

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK**  
**WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE**  
**RESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2023**  
**9.30-11.30AM**

Ref	Item		
<b>Present</b>	Professor Christopher Hughes	CH	Pro Vice Chancellor (Education), (Chair)
	Kieran Barry	KB	SU WP Part-Time Officer
	Paul Blagburn	PB	Head of Widening Participation, (Secretary)
	Adam Child	AC	Academic Registrar
	Baljit Gill	BG	Widening Participation Manager, (Assistant Secretary)
	Associate Professor Lee Griffin	LGri	Academic Director, Postgraduate Taught Education
	Paul Johnstone	PJ	Head of Analytics
	Sue Jones	SJ	Head of Student Finance
	Professor Derrick Watson	DW	Head of Psychology, Faculty of SEM
	Roberta Wooldridge Smith	RWS	Director of Student Opportunity
<b>Attending</b>	Cherryl Jones	CJ	WP Access and Lifecycle Manager; Student Success and Progression Working Group Co-Chair
	Rosalyn Forbes	RFo	Leadership and Regular Giving Manager, representing Deputy Director of Development
	Victoria Hill	VH	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Arts
	Iain McKenny	IM	Head of Sports Delivery (at 11.00 item 046)
	Gavin Schwartz-Leeper	GS	Associate Professor, Liberal Arts
	Dr Tammy Thiele	TT	WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair
036	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Amanda Bishop, (WP Faculty Co-ordinator, SEM); Professor Celia Brown, (Professor, Warwick Medical School); Adele Browne, (Director of Student Experience); Claire Edden, (WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Social Sciences; WP Student Advisory Group Co-Chair); Dr Rebecca Freeman, (Dean of Students); Professor Letizia Gramaglia, (Head of Academic Development); Dr Elizabeth Hough, (Head of Admissions); Professor Ruth Hewston, (Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning); Kate Ireland, (Director of Centre for Teacher Education); Nina Anne Lawrence, (Head of Academic Department, Foundation Studies); Natalie Lloyd, (Deputy Director of Development); Chih-Hsiang Lo, (Students' Union Representative - Education); Professor Tim Lockley, (History, Faculty of Arts Representative); Samuel McClenaghan, (Deputy Finance Director); Catherine McNicholl, (Widening Participation Manager); Hamza Rehman, (Students' Union Representative - Postgraduate); Kulbir Shergill, (Director of Social Inclusion); Professor Emma Smith, (Director of Education Studies; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair); Fiona Parsons, (Information &amp; Digital Group); Professor Patrick Tissington, (Academic Director of Employability and Skills); Professor Gwen Van Der Velden, (Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)).</p>		
037	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>No new declarations were made.</p>		
038	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting on 30 March 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 (038-WPC230523{Protected}) were received and approved.</p>		

039	<p><b>Matters arising from last meeting on 30 March 2023</b></p> <p>a) Item 028 - Council update on Widening Participation will be followed by a webinar to Council Members this evening by PB, RF and three students.</p> <p>b) Item 029 - Student Experience Strategic Framework has been endorsed by Senate.</p> <p>There were no other matters arising from the meeting on 30 March 2023 that were not covered in the agenda.</p>
<b>Chair's Update</b>	
040	<p><b>Chair's Business and Action</b></p> <p>a) <u>Warwick Scholars nomination</u> - 'University Progression Initiative award' at the 2023 Student Social Mobility Awards awards ceremony taking place on 13 July at Mansion House, London. Over 270 nominations in all categories</p> <p>b) <u>Enhanced hardship provision</u> - all students in receipt of the Estranged Students' Bursary, the Care Leaver Bursary and Sanctuary Scholars (UG) to receive a one-off additional payment of £750 in June in support of vacation related costs and enable students to engage in employability or extra-curricular related activity.</p> <p>There were no other updates from the Chair.</p>
<b>Strategic Item</b>	
041	<p><b>Warwick Students Union Cost of Living Survey Report 2023</b></p> <p>The Committee received a paper from the (041-WPC230523{Open}) from the SU WP Part-time Officer.</p> <p>a) The cost-of-living crisis has been affecting students for the past year, especially through rising prices brought upon by increases in inflation. This has had a multi-faceted effect on students, effecting large parts of the student experience. Based on consultation with students, and with the increasing seriousness of the situation, the Warwick SU initiated the process of collecting student feedback regarding the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, to help guide the SU's and University's strategy in tackling the crisis.</p> <p>b) The SU undertook a survey in term 1 of the 2022-2023 academic year, seeking to further understand and collect data on students' experiences of the cost-of-living crisis. The survey formed part of a wider campaign led by the SU VP for Campaigns and Welfare and Widening Participation Officer. The survey received a total of 764 responses, one the highest levels of responses and engagement that any of the SU's surveys have received in recent times, reflecting the ability of the data collected to act as a continual reference point but also the foundations for actions and policies on which both the University and Union can build to together to help students through the cost of living crisis.</p> <p>c) The report is also supported by data from the NUS and the survey conducted by the Russell Group regarding the cost-of-living crisis. A second cost-of-living survey will be launched in term 3, which will build upon the first survey and will be incorporated into later versions of the report. In this second survey, the data will be split by protected characteristics and ethnicity.</p> <p>d) Through analysing the data, a number of key themes were identified: general student hardship, the hardship fund process, socialising, food prices on campus, and travel. The report examines these themes through breaking down certain questions in the survey via Faculty and International and Home status. From this survey and its findings, recommendations are made which will be presented to specific Faculty boards and University committees. With the current iteration of the report, the SU is seeking to inform, to highlight the student experience, and to canvas opinion, after which the report will be updated.</p>

	<p>e) Key recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Subsidising food on campus and expanding the number of affordable and dietary-requirement friendly options available to students. Providing meal deals which are comparably priced to national supermarket meal deals, currently the price on campus is £4.45. Exploring the logistics of an at-cost canteen(s) to provide cheaper hot food options for students and staff.</li> <li>ii. Hardship fund - expanding the level of the hardship fund and relaxing the adherence to National Association of Student Money Advisor (NASMA) guidelines. Working with departments and personal tutors to publicise the fund, as many students are likely unaware of the possibility of accessing hardship funding.</li> <li>iii. Socialising and student experience - reviewing funding that goes towards extracurricular events within departments, the Residential Community Team (RCT), Warwick Sport, Warwick Presents and the SU.</li> <li>iv. Exploring further promotion of RCT, and other, free events by the University, including granting RCT access to a social media account to boost the publicity of their events.</li> <li>v. Risk, Equality and Environmental Sustainability Considerations/Impacts - the report details how the cost of living crisis is affecting the student body overall, including those students who are from minority communities. In the initial survey, the survey data was split by home and international student status; in the next survey, data will be split by protected characteristics and ethnicity, to highlight specific issues faced by minority student groups in relation to how they are affected by the cost-of-living crisis, with recommendations for redressing these issues.</li> </ol> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b></p> <p>The Committee <b>noted</b> the report and looked forward to receiving details of the subsequent survey.</p>
042	<p><b>Cost of Living Update</b></p> <p>The Committee received a report (042-WPC230523{Protected}) from the Director of Student Experience, presented by the Head of Widening Participation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Student Cost of Living Working Group was formed in August 2022 and advised on the University's initial cost-of-living support package announced in October 2022. During 2023, the Working Group has continued to monitor the ongoing situation for students, seeking to understand Warwick students' situation in the context of wider sector data about impacts on students, and insights gained within the University.</li> <li>b) The paper provides an update on the Warwick student cost of living situation in May 2023, as assessed by the University's Student Cost of Living Group. To frame its work, the Working Group identified a set of specific risks to the University and has focused on sourcing reliable evidence for continuously assessing our risk position. Of six identified institutional risks, four are currently rated as low, and two as medium.</li> <li>c) Student cost-of-living market research published over the past year has focused on a number of key themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Students' levels of worrying about finances – the data shows a clear correlation between those reporting higher financial worries and a lower sense of wellbeing/worse mental health, and higher financial worries and less sense of belonging at the university.</li> <li>ii. The impact of worrying on mental health and wellbeing.</li> <li>iii. impact of cost-of-living pressures on academic performance;</li> <li>iv. Food - 70% Home students and 59% International students disagreed they could afford to buy the food on campus</li> <li>v. Part-time work - 'part-time work' has been the most visited tile in the Cost-of-Living online hub, attracting 1,487 page views in the period October to March.</li> <li>vi. Access to sports and social activities - cost-of-living focus groups highlighted that tightening budgets and diminishing disposable income are barriers to meeting other students, forging</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>new friendships and creating peer support networks. In the SU survey, 70% of Home students, and 67% International students, disagreed they could join a Sports Club at Warwick Students' Union if they wanted to. 70% Home students and 74% international students stated they had missed out on social events because of costs.</p> <p>vii. Optimism about the future - focus groups showed that undergraduates approaching the end of their course are concerned about their financial future. • In the Warwick Term 1 survey, 51% of students stated they were worried about their financial circumstances after university.</p> <p>d) The term 3 survey 2022-23 will include new finance-related questions to gather more specific intelligence, including specific sources of support they have accessed, including any use of foodbanks; the impact of the cost-of-living on their mental health and wellbeing, academic performance and other key aspects, benchmarked against Office for Students' research; areas where students have cut back their spending (from essentials, such as meals, through to social activities); part-time work during term-time – whether students work, and how many hours; awareness of the student cost-of-living hub (webpages).</p> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b> The Committee <b>noted</b> the report.</p>
<p>043</p>	<p><b>Access and Participation Update</b> The Committee received a verbal update from the Head of Widening Participation.</p> <p>a) Forty-one institutions have now committed to wave 1, with Leeds and Southampton Universities the only Russell Group (RG) participants; it was agreed that the tight deadline made it unfeasible for the UoW to be included in this first wave. Therefore the University will be submitting in wave 2 next year, by an earlier deadline of February 2024.</p> <p>b) Regulatory documents have now been received, detailing guidance on what the APP should include, including a template for the Students' Union. This reflects changes in the methodology and approach being taken by the OfS, together with a new consideration in the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).</p> <p>c) The University will be taking a whole institution-approach specifically through the Education Strategy integrated in departments and services, looking at the whole student lifecycle, aligning with other University strategies, and including both the Students' Union and the Student Advisory Group. Data analysis of the UoW student population by the end of September will assess the current position and identify any risks. This will inform the development of intervention strategies across the institution.</p> <p>d) AC suggested the potential of collaboration with other RG Universities; however it was recognised that not all institutions had adequate resources. TT is in network conversations at RG level through the West Midlands Evaluation Group to share expertise; however, unlike UoW, many do not have evaluation teams. It was also noted that the OfS require individual submissions.</p> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b> The Committee <b>noted</b> the update.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> The Head of Widening Participation to bring an action plan to the next meeting.</p>

Monitoring, Policy and Governance	
044	<p><b>WP Student Advisory Group update</b></p> <p>The Committee received a report from the SU WP Part-time Officer (032-WPC300323{Open}) deferred from the last meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Widening Participation Student Advisory Group (WP SAG) is made up of a small group of students, recruited from Widening Participation backgrounds, supported by the Students' Union's Widening Participation Officer and members of the Widening Participation team. The Group meet 1-2 times each term to discuss pressing issues facing students from Widening Participation backgrounds, receiving student feedback on University strategies and on important issues such as the Cost of Living impact on students from Widening Participation backgrounds.</li> <li>b) Recruitment for the WP SAG took place within term 1 of the 2022-23 academic year, with many of the students from prior cohorts staying on to continue their insights into university strategy. This has resulted in a diverse group of around ten students who have been an integral part of Widening Participation life and student experience insights.</li> <li>c) During 2022-23 academic year, student inclusion and the Cost of Living impact on students, has been discussed, to gather student experience for projects and discussions taking place, in addition to the findings of the Social Mobility Student Research Hub earlier in the academic year, with several members of the group having contributed to the research projects. The importance of the Hub to social mobility research, and student experience at Warwick was highlighted, with positive feedback on the Research Hub.</li> <li>d) The WP SAG also provided insights into the Student Voice Widening Participation conference which took place in March in advance of the conference. This involved discussions on what should be included in the WP SAG session, the different student-led sessions taking place, the recruitment of speakers, and the importance of the session on how to take contributions from the conference forward. The WP SAG was particularly important in contributing to insights on engagement of WP students in the conference, how to meaningfully recruit student leaders for sessions, and how students can contribute to the WP work within it.</li> <li>e) The WP SAG was integral in the Students' Union's work on Cost of Living, a campaign undertaken by the SU's Widening Participation Officer and Vice President of Welfare &amp; Campaigns. The student insight on difficulties faced by students from the Widening Participation community helped to inform the SU's survey on the topic and internal discussions around the response to the Cost of Living crisis in the university.</li> <li>f) In a later meeting, the Cost of Living conversation also played a large part, with students having contributed ideas on how both the University and Students' Union could support those struggling from Widening Participation backgrounds. Ideas included food pricing on campus, the availability of kitchenette facilities, issues with bus facilities and transport, the accessibility of societies and sports clubs, costs associated with graduation ceremonies, and the importance of merging this with sustainable practices across the university. It also involved discussions on further advertising around Master's degree scholarships, specific financial information to support WP students and students with bursaries, and conversations around helping students feel more comfortable to access financial support when needed.</li> <li>g) The WP SAG additionally provided student insights on the University's Student Experience Strategy, particularly surrounding Student Experience Roundtables and the Student Community Experience Programme. There was positive support for the introduction of regular roundtables, with ideas surrounding regularity of meetings, student roles to facilitate the roundtable discussions, potential incentives for attending roundtables, and 'notes boxes' around campus for students to anonymously contribute their ideas on student experience. There was also a discussion surrounding the flexibility of times, due to students working alongside studies, and effective advertising and communications strategies. The Community Experience Programme, involving Warwick Presents and other activities to support student transitions into university life, received positive feedback with ideas surrounding better communication and advertising of</li> </ol>

	<p>opportunities to students. Social opportunities were also raised as important parts of this Programme.</p> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b> The Committee <b>noted</b> the report.</p>
045	<p><b>WP Evaluation and Research Working Group update</b></p> <p>The Committee received a verbal update from the WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Working Group is a platform for sharing research, has a new Chair (Emma Smith) and membership is being expanded across the University. Previously focussed on the Awarding Gap, focus is shifting to consideration of the EORR. The WP Faculty Co-ordinators have surveyed academics to identify areas of expertise, with thirty-two responses. The newly created Research Hub will facilitate the crossover between student and staff research, and offer funding opportunities.</li> <li>b) TT noted the benefits to individuals at subject level in the form of supporting promotions, TEF and Fellowship applications, in recognition of WP research. GSL inquired whether any gaps had been identified in departments, to which TT agreed to circulate a list of the disparities at departmental level.</li> <li>c) The next meeting of the Working Group will be on 11 July. Any interested parties to email TT to be included in the mailing list.</li> </ol> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b> The Committee <b>noted</b> the update.</p>
046	<p><b>Warwick Sport Update</b></p> <p>The Committee received a presentation on 'Improving the Student Experience and Outcomes for WP Students' from the Head of Sports Delivery.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Analysis of 300 students on the Warwick Scholars programme identified that 10% were members of a sports club, compared to an average of over 20% of the wider UG population. It is widely recognised that improved physical health has a positive impact on mental health, academic outcomes and employability; however, multiple barriers deter students from being active, including finance.</li> <li>a) The pilot group of 300 is made up UG Warwick Scholars enrolled in 2023/24 who meet multiple criteria and have been identified as being at the highest risk of non-participation: care leavers and estranged students; Sanctuary Scholars; students on the Warwick Scholars, Realising Opportunities and Pathways to the Professions access programmes. Working with this group provides an opportunity to remove a barrier track the impact via reliable data.</li> <li>a) Students taking up the offer will receive the following at no cost: gym and swim membership at the sports hub and membership of a student sports club. Warwick Sports and the Warwick Scholars team will track data on the number of students taking up the memberships at the Hub and/or a Sports Club; frequency of visits to the sports hub; academic progress – retention, progression and degree award. All data will be aggregated and anonymised, and will be measured against prior performance and the wider university population. going forward, focus groups will be used to assess the potential of Warwick Presents projects to impact on students' sense of belonging and association with the University.</li> </ol> <p><b>RECEIVED:</b> The Committee <b>noted</b> the update.</p>

047	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>a) RWS outlined the Turing Programme, which receives government funding to support student mobility. Any unused funding has to be returned and will impact the level of funding awarded in future years. Last year 425 students took up this opportunity, 77 of whom were from a WP background. 22 WP students took up short-term opportunities of two weeks which are more manageable for many students, receiving an enhanced bursary, which has now unfortunately ended. To increase numbers and maintain consistency of funding, RWS recognised the importance of early engagement with incoming WP students pre-arrival; the URSS will be holding a showcase on 15 November, which will be promoted to first years. Additionally it was suggested that extending eligibility to international WP students would support a greater take-up of the opportunities available to those facing the most barriers. Challenges with the recognition and definition of international WP students are being explored with SPA. TT added that the working group has been exploring measures of disadvantage amongst international students, identifying challenges around parity of qualifications and finance.</p> <p>RWS to present a paper at a future meeting on this topic.</p> <p>There was no other business.</p>
<b>Close by 11.30</b> <b>Next meeting: 29 June 2023</b>	