



Advisory Board Meeting November 2022



In the wake of #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and new flexibility that has come out of successive lockdowns, this year's Annual Advisory Board Guest Lecture, entitled "From Rhetoric to Reality: How the Diversity & Inclusion landscape is changing and how you need to respond to it", was given by Mark Lomas – Head of Culture, Lloyds of London. Mark explored the D&I promises organisations make and their poor delivery against them. He asked, "what does good look like?", with a focus on changing systems not people, to embed Diversity and Inclusion throughout an organisation and make change stick! He stressed that to achieve this we must also deal with our history and explained how Lloyds of London is recognising and seeking to reconcile its history with the transatlantic slave trade.

As always, all our Board members took time to meet and engage with the students after.



Billie Major chaired the meeting the following day, which began with a thank you to **Baroness Gisela Stuart** who is stepping down after many years on the Board. Billie thanked Gisela for being a champion of the School, and all the introductions she made to key political figures to support events and policy engagements, her guest talks to students, and the endorsements she gave her name to in support of a range of successful funding bids. Billie then went on to welcome new member, **Dujon Smith**, joining the Board from Accenture in Chicago USA, where he is Head of their Global Black Founders Programme. Dujon is already directly advising the School on its Decolonising the Curriculum programme, and the new MSc in Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Innovation.



Professor Matt Cole then gave an update on the direction of travel for the School and discussed the recruitment of the new Dean. After which, the Board discussed and explored how they could support the School's new initiative to work with corporations, SMEs and public bodies in the West Midlands, to launch the **Birmingham Digital Innovation District** to develop digital expertise that all West Midlands employers can tap into. **Sarindar Sahota** stated this had to begin at school-level, and commended the School's accompanying [Birmingham Digital Futures](#) project, designed to match organisations to

schools throughout the region to provide a digital curriculum initiative spearheaded by the Business School in partnership with TechSheCan and PwC. Sarindar, Billie and **Marc Stone** all agreed to subsequent meetings to engage on this programme directly.



The meeting continued with the Board advising new Deputy Dean, Professor Finola Kerrigan, on the means to engage corporate PhD funding, and how to re- envision how this might be done. **Yogi Dewan** warned of the challenges of expecting companies to view this philanthropically, and **Anji Hunter** gave examples of where she'd seen this done well and counselled how to align to the interests of business, without compromising academic objectivity.



The meeting ended with a review of the [University Elevate Programme](#), to support student entrepreneurs, many of whom are from the Business School. Yogi put forward some key challenges to the model to be further explored, and the Board commended the programme for providing incubator space for the students in our new city centre location ([The Exchange](#)) and stressed to make the most of connections that could be made between this initiative and the new taught programmes being developed at the Business School, by way of case-studies, guest talks and mutually beneficial projects.

