Presenter’s bio and pic

Nona McDuff – Solent University

Nona McDuff is the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Students and Teaching at Solent University, Southampton. She was awarded an OBE for her services to higher education and is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Nona is currently a member of the Advance HE Peer Review Quality Committee and of the UUK’s Racial Harassment Advisory Group. She has been a panel member of the Teaching Excellence Framework and a member of the ministerial Social Mobility Advisory Group which has prioritised the challenges and barriers students face in Higher Education. As the chair of the Higher Education Race Action Group (HERAG) with over 400 members. Nona was invited to address the All Party Parliamentary Group on Higher Education on diversity in academia where she challenged the ministers to take active steps to promote social justice through education. Nona’s work on the BME attainment gap and the Inclusive Curriculum Framework which she developed with Dr Annie Hughes has gained sector interest, awarded the Guardian Teaching Excellence award (2017) and has been disseminated across five other institutions as part of the OfS catalyst programme on student success. Nona’s research interests include inclusive curricula and differential attainment and she is regularly invited to speak on disability and widening participation nationally and internationally.
Annie Hughes – Kingston University

Dr Annie Hughes has over 25 years’ experience working in the Higher Education sector. Currently, she is Head of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Centre at Kingston University. Previously she was Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and an Associate Professor (Inclusive Curriculum) at Kingston. Her disciplinary background is in Geography and she led the Geography programmes at Kingston between 2005 until 2016. Throughout her academic career, Annie has been driven by her commitment to equality in both her teaching and her research. She is dedicated to ensuring that issues of diversity and inclusion are key considerations in higher education and are recognised as essential measures of quality in academic teaching. With Nona McDuff (OBE), she developed Kingston University’s Inclusive Curriculum Framework which was awarded the Guardian Award for Teaching Excellence in 2017. Her research has been supported by Kingston University, as well as AdvanceHE, the Office for Students (OfS), the Royal Geographical Society and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). She is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and a National Teaching Fellow.

Mychelle Pride, The Open University

Mychelle Pride is Head of Student Experience and Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Business and Law at the Open University. With more than twenty years’ experience in the sector, Mychelle’s work has focused on enabling students to achieve to the best of their abilities. In her current role, Mychelle takes the strategic lead for student academic success projects including access and participation. Since September, Mychelle has been working closely with Faculty students and staff to deliver a series of initiatives to improve awarding outcomes for specific student groups.

Prior to joining the Open University, Mychelle worked for QAA and worked directly with HEFCE and dBIS/DfE to develop the TEF. At QAA, she led on student engagement in the quality of their learning experience, driving forward students as TEF assessors and panellists. Mychelle’s areas of scholarship interest are student success, student mental health and scholarly co-creation.
Grace Allen, The Open University

**Grace Allen** is an Assistant Head of Student Experience and Lecturer in business studies within the Faculty of Business and Law at The Open University. Grace has been with the University since late 2019.

Before this role, Grace was a senior academic manager at a HE College which focused on championing widening participation, and where much of the student population was of disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. As Head of Faculty, Operations and Delivery Grace supported teaching and learning, student engagement and operations across the academic faculty.

At The Open University, Grace is involved in projects focused on awarding gaps, and her research interests more broadly focus on attainment, progression and inclusion of students from diverse backgrounds and cultures within higher education.

Professor Suzanne Rab, Serle Court Chambers, London

**Professor Suzanne Rab** is a barrister at Serle Court Chambers in London. She occupies a number of academic roles including as an associate lecturer with the Open University, Professor of Commercial Law and Practice Chair at Brunel University London, Visiting Professor at Imperial College London and Senior Research Associate at the Regulatory Policy Institute, Oxford. Suzanne is author of numerous leading textbooks on comparative regulation. Suzanne is a non-executive board director of the Legal Aid Agency and advisor to the Bar Standards Board on regulatory matters. Prior to her transfer to the English bar Suzanne was a partner in an international law firm and director or economics and strategy at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Suzanne has wide experience of regulatory law, EU law and competition law matters. Suzanne has significant experience of advising on the development, implementation and application of new laws and regulatory regimes in line with international best practices, including in emerging markets.

In 2019 she was a finalist for the Inspirational Women in Law Awards, in the Barrister of the Year category.
Sara de Sousa, University of Hertfordshire

Sara de Sousa is Student Success Lead for the Business School at the University of Hertfordshire, leading on projects to address the attainment/awarding gap between BAME and White students, and increase student engagement, belonging, retention and success.

Omotolani Fatilewa, University of Hertfordshire

Omotolani Fatilewa is the BAME Student Advocate for the Business School at the University of Hertfordshire where he is currently studying for a master's degree in International Business. His role as the BAME Student Advocate has covered activities such as being a part of the planning committee for the BAME careers events, organising focus groups for BAME students, creating a BAME society, and reviewing modules to ensure inclusivity.

Prof. Liz Thomas, Edgehill University, Birmingham

Liz Thomas is professor of higher education at Edge Hill University, and an independent higher education researcher and consultant. She has more than twenty years’ experience undertaking and managing research about widening participation, student engagement, belonging, retention and success, and institutional approaches to improving the student experience and student outcomes. Much of this work has focused on inclusive learning and teaching. Liz directed two phases of the What works? Student retention and success programme; was part of the pan-European team examining student withdrawal, persistence and success in 36 countries; and has recently led research on the engagement
of commuter students, and a whole institution approach to widening participation. Liz is committed to using her research to improve student experiences and outcomes, and is currently supporting a number of higher education institutions to develop their approach to engaging commuter students. Liz is part of an Erasmus+ project ‘#Ibelong: Towards a sense of belonging in an inclusive learning environment’ piloting interventions to improve the belonging and success of first generation and ethnic minority students. This involves developing awareness and understanding about diversity and success, creating inclusive learning environments, and peer mentoring. Liz is a widening participation expert for the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework main panel, and author and editor of many books and articles. She has just written “Inclusive Teaching” for the book University Teaching in Focus (2nd Edition, edited by Lynne Hunt and Denise Chambers, Palgrave MacMillan, forthcoming).

Afua Acheampong, Nottingham Trent University

Afua Acheampong is a graduate from the Nottingham Law School, having also completed a year studying Political Science at Western Washington University. At Western Washington, her specialisms reflected on Race, Politics, and Ethnic Relations. During her time at Nottingham Trent University, Afua was engaged in various extra-curricular activities, including being President of NTU Cheerleading.

Upon finishing her degree, Afua was elected as Vice President Education at Nottingham Trent Students’ Union. In her role, she is responsible for representing 33,500 students at Nottingham Trent University on their academia, both institutionally and nationally. The role has a wide remit of responsibilities, including sitting on senior committees to influence policy, working with various departments to support initiatives and projects, and advising senior leaders. Additionally, she works with a range of people, including senior members of the institution, students, members of the community, council, and Members of Parliament.

Afua specialises in areas of diversity, communication, leadership.

Over the past two years, Afua has focused on supporting equality, diversity, and inclusion. She has conducted institution-wide research into the experiences of Black and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) students and staff and how racial inequality affects their experiences in Higher Education. This research was the springboard in the development of the ‘NTU Black Leadership Programme’, a development initiative created to empower a new generation of black students. It is the first of its kind in the sector and is championed by former Olympian, Colin Jackson CBE.

Her commitment to personal and professional development is reflected in her achievements. She is a Holocaust Educational Trust Ambassador, and ‘Houses of Parliament Student Leaders Programme’ participant and has recently been appointed
to the national Office for Students Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Advisory Group. Last year, Afua was a panellist on the TEF. She has also recently been commissioned by The Guardian to write an article addressing the ‘diversity debate’.

Afua is keen to explore careers in Higher Education and/or Equality, Diversity and Inclusion when she leaves Nottingham this July.

**Tiana Francis, Nottingham Trent University**

Tiana-Maria is in her third year of studies at Nottingham Trent University, studying an undergraduate degree in Politics and International Relations. Originally, she is from East London.

Tiana’s interests include debating, skiing, and karate. In addition to this, she enjoys working with children and young people in education on social issues and tackling perceptions of race, inequality and racial injustice in British society.

Whilst on the Black Leadership Programme, Tiana has led and developed the online forum with respective partners from the Dutch institutions. Her sessions have covered a wide range of topics including the student perspective of the Black Lives Matter movement and colourism.

Tiana is interested in career opportunities in developing training in race, diversity and inclusion. Alternatively, she is interested in journalism and media production.