

LJMU CELEBRATING WOMEN ACADEMICS 2021



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CELEBRATING

WOMEN ACADEMICS

Tina Purkis, Executive Director Human

Resources said: Gender Equality is very important at LJMU and this is reflected in the EDI priority plan for the next five years. We are intensifying our work to ensure that women are represented in key decision-making areas of the University. Our aim is to increase the proportion of women in Professorship, Readership and Senior leadership roles. We are also committed to developing an inclusive culture where staff and students feel safe to report acts of harassment, discrimination, hate or violence and are confident to seek support. We want our university to be a safe place for everyone, a place where people can flourish in both their studies and careers no matter who they are.

LJMU's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Team reached out to a number of inspirational women-academics across the institution and asked them to share their personal journeys.

The achievements of the women in this booklet showcase some of the truly inspiring women we have at LJMU. Some of the stories are very moving and just go to show how amazing our people are when they can overcome real difficulties and still achieve incredible things in life and in their careers.

At the end of the booklet it provides information on how to get involved in our staff networks, and how to join the ally groups. I would encourage anyone reading this to get involved. The networks all provide great support for their members, and as an ally you can also make a real difference. Only by joining together and all contributing towards the EDI changes we want to see at LJMU will things start to change for the better.



Pro VC Prof Raphaela Kane

- PRO VICE CHANCELLOR
- PROFESSOR
- FACULTY OF HEALTH



Professor Raphaela Kane has worked at LJMU since 2014, formally the Director of NAH. She was conferred with a Professorship in 2016, in recognition of a significant leadership career in both the health services and the HE sector in both Ireland and the UK. Raphaela was appointed as Interim Dean of the former Faculty of Education Health and Community in 2017 and was appointed as Pro Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Health in 2019.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHICH PATHWAY DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Academic Leadership. The application and external review focused on a senior management and leadership career trajectory in the NHS and the University sectors in both Ireland and England.**

Q: WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **My former line manager and Dean 'insisted' that it was an objective in my PDPR and that I recognise the need to synthesise my career elements and focus on the criterion for Professor application.**

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: **Networks, Peers, Mentors, Family. Support came from a variety of sources both within and outside my discipline, and within and outside my employing organisations. Formal and informal mentors and family were critical supporters. My son and my family's support was absolutely essential.**

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **Seeking consistent advice on the application process and the appropriate focus for my application. To some extent maintaining confidence in terms of the timing of the application. Nominating external assessors that are independent of your work and collaboration but understand your sector and trajectory. Time was also a factor.**

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: **I am a mentor for the Women's Professor & Readership Networks and have also mentored individuals, men and women developing in leadership roles. I am a member of a variety of networks.**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH WOMEN CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR READERSHIP/ PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Planning and time to prepare, write, recognising the level of editing to ensure the most relevant focus. Working closely with a mentor with an understanding of the process and the route. Be sure to triangulate advice when it appears to be conflicting.**



Prof Zoe Knowles

- PROFESSOR OF ENGAGEMENT & LEARNING
- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- SCHOOL OF SPORT & EXERCISE SCIENCES
- HCPC REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST
- CHAIR OF LJMU'S WOMEN ACADEMICS NETWORK & WOMEN PROFESSORS NETWORK
- FIRST EVER FEMALE CHAIR OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SPORT & EXERCISE SCIENCES (BASES)



Professor Zoe Knowles is a member of LJMU's alumni and has worked at LJMU since 1998. Professor Knowles is passionate about equality, diversity and inclusion, and sits as the Chair of LJMU's Women Academics & Professors Networks.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHICH PATHWAY DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSORSHIP/READERSHIP?

A: **Social and Economic Engagement (AKA: Engaged Scholar)**

Q: WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **It was encouragement from colleagues after some reflection on my unique portfolio of work and recognition externally for this.**

Q: HAVE YOU TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING/FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES? IF SO, HOW USEFUL DID YOU FIND THESE ARRANGEMENTS?

A: **Yes, I returned from 2 periods of maternity leave on 0.6 FTE then 0.8 before changing to a term-time only contract with a flexible working element. I have been on this TTO contract since 2009 and it helps me to maintain my work/life balance and sense of wellbeing.**

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER AND WHAT/WHOM HELPED YOU THE MOST?

A: **I have been supported by excellent colleagues who gave me a nudge when I needed it to**

apply for promotion, roles and external posts. They were also there to remind me when I needed to 'take my foot off the pedal' at times. My family have supported me through personally challenging times and finding childcare that is sympathetic to your working hours and role is also important.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **Knowing when was the right time to submit an application. As women we typically wait longer than male colleagues to submit for conferment and we have to seek out good mentoring and critical friends in the application development process, then submit with confidence. I had excellent mentoring and feel I'm paying this forward now by supporting other colleagues in such ways**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH WOMEN CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Maintaining the work/life/family balance is important and you have to create opportunities for all of these activities including that of focus on your own wellbeing. Find a mentor that understands your career ambitions and can really challenge you when needed. Be ready for that challenge and make a change!**



Dr Theresia Komang Ralebitso-Senior

- SENIOR LECTURER
- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- SCHOOL PHARMACY AND BIOMOLECULAR SCIENCES



Dr Theresia Komang Ralebitso-Senior has worked at LJMU since 2018, during which time she has taken on the roles of EDI and Athena SWAN coordinator for the School Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: I truly enjoy teaching which I link directly with my research interests. Therefore, I endeavour to practice research-led teaching. What I find most rewarding is when students engage fully and enthusiastically with lectures and different or new research topics. Although I am relatively new at LJMU, and in my roles for EDI and Athena, I am enjoying the new connections that I am making with colleagues within my School, Faculty and parts of the wider University.

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER AND WHAT/WHOM HELPED YOU THE MOST?

A: I am the eldest of four children and come from a very close-knit family. They are, and have always been, my tremendous sources of support. I feel fortunate, as I have always enjoyed support from my teachers at primary and high school. This continued with some lecturers and professors at University subsequently becoming my mentors. Some of my academic colleagues have become both research collaborators and friends. I have enjoyed further championship and mentoring from my husband who was also an academic for all of his career.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: My first degree was a Bachelor in a Pre-Medical programme at Queens College of the City University of New York, USA. At the end of this degree I had to join my parents and sister to return to Lesotho, my birth country in Southern Africa. This had a direct impact on my intended career plan to be a medical doctor and it took me a few of years to find/decide what to do next.

My self-esteem was very low indeed. I overcame this challenge by holding on to my aspiration to continue with my postgraduate studies. As a result, I sought and thankfully received support from senior Management, while employed at the Ministry of Health, to then register for my BSc(Hons) at the University of Natal, South Africa. I then registered immediately thereafter for my PhD.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU?

A: Come to LJMU. I was welcome here from day one and I know you will be too. It's been said many times before but this is probably because it is true – never give up on your aspirations for progression. Sometimes you will have to change direction slightly but do look for new opportunities to continue to develop and realise your hopes. Do not be afraid of change. Indeed, sometimes we need to find change in order to realise our full potential. Use the degree that you have to launch a new career move than you had perhaps not envisaged originally – recognise and use opportunities that are available to you. Continue to rely on your support system and be there to offer support to others.



Dr Tori Sprung

- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- SCHOOL OF SPORT & EXERCISE SCIENCES
- SCHOOL EDI COORDINATOR



Dr Tori Sprung joined LJMU as a lecturer in 2018. Tori led the formation of a School of Sport and Exercise Sciences' Athena Swan self-assessment team and the School were subsequently successful in their application for Athena Swan Bronze status in 2019. This marked the first successful departmental submission in LJMU. Tori was appointed as School EDI Coordinator in January 2020 and now leads an EDI Panel of 24 staff and 3 students.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: I really enjoy the part of my job that involves the development of students and ECRs. Inspiring curiosity and independent thinking excites me so much more than simply teaching through knowledge exchange. It is a real privilege to be so involved in someone's journey and personal development.

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: During my years as an ECR you generally fit into a stereotypical hierarchal model whereby you are dependent on your supervisors to 'keep you on track' and for reassurance. However, as I become more independent I find myself looking sideways to my peers, and even to students, to keep my practices grounded and current.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: Talking freely and fluently is something most people take for granted, but when you have

a speech impediment, life is not so simple (especially when you are a HE Lecturer). Personally, I have worked on various coping strategies but the biggest day-to-day help comes from my colleagues, and our students - who are always reassuring and patient which means I never feel intimidated or isolated. From stumbling over every other word as a child, I can go whole days without audibly stammering and deliver lectures to upwards of 200 students. That prospect was, truly, an impossibility to my 10 year old self, I NEVER thought it would be possible!

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: I am a member of the Disability and Women's Network and an ally to the BAME and LGBT+ Networks. Involvement in these networks really influences how I lead our EDI initiative within our School, by keeping updated on issues that are central to our community. While we have a collective responsibility to practice EDI principles; fundamentally, impetus is borne of those in positions of leadership.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU?

A: Choose to study and work in an area that you feel really passionate about and, most importantly, work hard to continue developing. LJMU is a supportive and inclusive community that will facilitate this journey.



Prof Gillian Hutcheon

- PROFESSOR
- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND BIOMOLECULAR SCIENCES
- HEAD OF INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH



Professor Gillian Hutcheon has worked at LJMU since 1999, during which time she was promoted to Reader, was appointed as Head of Institute for Health Research (6-year secondment), and promoted to Professor. She is also a mother to three children

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHICH PATHWAY DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSORSHIP/READERSHIP?

A: **Research & Scholarship**

Q: WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Firstly, to get recognition for my research and contributions to research leadership, and secondly to give me the confidence to think about future career prospects as a Research Leader at a senior management level.**

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: **My current role involves helping other researchers come together in a team to undertake new projects. I find it very rewarding when they achieve successes, such as securing external funding or publishing a new paper. I also love to talk to people, and find out about their interests and goals. I am fortunate that this role allows me to do just that.**

Q: HAVE YOU TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING/FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES? IF SO, HOW USEFUL DID YOU FIND THESE ARRANGEMENTS?

A: **Yes, I worked part time for several years after having my third child. This was useful in helping me maintain a work life balance, but eventually my workload crept up so I was effectively doing a full time job with part time hours. Now I work full time but take advantage of the unpaid parental leave to take additional time off in the summer to spend with my children.**

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **The biggest challenge was returning to work after maternity leave – and I had to do this 3 times! It was very difficult with a young family to return to a full teaching load and getting my research up and running again. Especially because I had missed a year of progress and had been absent from the ‘network’. I think I’m yet to overcome this hurdle ten years on, but I’m keen to support change so that other new mothers have a different experience upon their return to mine.**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH WOMEN CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Start thinking about your application way in advance before you apply so that you can seek feedback from mentors and colleagues about where your strengths and weaknesses lie. Then develop a plan to plug any gaps before submission.**



Professor Abir Hussain

- PROFESSOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE
- FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
- SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS



Professor Abir Hussain began work at LJMU as a Senior Lecturer in 2000. Abir then became a Reader 2014 and went on to gain her Professorial status in 2018.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: **I find that my most rewarding work is with my students and being respected by my colleagues. I also enjoy the challenge from supervising my research students.**

Q: PLEASE TELL US WHICH PATHWAY DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **I used the research pathway.**

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: **My colleagues at the department.**

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **My biggest challenge during my career is the balance between work and family time. I have two children and I am a single mother. Commuting between Liverpool and Manchester to collect them from after school clubs, when I had been working late and juggling finances, was challenging at times. Luckily, I had the support of my friends and family who kindly stepped in to assist me when I needed help.**

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: **Yes, particularly the Aurora Leadership Programme, which has given me the confidence to express myself.**

Q: WHAT DOES EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) MEAN TO YOU?

A: **EDI is the base for a healthy work environment and without it I cannot see myself keep moving**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU?

A: **I would say work hard without expecting any rewards as reward will come anyway because you are working hard.**



Dr Lynne Boddy

- READER IN CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- FACULTY OF SCIENCE
- SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCES



Dr Lynne Boddy has worked at LJMU since 2004, during which time she completed a PhD, was appointed as a Lecturer in Physical Activity and Health within the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences, became a Reader in Children's Physical Activity, was then appointed head of the Physical Activity Exchange and became a mum to two children.

Q & A we asked...

Q: WHICH PATHWAY DID YOU ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSORSHIP/READERSHIP?

A: **Research & Scholarship**

Q: WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **I felt my profile was consistent with the profile of a Reader. I had been considering applying and seeking advice from senior colleagues for approximately 2 years prior to writing the application.**

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: **Yes, I engaged in the Aurora programme in its first year and have completed some ILM leadership and coaching training. I'm also working through the current training sessions for line managers at LJMU. The various courses have helped me to understand some of the theoretical aspects of leadership and given me some useful skills to build upon.**

Q: HAVE YOU TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING/FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES? IF SO, HOW USEFUL DID YOU FIND THESE ARRANGEMENTS?

A: **Yes, very useful, though not well understood in general. I now have two young children, so flexible working is essential to my family life.**

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **The key was a long lead in time. I had been preparing for around two years before applying. Writing the letter, CV etc. was challenging because of word count limits and the detailed information needed in the CV. I asked four senior colleagues to critically review the application, which was very helpful.**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH WOMEN CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: **Yes, plan early. You need to plan ahead and get some feedback from senior colleagues that have been through the process and/or worked on the conferment panel at least 12 months before applying, so that any gaps in the CV can be addressed prior to the application. Don't underestimate how long it takes to complete the application, it's good to have a rough draft ready before the deadlines are announced.**



Dr Emma Vickers

- SENIOR LECTURER
- FACULTY OF ARTS PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES
- HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE



Dr Emma Vickers has worked at LJMU since 2013 years, during which time Emma has championed LGBTIQ+ equality and led on a number of related staff network events.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: My students, without whom I would be lost. I also love the work that I do as part of my interest in public engagement and impact. I have collaborated with some extraordinary people and organisations in order to spread the message that LGBTQ+ people and their histories are incredibly important.

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: My line manager (David Clampin) and my colleagues in History and HSS continue to be a phenomenal source of support.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: Not feeling good enough and feeling like an imposter. I'm not sure that I've overcome either of these challenges, but then they're intrinsic to the wider structures of HE.

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: LJMU is a wonderful research network that has exposed me to colleagues and research that has been really enriching. I am also part of the HSS Athena Swan committee which has illuminated both the progressiveness and the challenges facing LJMU in relation to female staff and students. I have organised a few LGBTQ+ events at LJMU, including public talks by Stuart Milk and Tom Robinson. In terms of my career, these events contributed to my nomination for the role of faculty EDI champion. I would like to think that I am a visible force for change at LJMU and a fierce protector of minority rights.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU OR ANY CURRENT STAFF/STUDENTS WISHING TO PROGRESS IN THEIR CAREERS?

A: Be authentic. Only good things can come of it. Another would be 'kindness is king and love leads the way.' I have some wonderful memories of working for LJMU. It is embedded in one of the friendliest and most generous cities in the world.



Catherine Bonser

- SENIOR LECTURER
- FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW
- LIVERPOOL BUSINESS SCHOOL



Cath Bonser has worked at LJMU since 2012, after selling her second business in coaching new tech start-ups. Cath is a proud mother of two and former Programme Manager Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship at LJMU.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: The most rewarding part of my job is teaching and seeing students grow in confidence during their programme. I also enjoy mentoring students who need that extra bit of help to achieve their potential and to help them recognise that not everyone learns in the same way. I try to introduce my students to various learning approaches and let them find the one that suits them. This is what attracted me to setting up the apprenticeship programme, as I have dyspraxia and dyslexia, so just reading and listening does not help me learn. I have to use practical experiences

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: I was encouraged to be ambitious and learn by my mother. Whilst I worked at OCLC I had two very supportive female managers (A VP in America and the MD in Europe). Without their support and encouragement, I would not have had the confidence to do my Masters and believe I could be the MD of an international company.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: I am actually quite reserved and have always worked in a male dominated environment. It has taken me a long time to become who I want to be and I think that age and supportive people around me have helped me to overcome this.

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: I have participated in the LGBTIQ+ staff network activities and have taken on the role of co-chair for the past two years. The members of the group are very inclusive, welcoming and arrange several networking events per each year, which helps when you need a friendly face in other departments. I have also taken the opportunity to attend a number of researcher and staff development programmes, such as introduction to coaching and mentoring. All of these events have enabled me to continue to develop as an individual, develop my skills and network within the university.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU OR ANY CURRENT STAFF/STUDENTS WISHING TO PROGRESS IN THEIR CAREERS?

A: LJMU is a genuinely welcoming place for everyone. There are many opportunities to continue your personal and professional development, but it is up to you to register and attend. The more you do, the more you meet the great people that work and study at the university and feel part of LJMU.



Dominique Walker

- FACULTY OF ARTS PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES
- SCHOOL OF JUSTICE STUDIES



I started as a lecturer in Policing Studies in 2020, just before lockdown. Because of that, I've not yet been in the office! Since starting, I've have taught several modules across the School of Justice Studies. and joined and supported the attainment gap council. I have also joined LJMU's first Decolonial Network, and we are working on ways of reframing, rethinking, and reconstructing the current curriculum, in order to make it better and more inclusive. I think my greatest achievement throughout all of this is managing to also home school my two children, while writing chapters for my PhD. I've also been working in a social enterprise group called The Goddess Projects - working to support and help black women and women of colour in our communities. Surviving and still working during these tough times is ultimately my proudest achievement to date.

Q & A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: **Helping students, supporting staff and identifying ways to design curriculum and content that encourages our students to critically think, analyse what is taught, and deliver transformative education that moves words into action.**

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: **I have several mentors - white, black, male, female and non-binary; who are so very helpful and guide, support and listen to my ideas. They are able to help me form a pathway to achieve my personal goals, while reminding me to stay present and sane. I also have the**

pleasure of working alongside the equality team who are always on hand to listen, guide and support. Also, my partner, my mother, my siblings and my children, who are always there and so supportive and understanding.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **Managing my time. I am still yet to overcome this - any suggestions, please send on a postcard! I do wonder about cloning... maybe if I had a clone I could get twice as much done - it's one of the only solutions I have come up with yet!**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU?

A: **Come to LJMU, especially if you're a black women, its live here! Come to an institution that delivers on a serious commitment to creating a transformative and pedagogically inclusive learning space for all members of the university- staff and students, no matter what your background or ethnicity.**



Prof Joasia Krysa

- PROFESSOR
- FACULTY OF ARTS PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES
- LIVERPOOL SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN



Professor Joasia Krysa has worked at LJMU since 2015, initially holding a partnership post across Liverpool School of Art and Design and Liverpool Biennial that combined an academic research with her practice as a curator of contemporary art. During this time she co-curated several Biennial editions and at LJMU she took on a number of research leadership roles, progressing to the positions of Professor of Exhibition Research and Head of Art and Design subject. She is also part of a steering committee for the Faculty's Institute of Art and Technology and leads Exhibition Research Lab, a research group and a public exhibitions venue at LSAD. In her former role she was Artistic Director of an arts institution in Denmark, and worked internationally on exhibition projects. She is a passionate believer in empowerment through education and art.

Q & A we asked...

Q: WHAT MADE YOU APPLY FOR YOUR READERSHIP/PROFESSORSHIP?

A: Working extensively over a number of years as an academic, curator, and director - both in the UK and internationally - I arrived to the position where I felt I could enhance my contribution to the institution and my field of work, very much encouraged by my line manager.

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM, DURING YOUR CAREER AND WHAT/WHOM HELPED YOU THE MOST?

A: My career has developed over a long period of time and not always in the most predictable way or how I planned. At the very beginning I wasn't quite sure what my path was - I studied International Politics, Cultural Theory, and finally Contemporary Curating, to then find

myself interested in new media and digital art and collaborating with Media Art Biennial WRO, before taking up my first academic job. This has become my modus operandi working across the academic and cultural/art sectors, seizing opportunities and thriving on challenges. I have developed my career through extensive networks, and through a number of close colleagues in the field who served as mentors. My most formative role model and the person who I admire the most is my mother, herself the first generation of academic women who started her work and education in the post war period, and who instilled a strong sense of curiosity, ambition, and a strong belief that everything was possible. I grew up in a culture and at a time when gender equality played out quite differently - from the education system to work environment to everyday life there was a sense of empowerment and equality, and open opportunities to all, without stating it. At LJMU, I have gained extraordinary support from my line manager and Director of the School.

Q: HOW IS YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE AS A READER/PROFESSOR?

A: My work is very intense, often extensively beyond work-life balance, so it requires great skill in time/tasks management and multitasking, which I am progressively trying to develop. I am also training myself to be able to strike a balance between perfectionism and getting things done efficiently.

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: To be able to communicate my achievements and their significance to the panel made up of representatives from different fields and positions, often outside of my specific field. And most importantly not to be discouraged and persevere.



Prof Valerie Fleming

- PROFESSOR
- FACULTY OF HEALTH
- SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH



Professor Valerie Fleming has worked within the School of Nursing and Allied Health since 2017, during which time she has supported students during their studies to achieve their greatest potentials.

Q&A we asked...

Q: WHAT DID YOUR JOURNEY BEFORE LJMU LOOK LIKE?

A: I dropped out of university way back, deciding I wanted to be a nurse - so that's what I did. My aim was to work on board a cruise liner, but on the way to getting the experience I became a midwife. This job took me travelling to India where I gained amazing experience. After some time, the backpack was on and I headed to the Thai Cambodian border where there was a refugee crisis happening. This proved to be even more experience for a fairly junior nurse and midwife. Finally, I ended up in New Zealand, where I planned to spend the next 12 months gaining the necessary experience that would enable me to cruise. In my second year (yes I liked it!) I heard about nurses "doing Massey" and being of an inquiring nature (nosey) I discovered that Massey university was offering a distance education programme for nurses to gain a BA. In 1984 this was revolutionary, so I enrolled and was able to continue working, skiing and lots of other things. It was a terrific opportunity and I gained my degree in five years.

Just as I finished they made their Masters' degree more open, so I was first to sign up. The day I submitted my thesis two years later, I also submitted my application for a job...and got it! It was tough to leave my post

as the country's first independent midwife but fantastic experience, and I soon also registered for my PhD. The commonality is that I was always seeking new challenges and after completing my PhD in 1994, I was again restless. The job I was offered was back in my native Scotland where I became a senior lecturer. I started to chase the research grants and they came. I always included junior staff to give them experience and made sure all our names were on the authorship. In 2002, as I was working for our World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Centre leading a programme in Kosovo, I got the news that I had gained promotion to professor. My office in Kosovo was in the same corridor as the Prime Minister's, and as I raced along to tell my colleagues, the whole parliament got to hear about it! How they helped me to celebrate will never be forgotten. Since 2002, I have worked in many countries, at first under the auspices of Glasgow Caledonian and then directly for the WHO. I have always grasped the chances that came my way. Sometimes there were mistakes, but on the whole, they've worked to the benefit of the community we serve.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU OR ANY CURRENT STAFF/STUDENTS WISHING TO PROGRESS IN THEIR CAREERS?

A: Don't turn down opportunities. Create your own opportunities. Always involve others. Remember that we are in a global economy. Embrace the unknown. Don't be afraid of disappointments. In short: go for it!



Dr Denise Lee

- FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
- SCHOOL OF CIVIL ENGINEERING AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT



I started as Senior Lecturer in 2012 as a mother of one, since then I have continued to work full time and have had two children since being at LJMU. During my time at LJMU I have been involved in summer schools, outreach work and have had the opportunity to progress to become programme leader in 2020. I have been actively engaged in EDI and have been lucky enough to be part of the team preparing the Race Equality Charter. I am also chair of the school's EDI committee, as well as being involved in the BAME network.

Q & A we asked...

Q: WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

A: **Being able to support students from a diverse background and see them progress and grow academically under our support and guidance.**

Q: WHERE DID YOU GAIN SUPPORT FROM DURING YOUR CAREER?

A: **The most support has been given to me through my Director of School, who has always provided me with guidance and opportunities to be involved in wider University projects.**

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE DURING YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID YOU OVERCOME THIS?

A: **Work life balance. As a mother of three young children, working full time has not been easy. Without the understanding of my managers and without the support of my family, especially my parents, I would not have been able to progress in my career as much as I have.**

Q: HAVE YOU ENGAGED IN ANY STAFF NETWORK OR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT RELATED EVENTS/INITIATIVES AT LJMU AND IF SO, HOW HAVE THESE ACTIVITIES HELPED YOU WITHIN YOUR CURRENT ROLE OR CAREER?

A: **I engage with the BAME network and endeavour to attend as many EDI workshops and training schemes as I can. I have recently started to attend Women Academics sessions too. Attending the EDI and BAME sessions have allowed me to contribute to the wider EDI agenda at an institutional level. I have also been part of a team who have been awarded a research grant to look at student perception of the Colonised Curriculum.**

Q: WHAT DOES EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI) MEAN TO YOU?

A: **As a mother of three, having experienced discrimination myself, equality and inclusion is my passion. It's very important to me that people are treated equally and everyone is given the opportunity to achieve their best and reach their own goals. Those goals will be different for everyone, but everyone should definitely be given the opportunity to do this.**

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANY PEARLS OF WISDOM THAT YOU COULD SHARE WITH ANY PROSPECTIVE STAFF/STUDENTS, CONSIDERING WORKING/STUDYING AT LJMU?

A: **If you are passionate about making a difference and you are aligned to "modern civic" then you'll find that LJMU is a great place to work. There are challenges, but from the biggest challenges come the biggest rewards. Those rewards are people from different race, social and economic backgrounds, achieving their goals.**

How to Join LJMU's Equality Staff Networks and Ally Groups

Did you know LJMU has a number of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Staff Networks and related Ally Groups, that LJMU and JMSU staff can join?

EDI STAFF NETWORKS & ALLY GROUPS:

- LJMU Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Staff Network
- LJMU Dis-Ability Staff Network
- LJMU Together (LGBTIQ+) Staff Network
- LJMU Women Academics Network (Women Profs, Readers and Pre-Readers/ECR)

EQUALITY ALLY GROUPS:

- Race Equality Allies
- Disability Equality Allies
- LGBTIQ+ Equality Allies

If you would like to join any of the groups outlined above, please email equality@ljmu.ac.uk with your request and you will be added to the corresponding mailing list. After which, you will receive invites to network meetings, events and receive related information.

To find out more, please visit LJMU's Equality Networks, Committees and Champions webpages:

<https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/staff/edi/equality-networks-and-champions>