

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Widening Participation Committee
Wednesday 13 February 2019

- Present: Professor Chris Hughes (Chair, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education), Paul Blagburn (Secretary, Head of Widening Participation), Delyth Chambers (Director of Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions Service), Matt Ferguson (Director of Development), Professor Louise Gracia (Dean of Students), James Hutchinson (Head of Student Finance and Student Funding), Larissa Kennedy (Education Officer, Warwick SU), Ellie King (Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU), Emily Reid (Senior Careers Consultant), Professor Jeremy Smith (Head of Department, Economics), Thomas Such (Operations Director, Foundation Studies), Professor Patrick Tissington (Academic Director of Employability and Skills), Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar), Despina Weber (Head of Disability Services)
- Apologies: Anil Awesti (Centre for Lifelong Learning, Co-Chair of Student Success and Progression Working Group), Hannah Friend (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding), Professor Lorenzo Frigerio (Head of Department, Life Sciences), Jonathan Heron (Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning), Andrew Higgins (Director of Academic Office), Anne Hollingshead (Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning), Kate Ireland (Director of Centre for Teacher Education), Samuel McClenaghan (Deputy Finance Director), Dr Ines Molinaro (Academic Director, Warwick Foundation Studies), Dr Rachel Moseley (Head of Department, TV and Film), Professor Robin Naylor (Director of Studies, Economics, Co-Chair of WP Evaluation and Research Working Group), Kulbir Shergill (Director of Social Inclusion), Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director, Graduate Studies), Professor Richard Tunstall (Head of Clinical Anatomy & Imaging)
- In attendance: Baljit Gill (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager), Catherine Munn (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager), Joanne Bowers (Widening Access Officer), Cherryl Jones (Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager) (item 8)

27/18-19 **Apologies and Conflicts of Interest**

REPORTED:

That, should any members or attendees of the Senate have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance (2014), available online from <http://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/publications/>.

NOTE: No declarations were made

28/18-19

Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the WP Committee held on 29 November 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the WP committee held on 29 November 2018 be approved.

29/18-19

Matters Arising

NOTED:

- (a) 16/18-19 Draft Widening Participation Strategy
This item will be discussed further during this meeting.
- (b) 21/18-19 WP Programmes Contextual Offer Making
This proposal will be presented to the Student Recruitment Steering Group.

30/18-19

Chair's Business

NOTE: No report from the Chair.

31/18-19

National Collaborative Outreach Programme

REPORTED:

A paper outlining the focus and conditions of funding for phase 2 of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) (WP 14/18-19) by the Head of Widening Participation

- (a) Following a review of the programme, the OfS has agreed in principle to extend funding for two further years up to 2021, whereupon funding will cease.
- (b) Key elements of the programme:
 - i. Targeted outreach with year 9 learners – the upper age limit to be removed, to include those over 19 studying in further education. NCOP wards have not been changed
 - ii. Outreach Hubs across England to provide open, transparent and impartial routes for schools and colleges to access outreach provision. These will support wider local collaborative activity with local authorities, employers and LEPs
 - iii. Continued support for robust local and national evaluation
- (c) Phase One of the programme will continue until July 2019, with Phase Two commencing in August 2019. Programme funding for the 2019-20 academic year will be confirmed in March 2019. The OfS will be working with existing NCOP partnerships to develop local plans and agree geographic coverage for local Outreach Hubs
- (d) Indicative funding suggests a positive outcome for the local NCOP; the funding has been uneven across the country, with the Warwickshire area receiving the second lowest amount.
- (d) It is expected that after August 2021 funding will only be provided for the Outreach Hubs with the expectation that funding aligns to institutional Access and Participation Plan commitments up to 2024-25.

NOTED:

The announcement from the Office for Students for Phase Two of the National Collaborative Outreach Programme.

32/18-19

IntoUniversity Centre Coventry

NOTED:

An operational report from the Head of Widening Participation on the IntoUniversity Centre Coventry (WP 15/18-19)

- (a) The report outlines the development of the Centre since its opening in November 2018. It has proved resoundingly successful in engaging local schools and is fast becoming embedded within the local community, with strong connections to other community groups. Supported by the University it is ahead of initial operational plans. Current Warwick students will be involved through Warwick Volunteers to provide mentoring support, and hopefully the development of collaboration with the Centre for Teacher Education.
- (b) Future reports will be presented to the WP Committee, exploring alignment to key performance indicators.
- (c) IntoUniversity has strong expansion and growth expectations where by 2020 there will be up to fifty Centres across the UK, forthcoming Centres are due to open in Glasgow, Edinburgh and in Birmingham. The Birmingham IU Centre will be opened in partnership with Birmingham City University, which will contribute to discussions around our regional strategy. The Coventry Centre is currently the only one opened in the West Midlands.
- (d) The formal launch of the Coventry Centre will take place next month. Half of the required funding has been raised already, and there is great interest from philanthropic donors in Widening Participation in general and IntoUniversity in particular.

NOTED:

The operational developments of the newly opened IntoUniversity Centre in Coventry. The Committee welcomes further updates.

33/18-19

Access Agreement Monitoring Return

REPORTED:

A report from the Head of Widening Participation on the outcomes reported to the Office for Students on the 2017/18 Access Agreement Monitoring Return (WP 10/18-19)

- (a) The report outlines the main outcomes that the University has reported to the OfS through its 2017/18 Access Agreement Monitoring return in January 2019. This was previously circulated to the WP Committee before submission. There has been no response from the OfS as yet.
- (b) The summary indicates a positive picture for last year, with the majority of baseline targets met/exceeded, including the new access agreement targets introduced in 2017/18.
- (c) Expenditure on student financial support has declined compared to 2016/17; however the number of WP students benefitting from support has increased. Expenditure on progression provision is also lower than predicted; this is the

first year the University has committed to this area, and new provision will come to fruition in the future. The challenges presented in calculating expenditure on student success and progression for WP work have been recognised by the OfS, which has confirmed institutions will no longer have to report on this via this route in future. The University is commencing on a new strategic phase of work, ensuring an evidence-based approach across the student lifecycle. This has been commended by the OfS, and will be considered during this monitoring round.

- (d) The OfS will be challenging the drive of institutions like Warwick to set ambitious targets in its forthcoming guidance. The Chair of the WP Committee and the Head of Widening Participation will be attending a workshop with the OfS in March, exploring a structured, considered reprioritising of this area of work, with stronger demonstrable outcomes.

NOTED:

The Committee noted the reported outcomes to the Office for Students related to the commitments made in the University's 2017-18 Access Agreement.

34/18-19

Widening Participation Strategy

RECEIVED:

An oral report on the development of the Widening Participation Strategy and a consultation roadmap for approval (WP 11/18-19) by the Head of Widening Participation

- (a) Building on discussions at the last Committee meeting, the Head of Widening Participation presented a roadmap outlines a structure for consultation and feedback on the draft Widening Participation Strategy and a proposed route through the University's governance structure.
- (b) The Strategy has been reshaped in line with comments from Committee members and is comprehensive. Feedback has been largely positive. It is vital that the process is followed to ensure understanding of the University's drive and mission for WP work in the future.
- (c) One aspect that requires focus is the lack of student input as yet. The Students' Union Education Officer indicated that many student societies are invested in WP and it might have been productive to view the strategy at an earlier stage.
- (d) The Committee agreed that the WP Strategy should be connected to other University strategies; links are evident, for example, in the Social Inclusion, Student Recruitment, Employability and Equality and Diversity Strategies, and it is to be presented at these Committee meetings.
- (e) The Strategy will shortly be presented to the University Executive Board, to Council in May and at Senate by July.
- (f) The Committee is invited to consider and approve the proposed route for the Widening Participation Strategy to progress through the governance process.

RECOMMENDED:

The Head of Widening Participation to meet with the Student Union Education Officer to discuss ways of shaping the WP Strategy.

The WP Strategy to be presented at appropriate Committee meetings across the University.

The Committee approves the proposed route for the WP Strategy to progress through the governance process and welcomes further updates on progress.

Access to Warwick Programme

RECEIVED:

A paper on the development of the new institutional Warwick Regional Access Programme (WP 13/18-19) by the Widening Access Officer and the Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager

- (a) The development and implementation of a University Access Programme forms a key element of Warwick's Access and Participation Plan. This paper summarises the aims, objectives, rationale and next steps for the development of the Warwick Regional Access Programme
- (b) The paper outlines the key barriers facing young people to applying to or attending Warwick, with a focus on entry requirements, engagement with the University and levels of cultural capital.
- (c) The paper further identifies aspects of competitor institutions' access programmes that prove attractive to young learners: a reduction in entry requirements; financial support; a package of interventions; additional experiences; and increased engagement with the institution.
- (d) Following intensive research, it is proposed that the University's Access Programme will target students attending state school sixth forms and colleges within a twenty-five mile radius of the University, thus incorporating Coventry, Warwickshire, Great Birmingham, Solihull, much of the Combined West Midlands Authority and extending into the East Midlands as far as Leicester. It was noted that due to the geographical boundary, and the awareness that students from a non-traditional background often choose, or need, to live at home while studying, this may create additional barriers in the full integration of commuting students into the University community. It was also suggested that travel bursaries may help this group both financially and in fully engaging with the University on a regular basis.
- (e) The programme will be open to eligible potential applicants to all departments at Warwick, with the prospect of attracting more than 500 applications p.a. Initial recruitment will start at around 50-100 year 12 students in 2018-19, rising to 100-150 in 2019-20. Proposed benefits to participants will include:
 - i. Enabling learners to achieve their academic potential in preparation for the transition to university level study
 - ii. Warwick 'Associate Student' membership, allowing participants access to University services and facilities to engender of a sense of belonging to the University community
 - iii. A guaranteed reduced offer – a minimum of two grades below the standard offer – when accepting Warwick as their CF choice and successfully completing the programme. The Director SROAS recommended exploration of a bold statement of intent in collaboration with Admissions, to ensure that these learners do not face significant disadvantage.
 - iv. Direct transition to the Warwick Scholars Programme, supporting transition, progression, retention and success. This will help to mitigate any fears that while these young people may get in to Warwick, they may face challenges to their success during their studies at the University. An important aspect warranting exploration was highlighted by the Academic Director of Employability and Skills – more traditional students enjoy greater support in recognising and enhancing their employability, so the students enlisted on the access programme would benefit from information, advice and guidance on degree choice, postgraduate aspirations, etc, to show a clear trajectory through Warwick and beyond.

- iv. Financial support, on which guidance is sought from the Committee. It was noted that the financial expenditure on support for these learners would be offset by the proposed growth in student numbers, and the subsequent increase in University income. It is vital that individual departments are not financially penalised by welcoming these students into their learning communities; furthermore co-ordination across departments would ensure collaborative resourcing and delivery of any additional support. The Academic Registrar advises this proposal be modelled and presented before ARC; in order to gauge the resource implications, parameters need clear definition.
- (f) The Head of WP stressed to the group that these will be bright students, who for a number of reasons, feel Warwick is unattainable. Their individual circumstances must necessarily be considered; in contrast to students from more affluent families, they have no access to private tutoring, excellent teaching, high attaining schools, or any of the resources, knowledge and experiences enjoyed by their peers. They are however more than capable of accessing and thriving at Warwick. As a University it is our duty to reshape and provide a level playing field, not promote a deficit model of thinking. It is important that these individuals are not stigmatised by an assumption that they are unable to meet expected levels of study, nor succeed at Warwick.
- (g) The next practical steps in the development of this programme involve working with academic departments, professional services and Admissions to develop specific operational aspects of the programme in preparation for an implementation in the 2018-9 summer term.

RECOMMENDED:

The Widening Participation Committee approves the targeting, eligibility, scope, scale, structure and content of the programme.

The Committee approved the non-financial benefits to participants.

The Committee recommends that a costed programme model be presented to ARC to facilitate the resourcing assessment.

The Committee approved a 'soft' launch in the summer term 2018-19; however the Committee advises working towards the full launch in September 2019. All approvals, including the financial considerations, will need to be finalised by Easter; therefore it is suggested that email circulation be utilised to expedite the process.

36/18-19

Student Recruitment Strategy

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Director of Student Recruitment Outreach and Admissions Service (SROAS) on the development of the Student Recruitment Strategy (WP 12/18-19) by the Director of Student Recruitment Outreach Admissions Service (SROAS)

- (a) The University's draft Student Recruitment Strategy has been developed following the University's 'Size and Shape' Project completed in 2017, which proposed a growth in student numbers over the next ten years. To this end, the University Strategy provides a target of 32,000 students by 2030.
- (b) The Student Recruitment Strategy has been informed by the Education, Social Inclusion and International Strategies. WP is a key component.
- (c) The paper outlines an indication of growth expectations across the Faculty areas; actual departmental targets will be approved through the ARC planning process.
- (d) Access and Participation Plan targets will be presented in percentages for the OfS; therefore the expectation of growing our numbers of students from WP backgrounds will rise in the same proportions. The ambitions of the WP

Strategy and the Access and Participation Plan will not be realised without the support of a strategic student recruitment approach.

- (e) The WP Team and the Student Recruitment Team work in collaboration to recruit students from WP backgrounds, and the new strategies in each area offer considerable potential to provide focus to drive activity and meet objectives in a targeted way:
 - i. Recruiting for Widening Participation
 - ii. Routes to Warwick
 - iii. Recruiting for Success: Enablers to Access
 - iv. Targeting strategies
- (f) It is acknowledged that there is considerable work to be done to implement the proposals, with further analysis to ensure that policy and operational decisions will be productive. It is further recognised that bolder decisions need to be made around admissions, the removal of financial barriers and the development of the infrastructure and tools to facilitate the promotion of the University to target groups.
- (g) The Strategy will be presented to the Student Recruitment Strategy Group (sub-group of ARC) in April.

RESOLVED:

The Committee commends and supports the draft Student Recruitment Strategy.

37/18-19 **Any other business**

None reported.

38/18-19 **Date of next meeting**

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on **Wednesday 3 April 2019, 3.00-5.00pm in CMR 1.0, University House.**