This report describes some of the actions Merton undertook to promote equality in 2016-17.

**Equality Adviser**
Professor Ian MacLachlan (Fellow and Tutor in French) took on the role of Equality Adviser in August 2015. He was succeeded in Michaelmas Term 2017 by Dr Bassel Tarbush (Fellow and Tutor in Economics).

The brief of the role is to:
- Assist with the progression of Merton’s equality objectives for the whole range of protected characteristics.
- Advocate on equality and diversity matters; promote their consideration in College committees; and maintain an awareness of the University’s work in this area.
- Advise and contribute to papers and relevant processes.
- Work with staff and student equality representatives.
- Convene equalities-related events including the annual Equality Conversation.
- Attend the termly Equality Forum.
- Attend the termly Welfare Forum, if wished.

**Equality Forum**
The College Equality Forum continues to meet on a termly basis. Details of events or activities (either past or forthcoming) of potential interest to the group and the wider Merton community are included on the agenda. Forum members are also sent the termly Equality and Diversity Newsletter, compiled by the University’s Equality and Diversity Unit.

**Equality Conversation**
The introductory talk at the fourth annual Merton Equality Conversation, held in conjunction with Leonard Cheshire Disability, was given by Lord Puttnam on ‘A Duty of Care’. This was followed by a discussion and Q&A, with panellists including Neil Heslop OBE, Chief Executive of Leonard Cheshire Disability; Selina Mills, Ambassador Manager, Leonard Cheshire Disability; Roisin McCallion, Merton College undergraduate student; and Sam Dickinson, Merton College alumnus. Further details and a recording of the event are available at https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/event/merton-equality-conversation-2017-duty-care.

**JCR Equality Forum**
The JCR officers with a brief for equality (Gender Equalities Rep, an Equal Opportunities, International & Racial Equalities Rep, LGBTQ+ rep, and Welfare Reps) continue to meet and pass on matters of concern to the College Equality Forum.

**Diversity in College portraiture**
A working group has been convened to discuss the issue of equality and diversity in relation to portraiture at Merton. The group comprises members of both the Sub-Committee on Pictures and Historic Chattels and the Equality Forum, and representatives from staff, MCR, and JCR. Initial proposals were taken to Governing Body in 2016-17, and work is now underway on their implementation.
HR Manager and HR Committee
The Human Resources Manager, Fiona Lawrence, continues to strengthen the College’s practice in areas including recruitment and selection; induction of new staff; parental leave; and staff communication and engagement. The HR Committee continues to meet on a termly basis to discuss general issues pertaining to policy and practice and future legislative changes.

Complaints and Feedback
The Equality Forum has continued its practice of reviewing complaints and feedback on equality matters (chairs and convenors of committees are asked for details before each term’s meeting).

Disability and Access
The College continues its programme of work to increase accessibility which has included provision of ramped and stairclimber access to key areas, installation of power-assisted doors, and further adaptations to residential rooms. Work on the lift to give full access to the SCR was completed in the summer of 2017. The fully-accessible suites in Grove and Holywell were not occupied in 2016-17, although the room in Grove was used by a disabled Open Day attendee, and the room in Holywell was used for examinations by a student with chronic health conditions.

Merton is one of only three Oxford colleges to have a full entry in the University’s Access Guide: http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/colleges/merton/. The Access Guide is a useful resource for any and all visitors to the College, as well as new staff members and students. It has been updated to include information and a photograph of the new lift (see http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access/colleges/merton/).

Gender and Transgender
The University’s Springboard programme for female students is regularly promoted to junior members.

The Warden & Tutors’ Committee undertook an extensive review of data and literature relating to the gender gap at FPE and FHS, and, with input from JCR representatives, agreed a number of actions. Further work will be undertaken in 2017-18 both to review the updated data, and to bring forward additional specific proposals for activities and events.

The MCR voted to create a Women’s Officer role in 2016-17, and are exploring whether further roles are needed to represent other groups.

Race
The College has collaborated with the Stuart Hall Foundation and TORCH (The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities) to create a Stuart Hall graduate scholarship, funded by Merton, for October 2017 entry. Also in conjunction with the Stuart Hall Foundation, a screening of Raoul Peck’s film ‘I Am Not Your Negro’ took place on 18 October 2017 in the TS Eliot Lecture Theatre. The screening, which was extremely well attended, was followed by a conversation about race and resistance, and the role of the intellectual as dissident, with Caryl Phillips and Isaac Julien.
A tri-college collaboration (with Oriel and Corpus) was initiated in 2016-17 to explore, and organise events on the theme of, race equality matters. The first event was a BME formal held at Corpus in Trinity Term, which was well-received.

**LGBTQ+**
The JCR Freshers’ Week programme was reviewed for Michaelmas Term 2017, with new LGBTQ+ events added. These included an LGBTQ+ allies event and a specific LGBTQ+ relevant section within the sexual consent workshop.

Following discussions between the JCR and Domestic Committee, College has decided to fly the rainbow flag for the full duration of LGBT History Month in 2018. College received positive feedback after flying the flag during Freshers’ Week.

The MCR have added further LGBTQ+ events to their termcards, including a Queer Poetry Evening, LGBTQ+ Society drinks, and an LGBTQ+ bop.

**Sexual Consent**
Non-mandatory workshops on sexual consent for freshers have been included in the MCR and JCR Freshers’ Week programmes for the last four years. The JCR session in Michaelmas 2017 took a new format, which increased attendance, and feedback was positive. The MCR will also adopt this format for their workshop in 2018.

**Faith**
Halal and kosher meals continue to be available to order in Hall.

Academic Registrar & Senior Tutor
November 2017