

ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER - ISSUE #4



HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'S FOREWORD

Welcome to this latest edition of our departmental newsletter. We have much activity to report and celebrate. It is a particular joy to us that five of our doctoral students successfully defended their theses. All of them were praised by the examiners not only for the rigour of their research, but also the potential of impact to practice and giving a ‘voice’ to people who otherwise might not be heard. Having these voices heard is crucial to our mission. Dr Helen Cooper investigated the experience of taxi drivers. I had the great joy of chairing her viva. The accounts of drivers going the proverbial extra mile (excuse the pun!) to do more than necessary for their clients is moving, as is the pride they take in their work. Dr Sam Evans looked at work in museums as a career. Much thought has been given to making the arts more accessible to a wide range of people, but is equal thought going into a diverse workforce? There is probably no work issue which is more emotive than pay; Dr Ian Hoare looked at this from an organisational justice perspective. Dr Chinedu Uwabuike considered the experiences of West African migrant nurses – another pertinent topic given the staffing shortages in the UK in healthcare. Finally, Dr Kirsty Lauder looked at the evidence for how to support people with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at work, to start redressing the balance as the bulk of research is on children and teenagers. Kirsty will be an active member of our newly launched Centre for Neurodiversity at Work. The first two ‘seed projects’ are under way. We are looking to

have a formal launch event sometime in summer and share our data fresh off the press.

In our next issue, I will have more to report on staffing changes and new programmes in our Department. We are launching a new professional doctorate and want to further strengthen our focus on wellbeing and diversity in our research.

*Professor Almuth McDowall
Head of Department*



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LAUNCH OF RESEARCH CENTRE FOR NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK

The Department of Organizational Psychology has joined forces with [Genius Within CIC](#) to launch the [Centre for Neurodiversity at Work](#), a new research centre which will take an evidence-based approach to supporting ethical, impactful organisational practice, influenced by the priorities of neurominority employees.

We believe that good organisational practice fosters diversity and embraces difference and the Centre aspires to effect change by developing interventions that work, which management feel confident to deliver and which enhance the prosperity and career opportunities of neurominorities.

#OUR BIRKBECK: CELEBRATING OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY



Our alumni have been sharing their inspiring stories through #OurBirkbeck, a new initiative which celebrates the incredible impact of the Birkbeck community. [Hear from Arvinder Mudhar](#), Chief Information and Digital Officer at Unum, on his career and why he sees computer science as key to economic recovery in the wake of the pandemic.

[Unum continue to partner with Birkbeck](#) to assist students who need extra financial support to access university.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PHD CANDIDATES

We are delighted to announce that the following PhD candidates have successfully defended their theses:

- Dr Helen Cooper - Taxi! A narrative study of low-skilled work from a career boundary perspective;
- Dr Sam Evans - Struggles for distinction: class and classed inequality in UK museum work;
- Dr Ian Hoare - Bonus pay, organisational justice and turnover intention: research into affective, social exchange relationship and social comparison processes;
- Dr Kirsty Lauder - A critical examination of the evidence for effective reasonable adjustments for adults with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in the workplace;
- Dr Chinedu Uwabuikie - Cultural Dimensions of West Africa Migrant Nurses Experiences in United Kingdom.

Dr Sam Evans and Dr Helen Cooper have also been nominated for awards at the Spring BEI Prizegiving Ceremony:

- Dr Sam Evans has been awarded the prize for the Best PhD Thesis in the School of BEI.
- Dr Helen Cooper has been awarded the Honourable Mention prize for her PhD thesis.

JOIN US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We share the latest news and updates from the Department on Twitter. [Follow us @bbk_orgpsych](#) to join the conversation.

DR YI-LING LAI COMMENDED AT EMERALD LITERATI AWARDS



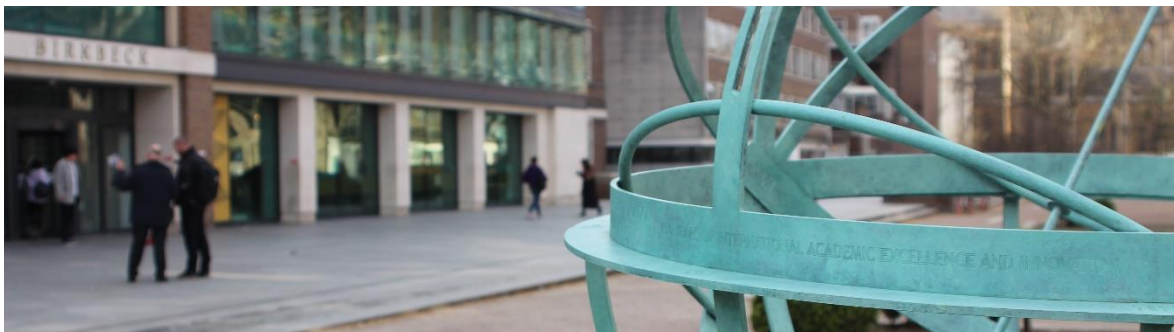
Dr Yi Ling Lai, Lecturer in Organizational Psychology received the Highly Commended Paper prize at the prestigious Emerald Literati Awards (Emerald Group Publishing, December 2020) for the paper Lai, Y. L., & Palmer, S. (2019). 'Psychology in executive coaching: an integrated literature review'. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 11(2), 143-164.

Dr Lai has also been appointed Editor of *International Coaching Psychology Review*, BPS.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Our academics have been sharing their expertise to support mental health in the workplace and sustainable working practices:

- **Professor Alexandra Beauregard** was quoted in an [article about work compensating for personal loss or trauma](#).
- **Professor Almuth McDowall** was a keynote speaker at the Royal College of Emergency Medicine Training Day – From Burnout to Brilliance (February 2021) where she spoke about teamworking. **Dr Kevin Teoh** spoke about burnout and job crafting at the same event.
- **Dr Kevin Teoh** delivered a webinar on 'The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Nurses and Midwives in the UK: Systematic Review and Recommendations' at the Workforce, Organisation and Well-being Annual Seminar (December 2020).
- **Dr Rebecca Whiting** delivered the webinars 'Collecting Qualitative Online Data' for University of Ulster Business School; 'Digital Strategizing & SAP Research' for the USA Academy of Management's Strategizing Activities and Practices (SAP) Interest Group, hosted by the University of Innsbruck; and 'Collecting Qualitative Data using Digital Methods' for the Centre for Qualitative Research, University of Bath.



REFLECTIONS ON DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM IN OUR DEPARTMENT

Dr Susan Kahn shares how colleagues are addressing inequality in the curriculum, the progress that has been made this year and the work that's still to be done.

The murder of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 sent shockwaves through our university community as it did the world. In our Department, this tragic reminder of how far we still have to go to achieve equality prompted us to take action on our curriculum and ensure we were doing our small part to redress the balance.

Asking questions about race feels risky. We worry that we will offend or leave the most important questions unasked. Yet this is the very issue that allows things to carry on without change. In the supportive and curious environment of our Department, I opened a discussion on what has changed for staff in relation to the curriculum since George Floyd's murder and what we would like to see happen next to continue moving towards racial justice.

Educating ourselves

As individuals and educators, we recognise the importance of educating ourselves on issues of race. There is a sense of shame around ignorance, which we can address by beginning to ask difficult questions. Following George Floyd's murder, our Department published a [guide of 'first stop' resources to help individuals understand institutional racism](#), the role of activism and to provide some strategies to cope with the trauma individuals have witnessed.

We engaged with [debates on how business schools can become part of the solution](#) to create fairer workplaces and a more democratic society and created and published our anti-racism statement.

Above all, if it was not there before, we now bring a heightened focus around social justice to the act of critiquing, challenging, and discussing the research, work and practice of ourselves and others.

We are aware that our work is just beginning and that the conversation about structural racism and White privilege must continue.

Introducing new perspectives

Colleagues in our Department examined the syllabi of their programmes to ensure inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives. This concept of 'inclusion' is in itself problematic, as it implies 'including' representation of Black voices in 'our' curriculum. Instead, we are trying to build a curriculum that better reflects all scholars and learners across the world. In doing so, we hope to begin normalising debate around ethical justice in our classrooms, making this a natural area to question for our students.

Diversifying course content was met with varying levels of success: where modules provide an introductory overview, or are largely statistics focused, ways to introduce new voices are not easily found. Part of the problem may well be us not knowing where to look to find alternative perspectives, reminding us that this work is not a quick fix and that complacency is one of our greatest enemies through this process. At minimum we are now able to acknowledge where teaching references are predicated on White, Western perspectives.

In other areas, we were able to make more meaningful change. For our Work and Wellbeing module, we revised the structure to include discussion of social inequality on a national and global scale. On topics such as Emotion at Work, Discrimination and Exclusion and Leadership, we have included more scholarship by Black, Asian and minority ethnic authors. We are reflecting more deeply on intersectionality and have broadened reading lists to include essays which critique concepts and deconstruct positions which are deeply problematic in our field. We also look to

understand cultural appropriation of concepts such as mindfulness. We are aware that this action does not end with reading lists and are also committed to ensuring our invited speakers are representative of our wider society.

Learning from our students

While we hope to offer a broad and critical learning experience, we appreciate the way our students continue to challenge us to consider international perspectives and not take anything that we have in the UK, or even our small area of London, for granted. One of our Coaching Psychology students, [KK Harris, discussed her perspective as a Black, American woman in a BBK connections conversation.](#)

In our student evaluations, we now ask for feedback on the extent to which our modules took diversity into consideration in its content. We know that we are by no means perfect, but the positive responses we have received from this suggest that our students notice – and appreciate – the efforts we have made so far.

What next?

As a Department, we do not want these efforts to be the work of one Summer and then forgotten. We will continue to pay attention to the material that we teach, where it comes from and who produces knowledge. The process will be an incremental change rather than a revolution and one thing we can do is make students aware of the limitations of our knowledge base.

I feel the paradox of both shame and pride. I am ashamed of how much we have taken for granted in the past, that racism is a challenge in our own field, that it is present in the research we draw on and the institutions we work in. But I am proud to be part of a Department with an openness and honesty that makes these discussions possible, and that this engagement has enabled us to grow as leaders and role models for our students.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

KIRSTY LAUDER, PHD ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY



What's your BBK story?

I first came across Birkbeck when I was looking to do a Master's in Organizational Psychology. I wanted something that I could do as a distance learning programme whilst working and Birkbeck was the only university that offered that kind of course.

I enjoyed it so much, particularly the critical thinking skills that it gave me, that I wanted to carry on doing more research, so I stayed for my PhD.

Could you tell us a bit more about your PhD?

I was looking at what reasonable adjustments there are for people living with ADHD and whether these are effective or not for adults at work. As part of my Master's, I was doing special needs assessments and writing Education Healthcare Plans for children with special needs. I realised that after the age of eighteen children drop off the system and I saw so much value in them in the workforce beyond what they couldn't do and their limits. I was particularly interested in ADHD as it has only recently been recognised as a condition that continues into

adulthood, in contrast to better-known conditions such as Autism. I'm now looking to take this research further; I've designed an intervention and am looking to see whether it's effective and if we can reduce the barriers to accessing support for individuals with ADHD.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love playing football – I've played since I was eight. I also love animals. I'm staying in South Africa at the moment, where my partner and his family are from and I love going on safari!

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

- Research conducted by **Dr Shareen Jaijee** and supervised by **Dr Caroline Kamau-Mitchell (OP)** has revealed that nearly half of female cardiologists have suffered sexism at work and over one-third have suffered sexual harassment. The research was conducted by Shareen as part of an MSc in Medical Leadership and has recently been accepted for publication in the prestigious cardiology journal *Heart*. [Jaijee, S. Kamau-Mitchell, C., Ghada, M. Hendry, C. (2021). [Sexism experienced by consultant cardiologists in the UK](#). *Heart*. Online.]
- Hwang, S., & **Beauregard, T. A.** (2021). [Contextualising intersectionality: A qualitative study of East Asian female migrant workers in the UK](#). Online First in *Human Relations*.
- **Teoh, K.R.H.**, Hassard, J., & Cox, T. (2021). [Doctors' working conditions, wellbeing and hospital quality of care: A multilevel analysis](#). *Safety Science*, Online First Publication.

Books, Chapters and Reports

- Basile, K. A., & **Beauregard, T. A.** (2021). *Boundary management: Getting the work-home balance right*. In E. Russell & C. Grant (Eds.), *Agile working and well-being*

in the digital age (pp. 35-46). Palgrave Macmillan.

- **Beauregard, T. A.**, Booth, J. E., & Whiley, L. A. (2021). *Transgender employees: Workplace impacts on health and well-being*. In J. Hassard & L. D. Torres (Eds.), *Aligning perspectives in gender mainstreaming: Gender, health, safety and wellbeing* (pp. 177-196). Springer.
- **Teoh, K., Kinman, G.,** & Hassard, J. (2021). *The relationship between healthcare staff wellbeing and patient care: It's not that simple*. In A. de Lange & Lovseth, L. (Eds.) *Healthy Healthcare* (pp 221-244). Springer.
- **Teoh, K.** & Hassard, J. (2021). *Linking organisational demands and patient care: Does healthcare workers' well-being matter*. In A. Montgomery, M. Leiter, & E. Panagopoulou (Eds.) *The Triple Challenge: Connecting Health care worker well-being, patient safety and organisational change* (pp. 41-57). Springer.



The Department of Organizational Psychology is part of Birkbeck's School of Business, Economics and Informatics.

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