Dismantling gender and race inequity in higher education

Alice Chilver, Dr Anatu Maham, Cianne Jones, Kate Fxen, Ana Faro, Ivana Vasic, Jenna Townend

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Celebrating the impact of the 100 Black Women Professors NOW Programme
Introduction

In 2018, there were 25 Black women professors in the UK, compared to 12,500 white men (Advance HE, 2018). Staying Power (Rollock, 2019), captured the lived experiences of these professors and made recommendations necessary to change this shocking reality.

It was November 2020 when I first read Professor Rollock’s report, just a few days before the WHEN team were due to agree on the few priorities that we believed would make the biggest difference towards speeding up gender equality in higher education.

Having read the report, not taking action wasn't an option. But how could I, as a white woman do this? I felt I would be laughed out the room by the Black community. I was wrong, that was classic imposter stuff, as Yasmin1 pointed out. In fact, I was in a privileged position, as a white woman, working at Oxford University. I had forged friendships with academics and professional services staff across the sector, led large-scale transformation at UCL and successfully mobilised a network of some 3,000 women from across the sector at that time. I called my friend Victoria2, with the initial idea of a systemic change programme, ‘Should WHEN do this, would we be able to make an impact, would Black women’s career trajectories change, could I do it?’ and the answer was clear ‘Yes, yes, yes and yes’.

Designing, developing, and introducing this programme has been the single hardest thing I’ve done, but without doubt the most impactful. One Black woman academic told me we’d accelerated her career by 15 years, and another that we’d changed the trajectory of her life. Being able to take a step back and listen to the experiences of all the different stakeholders who have been involved in the programme has been an important moment. I know we have accelerated gender equality in the sector, I know we have fostered inclusive leadership and made privileged people, just like me, more aware of racism and their ability to affect change and this is just the beginning.

Over the last 18 months my eyes have been opened to the career journeys of many Black women academics. There is no ‘one’ Black woman’s experience, each background and journey is unique. I’ve seen experiences of racism and just how difficult to pinpoint it can be. To break the cycle and change the status quo, we must step outside of our comfort zones, talk, acknowledge, and take personal responsibility for action.

I would like to thank the WHEN team of volunteers who have worked together to achieve the significant milestone of launching the pilot. Finally, I would like to thank all the Black women working in the sector who have contributed to the design, development, refinement, and piloting of this programme. You have paved the way for so many others and enabled WHEN to shine a spotlight on those things that matter the most.

Alice Chilver
Founder and CEO

1. Ms Yasmin Ali, Director of Corporate Services, Faculty of Medical Leadership and Management
2. Dr Victoria Showunmi, Associate Professor, University College London
Designing a systemic change programme

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This is just the beginning

Thank you

References
In 2018, there were 25 Black women professors in the UK, compared to 12,500 white men. WHEN set out to remove the systemic barriers that prevent Black women from thriving and progressing in academia. This was never going to be about ‘fixing the women’ but about addressing deep-rooted biases, systems, patterns and behaviours. The programme is the first and therefore sector-leading, systemic change programme to address the absence of Black women in the academic pipeline.

Design principles
- There is a critical underrepresentation of Black women in every stage of the academic pipeline.
- We must take specific and deliberate action to speed up change.
- Our institutions and sector need to do more to become anti-racist.
- Black women do not need fixing.
- Deep-rooted habits, practices and systems need to change.
- The most senior stakeholders including the Vice-Chancellor must take personal action to lead change.
- Black women academics' development can be accelerated by coaching, mentoring, sponsorship, networking, and career planning.
Early input

Based on the design principles, it was vital that a programme would be co-created with Black women, whilst ensuring that these women were not burdened with the additional workload required in running it.

It took 12 months from ideation to the commencement of the pilot programme. Quite a remarkable time frame for the sector. A sense of urgency was created and the team uncovered a swell of support for bringing the idea to life. The momentum was there for the sake of the future of the sector, for all the Black women and other minority groups currently working in the sector, as well as for the next generation of talent that this could impact.

Key early advisors:

Baroness Amos LG CH PC
Formerly the Director of SOAS University of London, Baroness Amos was the first woman of African Caribbean heritage to be Director of an Institute of Higher Education in Great Britain. In 2021, Amos became Master of University College, Oxford, she was both the first female appointed to that post and the first Black head of any Oxford college. She gave us confidence and introduced us to contacts including Nicola Rollock.

Professor Nicola Rollock
Professor Rollock’s report highlighted that there were fewer than thirty Black British women professors in the United Kingdom in February 2019. Her work inspired the conception of the 100 Black Women Professors NOW Programme and she provided valuable feedback and guidance right at the beginning of the design phase which helped us to ensure the central role that Heads of Department play in the programme.

Vice-Chancellor Professor David Richardson
Professor Richardson fronted a UUK advisory group which published a set of recommendations (UUK, 2019) designed to decisively tackle racial harassment in higher education in the UK. The recommendations were informed by an in-depth consultation with panels of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students and staff with experience of racial harassment. He gave us confidence, assurance, and helpful feedback to continue.
Design process

1. Creating and socialising the concept
   - Concept presented for the first time to the WHEN team in November 2020.
   - Concept paper produced.
   - Paper socialised with women academics of colour and university leaders including key advisors in December 2020.

2. Securing support
   - Design team assembled including HR Directors, academic leads, staff network leads, organisational practitioners, academics with expertise in race and gender, Heads of Departments and Black women academics.
   - The programme was co-created by working together in an iterative development process.

3. Designing the programme
   - Six pilot partner universities secured by January 2021.
   - Invited pilot partners to put forward key staff to form the design team.

4. Official launch
   - Programme launched in April 2021 via webinar highlighting the key issues and setting out a commitment towards positive, systemic change.
   - WHEN hired a Head of Strategic Initiatives to take charge with all aspects of the programme in May 2021.

5. Forming the faculty and delivery team
   - The faculty team was confirmed in summer 2021.
   - The first programme session was delivered in November 2021.
Design team

Prof. Marcia Wilson
Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Open University

Dr Kennetts Hammond Perry
Director, Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, De Montfort University

Pauline Matturi
HR and OD Advisor, Loughborough University

Dr Lisa Amanda Palmer
Deputy Director, Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, De Montfort University

Prof. Dawn Edge
Academic lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Manchester University

Adele MacKinlay
Director of People and OD, Manchester University

Dr Sarah Mohammad-Qureshi
EDI Partner, The University of Law

Dr Jummy Okoya
Chair of the Women's Network, University of East London

Dr Rachel Cowen
Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Manchester University

Dr Zainab Khan
Director of the Centre for Equality and Inclusion, London Met University

Dr Victoria Showunmi
Associate Professor, UCL

Veronica Moore
Co-Chair of the BAME Staff Network, Loughborough University

Delivery team

Alice Chilver
Programme Director

Nicola Lee
Programme Manager
Programme faculty

Dr Doyin Atewologun
Dean for the Rhodes Scholarships, Rhodes Trust, Oxford University

Maureen Obatomi
Career coach

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Dean for the Rhodes Scholarships, Rhodes Trust, Oxford University

Dr Elizabeth Shaw
Head of Department Lead

Dr Geetu Bharwaney
Career coach

Maureen Obatomi
Career coach

Marcia Hazzard
HR Lead

Louisa Joseph
Career coach

Marshah Dixon-Terry
Coaching Lead

Dr Elizabeth Shaw
Head of Department Lead

Dr Anne-Marie Baker
Consultant

Alison Mackay
Career coach

Louisa Joseph
Career coach

Marshah Dixon-Terry
Coaching Lead
Programme aims

To increase the number of Black women at every stage of the academic pipeline and to accelerate their career progression.

Four reasons why this programme is ground-breaking

1. An exclusive focus on the most under-represented and disadvantaged group - Black women: those of African diaspora who represent less than 0.2% of the UK professoriate.

2. The first and only sector-wide solution that addresses the issues and recommendations from the ‘Staying Power’ report which was based on interviews with 80% of Black women professors at that time.

3. A focus on systemic change and action, requiring deep commitment and engagement from three major stakeholder groups: institutional leaders; line managers; and the academic cohort.

4. Bringing together peer groups from multiple universities to facilitate cross-institution learning and accountability.

The following pages describe the next iteration of the programme and incorporate lessons learned during the pilot.
The impact on institutional leaders and line managers

To measure the impact this programme has had so far on institutional leaders and the universities as a whole, we asked institutional leaders a series of questions. The analysis below is based on 19 responses from this group.

- **100%**
  - Said the programme has made them more aware of the experiences of Black women academics in their university

- **95%**
  - Said they would recommend that other universities participate in the programme

- **80%**
  - Said the programme had supported them to identify actions that can change the status quo

- **79%**
  - Said the programme has contributed to increasing their understanding of race and issues to do with racial justice in the workplace

- **73%**
  - Said that the programme has made them a more effective and inclusive leader

- **21%**
  - Said that the programme had already increased the university’s capacity for strategic change, the rest said it was too early to tell
The programme comprises two parallel strands

The first strand describes the work that takes place with institutional leaders and line managers. The second strand describes the work that takes place with the academic cohort. These two parallel strands of activity comprise the key components of the programme. The activities are interconnected, and the sequencing is carefully planned for maximum impact.

1. Systemic change
The tone for change must be set from the top, with leaders taking a proactive role in facing deeply rooted barriers. In this component learning takes place amongst senior leaders within each institution as each Vice-Chancellor will bring together their nominated sponsors, EDI Leads, HR and Research Directors and each person who line-manages a member of the Academic Cohort. The session is to explore white privilege, anti-racism and racial justice as a starting point for enabling systemic change.

2. Inclusive leadership
HR and Research Directors, together with Line Managers from across all universities come together. They deepen their understanding of what it means to be an inclusive leader, and create objectives for the change they will drive from their unique position. During the workshop there is mutual learning and challenge between peers. The programme understands the powerful influence of these roles and works with them to enable change within their sphere of influence for current and future generations. They explore the power they have and understand how they can take action that will change the status quo within their institution.

3. Action learning
Cross-institutional groups come together for two action learning sets in which they are able to share their experiences and be supported by their peers to overcome challenges they are facing with implementing their individual commitments.

4. Delivering change
Each Vice-Chancellor brings back together their nominated sponsors, HR and Research Directors and each person who line-manages a member of the Academic Cohort. They reflect on key lessons learned, progress made and collective priorities moving forward.

5. Personal insights
The Academic Cohort explore lived experiences as Black women academics and identify core themes between experiences. They identify systemic barriers to progression within institutions and ways of reducing them. Insight sessions enable the WHEN team to capture the lived experiences of the cohort. Themes get shared with senior leaders and line managers to support them to increase their understanding of experiences, as well as to get thinking straight away about changes that could lead to impact.
6. Career planning
This workshop focuses on career pathways to date, supporting the Academic Cohort to reflect on their key moments, key lessons, core values and aspirations for the future. The cohort will support and challenge one another to think differently and define their career vision. They will be introduced to career planning and meet their career coach for the first time. They will spend time during the session preparing for their three-way coaching session with their line manager.

7. Career coaching
Career coaches work with Academic Cohort members to support them to define their career action plans, ensuring that plans focus on the few things that will make the biggest difference to accelerate their career progression.

8. Career strategies
Focusing on career strategies, the Academic Cohort share their career plans and support one another to define strategies in order to make progress with their action plans, translating these most important activities into 90-day action plans for implementation. The cohort are supported to reflect on the progress they have made during the programme and hear about the changes and commitments that their universities have made.

Sponsorship, mentoring, and stakeholder meetings
Before the programme starts, the Vice-Chancellor and EDI lead work together to assign sponsors and mentors to the Academic Cohort. Sponsors are briefed to actively advocate for sponsees in pursuit of their career goals. Mentors are briefed to provide guidance to mentees as they navigate the networks and systems in their disciplines. This takes place up front to allow sufficient time for introductions to be made so that the Academic Cohort can gain maximum benefit during the programme.

Throughout the programme, key stakeholders including the Vice-Chancellor and HR Director, Research Directors and EDI leads are encouraged to meet with the Academic Cohort in order to better understand lived experiences. These relationships will drive increased understanding, influence policy change and secure accountability for action.

Towards system wide change
The programme is unique, and we are already seeing the impact. We have reviewed and revised the recruitment and selection process, so it is conducted through an anti-racist lens, incorporating positive action at every stage, and a renewed focus on academic promotion and rewards criterion. Two participants have been elected to the University Senate (Committee responsible for academic (decision-making), two further participants achieved promotions and all participants have strategic action plans relating to their career progression. Senior leaders have increased awareness regarding the barriers that Black women academics experience in their career progression, and what is required to create an anti-racist institution with an impact for students as well as staff). Senior leaders have pledged to work towards creating an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory institution and engaged in reciprocal mentoring and sponsorship of the participants on the programme.

Professor Marcia Wilson: The Open University
What institutional leaders are saying about the programme

“It helps to concentrate on a specific problem, in a constructive manner.”
Professor Cees de Bont, Dean, Loughborough University

“Before this programme I thought I would support the colleague with better understanding of the promotion criteria and offer support with preparation of career path. However, after the workshop I realise I would need to understand more about the cultural/personal context and explore if there were any barriers that they see about their future growth and then offer any support advice I can.”
Professor Martin Levesley, Head of Department, University of Leeds

“The Programme is illuminating and focussed on supporting our colleagues who need it the most. I thoroughly recommend it.”
Professor Steven Hutchinson, Head of School, The Open University

“Fantastic well-designed programme that highlights the many obstacles that still need to be dismantled for Black female academics in UKHE.”
Professor Bugewa Apampa, Dean, Office for Institutional Equity, University of East London

“The programme is sector-leading and cutting-edge. Rather than just talk about the issue, WHEN has developed a programme that is focused on finding solutions to the shocking under-representation of Black academic women in the UK. The pilot programme added significant value to both the women who participated but as importantly to the university in terms of identifying change in systems, process and people. It’s about changing the system, not ‘fixing’ the women.”
Adèle MacKinlay, Director of People and OD, University of Manchester

“Working with the Black women academics on our pilot programme has been a privilege for me. It has made me realise the great potential within these women and how fortunate we are to have them still with us despite the challenges they have experienced. What I really hope is that this is the start of sustained positive change for them, for our university and the wider sector.”
Professor Louise Bryant, Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, University of Leeds
“This programme is the most effective career development programme that I have had the pleasure of being involved in. By engaging the key stakeholders, leaders have the power to change the status quo and focus on addressing structural deficits. Given the shocking and disturbing low numbers of Black women in the academy and in senior positions, institutions cannot reap the benefits of a fully diverse and inclusive workforce if this situation does not change. Therefore, this is an important programme for institutions that truly value equity, diversity, representation, and inclusion.”

Professor Marcia Wilson, Dean for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, The Open University

Most significant benefits to university leaders

Senior leaders cited the most significant benefits so far as firstly, developing closer connections with Black colleagues by having meaningful discussions and getting to understand their challenges better. Secondly, the programme has helped to create more awareness. Thirdly, the programme has enabled a sense of agency in supporting Black women colleagues to achieve progression in the context of historic barriers’ giving senior leaders opportunities to help support colleagues.

Most significant benefits to pilot universities

Senior leaders reflected that the most significant benefits to the university so far have been firstly to ensure the university is aware of the range of issues that can be reflective of a racist environment and in particular ensure that Heads of Department are aware of the importance of developing an inclusive culture. Secondly, to ensure that best practices are shared. Thirdly, to boost the motivation of Black colleagues by demonstrating that the university and its leadership are committed to addressing the issues related to race and that concrete steps are being taken.
Before becoming The Open University (OU) Dean of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in December 2020, Professor Marcia Wilson had worked in higher education (HE) for more than 30 years in the USA and the UK. Over that time, she had always noted the lack of Black women in such senior positions as VCs, Pro-VCs, Deans or heads of schools and she found that the lack of Black professors – and more specifically Black women professors – lay “in the pipeline”. “When you look at the data, the largest group of students going in to study for undergraduate degrees comes from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds,” Marcia says, “but these numbers tail off at Masters and PhD level. The pool of those who go on to become academics keeps getting smaller as you progress through the pipeline.”

Marcia says the programme has been going well and reactions have been “very positive”. “I think any time you target a group and explain what you’re trying to achieve, it makes people aware so they’re not looking at it from a deficit perspective,” she says. “This programme is important because it’s a shared responsibility across the board – it’s about what colleagues can do to reverse things, to change the pattern that we can all see across the sector. I think that’s one of the wonderful things about this programme – people recognise now that they have to play their part in order to effect change.”

Marcia adds: “Another really positive benefit is that the programme has brought women together. We have eight participants on the programme who work in different faculties and some have been there for 15-16 years without ever meeting the other women. That’s no surprise because sometimes you are the only one in your department or faculty and that can be a lonely existence. So we are doing some excellent networking, we are supporting each other and we have made the commitment to continue meeting well after the programme finishes.”

Talking about racism can be challenging. Marcia says the lack of Black women professors is an issue that hardly ever gets talked about. When she does presentations, she is often asked if she’s got her figures right. “People are dumbfounded, they just cannot believe we do not already have 100 Black women professors,” she says, “and my response is how many Black women professors are in your institution, how many do you actually work with, how many are in your department, how many are in your school?”

Marcia says it’s also important that colleagues recognise they need to educate themselves around some of the issues otherwise no progress will be made.

Three key factors have influenced the successful implementation of the WHEN programme at the OU – an instruction from the VC that “this is something we are doing” and an induction period that paved the way for good engagement because people understood what was expected of them. A third factor has been that all participants can now see opportunities for career progression.

“People recognise now that they have to play their part in order to effect change.”
One of the wonderful things about this programme is that participants are now thinking more strategically about their career and how they are going to navigate academia,” says Marcia. “That is such a positive step forward because it’s easy to get into a routine where you are so busy that you don’t have time for writing research papers, publishing and doing all the things that can bring about promotion. I see Black, Asian and minority ethnic women involved in the kind of silent, emotional labour that is not allocated in their workload but takes up a lot of their time.”

She adds: “Half the battle is knowing what the rules of engagement are. When I reflect on my career it did not even occur to me to apply for promotion. I was enjoying my work and wasn’t thinking about the next step but this programme helps to focus the mind on what’s really important in your career. You learn the need for balance around doing all those important things but also taking care of your career and moving yourself forward. It’s all about building confidence to take that next step.”

Marcia continues: “If you’re the only Black woman in a unit you often feel invisible and unheard and when we all come together it’s very much a case of ‘I see you, I hear you, I appreciate and recognise the really important work that you’re doing’. This programme tells people that they can do this because we’ve got their backs, we’ve got people pushing them forward, they are benefiting from strength in numbers rather than being an isolated individual.”

You often feel invisible and unheard and when we all come together it’s very much a case of ‘I see you, I hear you, I appreciate and recognise the really important work that you’re doing’.
Impact on Black women academics

To measure the impact this programme has had so far on the Academic Cohort, we asked each a series of questions and performed deeper investigative interviews with 20 women. Responses were analysed and clustered into themes.

Impact measured in numbers

70% of the cohort felt the programme changed their attitude about their future career.

How has the programme changed your attitude about future careers?

- Increased career clarity and confidence
- Improved perspective and ability to act strategically for career progression
- Increased level of optimism
- Increased confidence in university and feeling valued
- Inspired to effect change more broadly
- Increased hope and enthusiasm

70% of the cohort felt the programme had accelerated their career progression.

What has made the difference?

- Career action planning and coaching
- Being more strategic with stakeholders and opportunities
- Clarity, confidence and interest about promotions
- Senior leadership buy in as a motivator
- Profile and reputation raising
Impact in Black women’s own words

It is important to WHEN that Black women do not succeed at the cost of their mental health or wellbeing. We aim to support them to thrive in the academic setting. WHEN interviewed 20 women pilot participants about their commitment to staying in the field of academia. We asked them if they were considering leaving academia, and whether the programme has swayed their answer. Responses were then broken down into parts and analysed to describe what they were talking about and given a code for each different topic covered. By further analysing the codes, secondary themes were identified and recorded, where multiple codes follow a similar theme.

65% of the cohort had, or currently are considering leaving academia.

Why Black women might want to leave academia

The most compelling piece of information is about why these women would consider leaving academia, with the most common reason being when women do not feel valued, or their hard work goes unrecognised. The second most common reason was career progression. Where women cannot picture themselves progressing in academia, or where they have been overlooked for promotion in the past, this has swayed them towards being more likely to leave academia. However, some women have never considered leaving the sector. Their reasons for this were either being new to higher education or having a belief in academia as a cause they want to contribute toward. The most cited reason for women changing their minds, swaying them more toward staying in academia was this programme.

“I thought that I'd be in academia forever because this is what I love doing, but after lockdown, I thought, I don't want to do this anymore, because I felt that I was not recognised for all the work I did during lockdown.”
Respondent #19

“I am very much overworked and undervalued. I'm not the only one that feels like that, but I can only speak about myself. I just feel like you give your all and you do all these things. There's no recognition. So why should I stick around if there's a better opportunity?”
Respondent #9

“I told myself that I'm going to be grade eight. I didn't even see any way of getting to grade nine.”
Respondent #20

85% of those women said they are more likely to remain now because of the programme.
The programme has made women more likely to stay in academia

For some women, just being part of the programme was enough to improve their opinion of academia. They mentioned that the programme was one part of wider systemic change, that gave participants an opportunity to safely voice their concerns, and that the programme had a positive impact on their whole year. The opportunity this programme offered to do that and to think more strategically, both in general terms and in respect to their own career progression, was also cited as a benefit of the programme. The power of building a network and the enjoyment of working in a women-only space were also mentioned as positives of the programme.

"Why did I join this programme? I think it's given me some kind of renewed hope. That there is hope. It's not just a job, but you can actually progress and still achieve your dreams."
Respondent #15

"Before the programme, I wasn't looking forward to this academic year. I've had the most amazing and invigorating year I've had in many, many years."
Respondent #10

More still needs to be done

While commitment to the programme was received well, a couple of women noted that the benefit of participating does not come from signing up, but from the work being done whilst engaged in the programme and questioned how committed to positive change their institutions were. For one woman, the programme had, so far, failed to meet the high expectations she had placed on it, and another had a negative racist experience that then outweighed all the positivity that she had gained from her involvement.

"I feel like that because I don't sense that really that there is a full commitment to doing this work. I think there is a lot of committed people who want to be seen to be doing this type of work. Institutions want to be seen to be practicing race equality and to be part of a programme like 100 Black Women Professors NOW. But I think down on the ground, when you actually dealing with them on the day-to-day, that's not on their agenda at all."
Respondent #16
Building the skills needed to thrive in academia

Ambition and confidence: these, as well as increased self-worth and sense of belonging at their institution, were the key attributes that women have fostered on this programme enabling them to feel more at home in academia. Of the women we interviewed, seven (roughly one-third) mentioned that, since joining the programme, they are better able to imagine themselves in more senior positions, that they are planning to or have applied for a promotion or new role, or that they have found a new clarity around how they will progress in academia.

“I feel more positive about it because I've just got a new role which I believe is my level as it matches my experience.”
Respondent #11

“This programme has helped me to know my self-worth and to know that I can go out there and find something else and make an impact on lives and to change lives and have a positive life and outcome. So yeah, the project has really helped me to come to terms with my own self-worth. And to help me move on to the next chapter of my life.”
Respondent #10

Academia is about more than making money, it’s about making a real, positive difference to the wider society. We believe this is the crux of it. A few of the women stated that they would never consider leaving academia because, for them, it's about much more than just their job. It's about expanding knowledge, making scientific breakthroughs, and enabling the next generation. While only a few women specifically mentioned this – we believe this to be the case more widely among our cohort. Add to this, the fact that some of our women mentioned the privilege they felt in even being employed, let alone having a well-respected job in a competitive sector such as academia. And these are the reasons why universities can get away with paying far less than other sectors and burden employees with far larger workloads. It is almost as if women feel the need to complete their work to be allowed the time to give back to society – something which they feel resolved to. They feel exploited but that's the price they pay to stay true to their altruistic values for contributing to societal change.

‘I come from a family of academics, so it’s like that’s the life that I’ve known, the life that I’ve enjoyed. I made that choice ages ago. So it’s not a choice that is like “Oh yeah; tomorrow I’ll just start baking cakes and leave it all.” For me it hasn’t been like that. I see myself as what I’ve always, not always been, but what I’ve become. Do you see? And so I think it’s part of my identity. What I enjoy, really like it.’
Respondent #7
Next steps

An unexpected outcome of the programme has been a clear list of recommendations for the sector, for universities, and for Black women academics, to continue to move toward breaking down the barriers that prevent or deter Black women from progressing in academia.

Sector level recommendations

Hold annual conference
Proactive institutions would support sector wide progress by uniting at an annual conference to share progress, research and good practices that are emerging nationally and locally.

Provide a consistent promotion pathway
Different criteria for promotion, with different job titles at different institutions make translating institutional promotions criteria complex. Co-creating a sector wide career pathway to professor that is translatable across institutions would raise equity of opportunity by step changing transparency and clarity for all across the sector.

Become accountable
Institutions should be held to account for diversity and inclusion by external bodies. University systems need to be audited and changes made where they are found to foster inequality. This should be nuanced, taking an intersectional approach.

Black women academics’ recommendations’

Believe in yourself
Try to build a greater understanding of the value of your own strengths and develop the confidence to be heard. Where you can, change your own mind-set to confront barriers and provide solutions.

Be open with your manager
Have the confidence to have open discussions with your line manager and other senior faculty staff when necessary: this includes sharing multiple life challenges and how these can at times compound work barriers.

Support others
(If you can) make some time to ‘pay it forward’ and support other Black women in academia.
University level recommendations

Demonstrate genuine recognition, understanding and commitment
There is a greater need for more widespread, genuine recognition and understanding of the lived experiences including barriers that Black women academics face. This needs to come from from all levels within the university as well as a commitment to prioritise actions that lead to racial equality. Racial/white privilege training could enable this.

Improve clarity, transparency, and support for the promotion process
Ensure the promotion criteria are clear and easy to understand for all, that they are easily accessible and that it is clear where there is agility within the criteria. Explain non-traditional routes to promotion and provide greater transparency of the promotions process, for example who the promotion panel members are. Provide preparation, support and encouragement through the promotion application process, this could be workshops, micro-mentoring to support with applications, sharing examples of successful applications. Provide a voice to filter out bias within promotion committees.

Improve workload allocation models
Current systems are not realistic and do not fully account for actual work done. Minority groups often support others with activities such as mentoring and sponsorship, this should be celebrated not burdensome, however it needs to be accounted for. Personal and professional development time must also be incorporated.

Support line managers to use good practices
Each individual’s experience is heavily influenced by how effective the line manager is, and some are more effective than others when it comes to supporting their teams to progress. Targeted, individual development plans for line managers would help to address some of the barriers in a more consistent way across the institution. Ensure that as a minimum annual career development and planning conversations take place.

Introduce more structured accountability
The implementation of agreed policies (e.g. not appointing fixed term contracts) must be systematically monitored and inaction must be addressed, holding those responsible to account. Line managers should support once another to increase awareness of policy changes and exchange successful approaches to introducing policy changes.

Safe spaces and support
There needs to be a space for Black women to be open about their issues. Where appropriate, the EDI lead could host Black women academics to ‘check in’, discuss opportunities, share experiences, network, and potentially open up new mentoring relationships.

Celebrate positive role models
Including hosting university-wide inaugural lectures to celebrate newly appointed Black women professors (WHEN recommendation). Draw on participants from the pilot, to share their stories and act as mentors to other academics.
This is just the beginning

The programme has highlighted the value and importance of a holistic and integrated approach to driving system wide change. Our approach has been and remains that it is not about ‘fixing the women’ but about addressing deep-rooted biases, systems, patterns and behaviours. We are clear in our conversations with institutions that this programme is not about “institutional peacock-ing” but a demonstrated commitment to changing the systems and cultures that are prevalent in the sector impacting on the career progression of Black women academics.

WHEN is committed to taking the learnings from the pilot to refine, build and implement phase 2 of the programme in 2023.

What’s next for the programme

The programme has been recognised as a vehicle for systemic change in the sector. Momentum is building and we have now closed applications for the 2023 cohort. We are delighted to announce that we will welcome 69 Black academic women to the programme in 2023. To increase the number of Black women at every stage of the academic pipeline the next phase of the programme includes PhD candidates as well as advanced career academics. We are thrilled to be working with 8 institutions who have demonstrated their commitment to change by joining phase 2 of the programme:

![Institution Logos]

We are proud to be working with over 200 stakeholders across these 8 institutions to accelerate the career progression of Black women academics.

How to get involved

Institutions

We are currently accepting expressions of interest for the 2024 cohort. We would encourage all institutions that are committed to dismantling gender and race inequity in higher education and ready to take action to get in touch.

Black women academics

If your institution is not running the programme but you think they would be interested, please do share the report with your senior leaders and put them in touch.

We have several speaking opportunities available for women interested in speaking about their involvement in the programme or for those who would like to use our platform to talk about their work. Please do get in touch with our team.

Finally, if you are not already a member, we encourage you to join the WHEN network. We are stronger together.
Thank you

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Chris Linton
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Eerke Boiten
Elaine O'Flynn
Elizabeth Camacho
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Eric Addae-Kyeremeh
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Hassan Abdalla
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Ieman Hassan
Iwa Salami
Iyiola Solanke
Jane Khayesi
Janine Brennan
Jennifer Penfold
Jenny Douglas
Jenny Rodriguez
Jo Richardson
John Macklin
Josko Brakus
Joy Donaldson
Judy Chandler
Julia Bennell
Karen Blay
Katie Normington
Kaushika Patel
Kendi Guntai
Kennetta Hammond Perry
Kerri Akiwowo
Kevin Shakesheff
Kutoma Wakunuma
Linda Mortimer-Pine
Lisa Dionne-Morris
Lisa Palmer
Liz Marr
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Louise Westmarland
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Lynda Song, Leeds
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Martin Higginson
Martin Levesley
Marueen Obatomi
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Nick Jennings
Nikolaos Silikas
Olajumoke Jummy Okoya
Omolade Femi-Ajao
Pat Carillo
Patrick Hackett
Paul Conway
Paul Marshall
Paulet Brown-Wilsher
Paulette Johnson
Pauline Matturi
Josie Fraser
Rachel Cowen
Rachel Thomson
Ramzi Ajjan
Rema Khatun
Richard Courtney
Richard Hall
Richard Harty
Richard Taylor
Robert Kelsall
Roberta Davies
Sarah Cartmell
Sarah Mohammad-Qureshi
Sarah Williamson
Sheryl Williams
Shonil Bhagwat
Shumsha Patel
Simon Bradbury
Simon Oldroyd
Simone Buitendijk
Sophie Holder
Sophie Watson
Steve Rothberg
Steven Hutchinson
Taisir Elgorashi
Theresa Munyombwe
Tim Blackman
Vanessa Varvas
Verity Brown
Veronica Moore
Victoria Showunmi
Yasmin Ali
Zainab Khan

And the WHEN team:

Alison MacKay
Amanda Stanford
Jenny Rampling
Kate Faxen
Louisa Joseph
Manjari Preshay
Marcia Hazzard
Marshah Dixon-Terry
Nicola Lee
Rebekah Watson
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