas CBE highlighted to mentors and mentees alike their potential to make a difference in the long struggle to combat racism, why now was the time to get involved, and the hope that long-lasting change was imminent. Afterwards, mentors and mentees were introduced to one another in group sessions. Seemingly subtle but undeniably powerful, the hope is that this mentorship programme will continue to help Black and Minority Ethnic students for years to come, in the familiar close-knit Corpus style.



JOHN CHARRIS

## Gaining new perspectives

**Mentees describe meeting their mentors for the first time and reflect on what they hope to achieve from the Black and Minority Ethnic Student and Alumni Mentoring Scheme.**

**Zeinab Ali** (Neuroscience, DPhil)  
I would like to pursue a career in STEM. In the near future, this will include a postdoctoral position. However, I am debating between academia and industry. I hope to learn more about the pharmaceutical industry. I would like advice on how to make the most of my DPhil and time at Oxford and how to progress up the career ladder, networking and building lasting connections. I had a fantastic first meeting with my mentor. We discussed ways to navigate the STEM field. I gained valuable advice from someone who has an impressive career path in both academia and industry, and who I can relate to.

**Faseeha Ayaz** (Cardiovascular Science, DPhil)  
They say an Oxford DPhil opens many doors but what are those doors? I am hoping this scheme will connect me with people who can provide some insight and a perspective on the workplace outside academia. I am seeking advice on next steps, learning about and from the experiences of mentors as I too try to find my path. I am very open to a career within or outside academia. However, having only ever experienced the academic setting, it is often difficult to envisage the opportunities outside academia as well as one's suitability to them. First meetings have been very motivational. My mentor is willing to listen to my experiences

### Would you like to be a mentor?

We would love to hear from Old Members who are willing to offer mentorship and guidance to this and future generations of Black and Minority Ethnic students. For more information about the scheme please email [sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:sara.watson@ccc.ox.ac.uk).

The length of each mentorship is envisaged as being one year, after which mentors/mentees may continue or leave the scheme.

and share his own openly. His ability to identify my personal biases to allow me freedom from them, and challenge my reasoning process to illuminate new perspectives or ways of thinking, is something I find invaluable. After our meetings I felt I had grown a little taller and was inspired to reach a little higher.

### Mipham Samten (PPE)

I am interested in a career in financial services, namely M&A with the longer-term goal of buy-side work, either in public or private markets. I would like to learn more about the value of an MBA and opportunities to enter postgraduate studies. Through the scheme I hope to gain insights into my chosen career paths by networking with experienced professionals, in order to enhance my understanding of the industry. My first meeting was an extremely insightful session. The opportunity to speak to an alumnus with such valuable experience is rare and I learned a great deal from my mentor who was incredibly accomplished and patient.

### Sampada Sudheesh Venkatesh (Law)

I was born and brought up in Bangalore, a city in Southern India, and came to the UK for university. While the experiences of members of different minority communities are undoubtedly unique, I am certain that I will hugely benefit from learning about my mentor's journey both in, and post Oxford. I am currently choosing between pursuing a career as a solicitor in the City, and working in the legal policy field for an international public interest organisation. The first meeting with my mentor was insightful. It gave me a glimpse into her world of legal practice and how it differs from legal academia.

# Equality and Diversity at Corpus

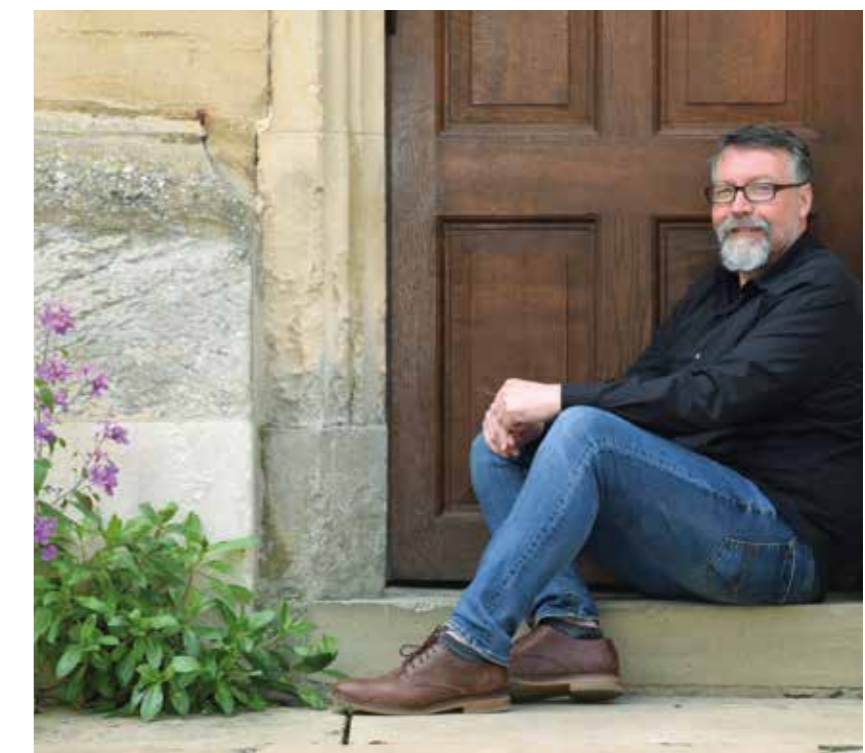
**Professor Mark Wrathall describes the role of the College's Equality and Diversity Fellow.**

As the Equality and Diversity Fellow at Corpus Christi College, I sit on the College's Equality Committee, and the Conference of Colleges Equality and Diversity Forum. The College Equality Committee oversees all matters of equality within the College, and considers all matters affecting the equality and diversity of the College as a community. The Committee meets once a term, and reports to the Governing Body. We review periodically the College's specific equality objectives – for instance, the requirement that all tutors attend implicit bias training – and we monitor progress in meeting those objectives. Other topics of discussion at our most recent meetings included the proposal that we provide professional Equality and Diversity training for Freshers (we're looking into it), and the renewal of an inter-collegiate Equality and Diversity Fund (this has supported a variety of initiatives in recent years, including a celebration honouring Black History Month and an LGBTQ+ club night).

As Equality and Diversity Fellow, I also participate in other College and University Committees where equality and/or diversity matters are being discussed. I took part last spring, for instance, in a series of workshops as part of the University's Associate Professor Inclusive Recruitment Project. These workshops were devoted to reviewing good practice in hiring and recruitment.

The Equality and Diversity Fellow is tasked with assisting in the achievement of Corpus's equality objectives for the whole range of protected characteristics, and in general serving as an advocate on equality and diversity matters. An important part of the role is to provide a link between the Governing Body and student representatives. I try to meet at least termly with the JCR Equal Opportunities Officer and the MCR Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

I, alongside the Governing Body, continue to be committed to seeking greater diversity and wider representation at all levels of the College.



NICK READ