UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK **WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE** **RESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 March 2024** **9:30 – 11:30**			
Present	Professor Lorenzo Frigerio	LF	Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education) (Chair)
	Paul Blagburn	PB	Head of Widening Participation (Secretary)
	Adam Child	AC	Academic Registrar
	Professor Matthew Clayton	MC	Head of PAIS, Faculty of Social Sciences representative
	Professor Rebecca Freeman	RF	Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
	Professor Letizia Gramaglia	LG	Head of Academic Development
	Associate Professor Lee Griffin	LGri	Academic Director, Postgraduate Taught Education
	Professor Ruth Hewston	RH	Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning
	Elizabeth Hough	EH	Director of Admissions
	Sue Jones	SJ	Head of Student Finance
	Mya Kaur	MK	Students' Union WP Part-Time Officer
	Professor Nina Anne Lawrence	NAL	Head of Warwick Foundation Studies
	Professor Tim Lockley	TL	Head of History, Faculty of Arts
	Vaishnavi Ravi	VR	Students' Union Representative (Postgraduate) (until 10.30)
	Emily Reid	ER	Director of Student Experience, WMS
	Simon Stearn	SS	Chief Data Officer/IDG
	Professor Derrick Watson	DW	Head of Psychology, Faculty of SEM representative
	Roberta Wooldridge Smith	RWS	Director of Student Opportunity
Attending	Amanda Bishop	AB	WP Faculty Coordinator, SEM
	Claire Edden	CE	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Social Sciences; WP Student Advisory Group Co-Chair
	Rosalyn Forbes	RF	Head of Philanthropy, Development and Alumni Engagement (representing Natalie Lloyd)
	Victoria Hill	VH	WP Faculty Coordinator, Arts (until 10.45)
	Cherryl Jones	CJ	Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager
	Catherine McNicholl	CM	Widening Participation Manager
Ref	**Item**		
037	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from: Adele Browne, (Director of Student Experience); Baljit Gill, (Widening Participation Manager (Assistant Secretary); Natalie Lloyd, (Deputy Director of Development); Andy Smith, (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding); Patrick Tissington, (Academic Director of Employability and Skills).		
038	**Declarations of Interest** No new declarations were made.		
039	**Minutes of last meeting on 30 January 2024** The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2024 (039-WPC140324) were received and approved.		
040	**Matters arising from last meeting on 30 January 2024** The Chair asked how the WP Conference went.		

	AB, CE, VH confirmed it had gone well – 171 delegates booked places with around 120 attendees. Across the day there were 17 sessions including several lead by students. Slides and notes will be shared in due course.

	Chair's Update and Governance
041	**Chair's Business and Action**
	a) The Education & Student Experience (ESE) Strategy was launched two weeks ago with the 1-day conference. The product of that was the circulation of the Green Paper (see link) about where the University sees itself between now and 2030. Colleagues are encouraged to attend the upcoming consultation events and give feedback through the relevant channels. The plan is to finalise the first draft by mid-May, with a high-level strategy paper shared with Council to follow. The implementation plan will be developed over the summer, with both set to be launched over the next academic year. b) The Academic Governance Review Green Paper is running alongside the ESE • **Education and Student Experience Strategy Green Paper** • **Academic Governance Review Green Paper**

	Strategy and Priorities
042	**Access and Participation Plan Development**

	The Committee received a paper from the Head of Widening Participation (042-WPC140324), along with slides to illustrate progress made.
	
	PB outlined the Assessment of Performance to date:
	
	• Considerable work has gone into the development of the assessment of performance which has generated a set of institutional risks to equality of opportunity for consideration.
	• The assessment included detailed analysis across all stages of the student lifecycle for a range of student characteristics compared to their associated comparator groups (4-year average) and benchmarked against sector and comparator institution data.
	• Risks were identified using a RAG rating process, so if a gap exists between one group and a comparator group that was >8%, or if just below this level but the gap was higher than the national average or comparator institution levels, this would indicate a significant institutional risk.
	• Once these high-level risks were identified, the statistical significance of the risks was considered, and if not statistically significant, they would not be considered as an institutional risk.
	• Since the papers were shared, further progress has been made in terms of refinement of the risks and the objectives, recognising the rapid pace required to get the paper through the committee stages.
	• Data sets – to note that there is a move away from using area-based low-participation indicators (e.g., POLAR or TUNDRA) and focussing instead on using IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) and eligibility for FSM (Free School Meals) as these are stronger indicators of individual circumstances.
	• The consultation process for the APP has been very positive, with staff and student workshops providing helpful and constructive input.
	• From the student workshops, the following themes came out of these conversations, in addition to the OfS EORR:
	  o Cost of living
	  o Belonging and mattering

- o Information and communication on assessment
- o Staff diversity
- o Academic regulations
- o Academic skills and transition support
- o Inclusive curriculum and delivery
- The assessment of performance identified nine institutional risks to equality of opportunity, which has fed into six draft institutional objectives. The level of ambition for the objectives and language used to frame that was still being determined. The draft objectives include:

Objective 1:

Warwick will increase the proportion of entrants from the most economically disadvantaged groups (IMD quintile 1) from 11.4% in 2021-22 to x by 2028-

Objective 2:

Warwick will eliminate the continuation gap between students with a declared mental health condition and students with no disability reducing to XXX by 2028-29.

Objective 3:

Warwick will eliminate the continuation gap between students with a social and communication impairment and students with no disability reducing to XXX by 2028-29.

Objective 4:

Warwick will reduce the completion gap for mature students, reducing to XXX by 2028-29.

Objective 5:

Warwick will eliminate the awarding gap between White and Black Students, reducing this to **x** by 2028-29.

Objective 6:

Warwick will eliminate the awarding gap between students from low socio-economic backgrounds (IMD Q1) compared to higher socio-economic backgrounds (IMD Q5), reducing to **x** by 2028-29.

- Some of these form part of the university's existing targets, recognising that in the long-term, none of these gaps should exist, but recognising that it will take time to get there, there is a need to be realistic about what is achievable within the next plan.
- Question regarding Objective 5 – White/Black Awarding Gap and the relevance for that within Warwick, departmental differences regarding different ethnicities.
    - o Data across the sector bears out that this is still the largest awarding gap.
    - o To add some context – a further analysis of the offer making data (for Race Equality follow up) it was black students who had the statistically significant variation in terms of a lower offer rate. Conversely, in UK context, the analysis showed that British Asian students were more likely than White British to get an offer, even when controlled for the most selective departments.
    - o Data Dashboards will be available to departments, enabling departments to set their own plans based on their context.
    - o Noted the 'tension' between what has to be reported to the OfS as the 'absolute' priority and the institutional priorities, which encompass the whole student body. Importance on how this is framed so the students don't sense that one group is more important than another.
- Question on Objectives 2 & 3
    - o A question was raised on these objectives, to consider the intersectionality of mental health and other conditions; noting that previous APP had broad term of 'disability' whereas this has been refined to focussing on those with a social and communication impairment.
- Question on student support

- o Issues raised by students in those workshops focussed on things that would be harder to measure (e.g., cost of living, sense of belonging)
  - o Each objective has to have intervention; each intervention has to have evaluation, some of that will come from student insight, including NSS
- Question asked on what the 'x' will be (e.g., 'reducing to xxx by 2028-29')
- Positive reflection on the last 5 years – where we were now and where we want to be; what are our ambitions? We know some of the things we need to do; ambitions need to be high enough so we know we have to take action now
- Mature Students / Commuter Students – not reflected specifically in the APP, questions raised as to what the institution response to support these groups will be.
- Interventions – example of the type of intervention required was shared, developed through consultation, focussing on student success.

- A thorough discussion on proposed support for academic skills, improving communication on assessment, support for students who need to access mitigating circumstances, personal tutoring support, understanding the differing challenges across departments (e.g., staff/student ratios can vary widely) and understanding different students' needs (e.g., anecdotal evidence to suggest some students are having to miss lectures regularly as they can't afford to miss their part-time job)

Financial Support Review

- As part of the APP development, a workstream was created to review the Warwick Bursary and consider the risk to equality of opportunity that cost pressures was placing on students.
- That the Warwick Bursary has not been reviewed for over eight years which has exposed challenges around targeting, wider economic factors, and how understandable the support is.
- The group has been reviewing the eligibility criteria for the bursary and is in the process of producing a set of recommendations for consideration. Recommendations will be underpinned by the following principles:

  i. That our financial support provision is targeted to those in the greatest financial need and makes provision for those without family support (independent) and/or those with additional responsibilities.

  ii. That our financial support provision is equitable, transparent, and easily understood by prospective and current students.

  iii. That our financial support provision supports students, as far as possible, to engage effectively in their studies and wider student experience.

  iv. That our financial support is underpinned by robust evaluation (including a Theory of Change) and a strong evidence base.

  v. That our financial support is competitive within the sector and reflects our strategic ambition to be sector leading in this space as indicated by the recently refreshed strategy to 2030.

- Proposed criteria changes include:
  - o Removing the requirement to be in receipt of the SFE tuition fee and maintenance loan which would benefit students from some religious or cultural backgrounds.
  - o Removing school background criterion
  - o Addressing financial circumstances for medical students
  - o Reviewing the household income threshold levels
  - o That consideration was being given to remove the Additional Bursary as a component of the Warwick Bursary to improve the understanding of the support available

	through the bursary. Care Leaver and Estranged student bursaries would be maintained. • That the financial considerations and overall affordability would need to be factored into the final proposal which throughout the duration of the plan will increase the overall cost from current levels. • That the options shared may not be the final proposal as further refinement needs to be made with the criteria and costings. Consideration will be given to cost mitigation. • It was raised about the impact of the Warwick Undergraduate Global Excellence Scholarship Scheme (WUGES) and how funding is deployed to support strategic priorities. • That the financial pressures medical students are under was expressed to the group. • That there is linkage to the wider Cost of Living work to support the affordability of the student experience, including promoting what can be done that is free, building community and engagement. Support for Part time work that is coordinated across the University providing greater opportunities to students. The Widening Participation Committee endorsed the current developments outlined with the plan. **ACTION** The Committee will receive the final draft of the APP at the next meeting.
	Monitoring and Practice
043	**IntoUniversity Birmingham Update** Deferred to next meeting
	Other
044	**AOB** There was no other business.
	Close by 11.30 **Next meeting: 14 May 2024**