

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Widening Participation Committee  
Thursday 23 May 2019

Present: Professor Chris Hughes (Chair, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education), Paul Blagburn (Secretary, Head of Widening Participation), Anil Awesti (Centre for Lifelong Learning, Co-Chair of Student Success and Progression Working Group), Rosemary Butcher (Teaching Fellow, Centre for Teacher Education), Delyth Chambers (Director of Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions Service), Professor Lorenzo Frigerio (Head of Department, Life Sciences), Professor Louise Gracia (Dean of Students), Jonathan Heron (Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning), James Hutchinson (Head of Student Finance and Student Funding), Samuel McClenaghan (Deputy Finance Director), Dr Ines Molinaro (Academic Director, Warwick Foundation Studies), Dr Rachel Moseley (Head of Department, TV and Film), Faye Murray (), Kulbir Shergill (Director of Social Inclusion), Emily Reid (Senior Careers Consultant, Careers & Skills) (until 4pm), Professor Jeremy Smith (Head of Department, Economics), Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar), Despina Weber (Head of Disability Services)

Apologies: Matt Ferguson (Director of Development), Hannah Friend (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding), Anne Hollingshead (Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning), Kate Ireland (Director of Centre for Teacher Education), Larissa Kennedy (Education Officer, Warwick SU), Ellie King (Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU), Professor Robin Naylor (Director of Studies, Economics, Co-Chair of WP Evaluation and Research Working Group), Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director, Graduate Studies), Professor Patrick Tissington (Academic Director of Employability and Skills), Professor Richard Tunstall (Head of Clinical Anatomy & Imaging, WMS)

In attendance: Baljit Gill (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation Manager), Professor Gwen Van de Veld (Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Student Learning Experience) (item 7)

50/18-19 **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

51/18-19 **Minutes**

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the WP Committee held on 3 April 2019.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the WP committee held on 3 April 2019 be approved.

52/18-19

**Matters Arising**

No matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the WP Committee held on 3 April 2019.

53/18-19

**Chair's Business**

(a) Warwick Scholars Programme

The recent launch of the Warwick Scholars Programme has received significant media attention, and has been communicated both internally and externally through a number of avenues. This announcement of Warwick's access programme has been received positively. The Chair and Head of Widening Participation have presented the programme to Council, receiving support for the Access and Participation Plan targets, and recognition of the changes necessary across the institution. Further communications will address the implications of the Plan for departments, including the dissemination of underlying research to provide reassurance about its implementation.

54/18-19

**Access and Participation Plan**

RECEIVED:

A draft version of the University's Access and Participation Plan (WP 21/18-19) from the Head of Widening Participation

- (a) The Plan articulates the University's strategic ambition to enhance the institutional approach to deliver sustained improvement across all phases of the student lifecycle in 2020 and beyond. It reflects on progress and challenges to shape priorities, approach and strategic measures, including how investment will be deployed to sustain and develop pioneering evidence-led practice.
- (b) The Plan shows recent progress made in identifying and reducing gaps between specific groups, in ratio rather than absolute terms. The plan focusses on the intersection perspective, for example, looking at BAME in the context of POLAR indicates that 95% of BAME students at Warwick are from Quintiles 3-5, making BAME from Quintiles 1 and 2 the most underrepresented group.
- (c) Attainment data demonstrating student success reveals gaps in ethnicity attainment; although the gap is not as large as some across the sector. There are also differential outcomes for mature students, but when accounting for entry qualifications, this group perform comparatively well.
- (d) Focussed targets will support endeavours in priority areas; however groups that may not have a formal target will continue to remain institutional priority, for example, first generation and care experienced learners, to aim for equality of opportunity for all.
- (e) The Plan was praised for its alignment with the Social Inclusion agenda, demonstrating the need for cultural, structural and behavioural change across the institution.
- (f) Levels of investment are difficult to accurately gauge at this time, but the University is committed to resourcing work in a strategic way. The investment levels reflect both institutional ambition and measures incrementally to 2024-25. The level of investment has now been agreed with the Finance department. The figures are significant; whether they will be adequate to meet

objectives will be clearer as the Plan is implemented. The OfS is more focussed on outputs rather than expenditure.

- (g) Future spend on new initiatives such as the Warwick Scholars Programme, are currently notional from 2021-22, and will be dependent on uptake of the scheme. Operationally the role of departments requires further clarification, particularly around support for departments in meeting the needs of incoming students. However it is anticipated that additional departmental support will be minimal, as the students will be academically able, with the added confidence gained by participation in the access programme. Any changes in practice in challenging institutional barriers and improving wellbeing will benefit all students. Furthermore data indicates that some of the least represented groups are currently outperforming their peers from the most representative groups. Resourcing support and monitoring therefore should present no difference to current practice.
- (h) To facilitate monitoring and support for all students, a robust learner analytic package is necessary to provide a resource to 'live look' at data to identify any issues early. This area requires further work and investment, and exploration of structural institutional barriers revealing ethical issues around learner analytics. The Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Student Learning Experience has produced guidelines addressing these, and there is a firm institutional commitment to implementing and resourcing this.
- (i) Elements of the WP Strategy bring together a range of stakeholders, to work collaboratively; models of best practice can be identified and expanded, relationships with schools through the Centre for Teaching Excellence can be strengthened and partnerships with the FE sector can be developed.
- (j) The Access and Participation Plan will be submitted on 24<sup>th</sup> May.

NOTED:

The Committee recognises the work put in to developing this Plan in a relatively short amount of time, and welcomes an update on the response from the Office for Students.

55/18-19

### **Widening Participation Strategy**

RECEIVED:

An update from the Head of Widening Participation on the draft Widening Participation Strategy following a phase of consultation (WP 22/18-19)

- (a) The draft Widening Participation Strategy has been going through an ongoing consultation process and as part of this, colleagues have been invited to offer their feedback through a variety of different channels including an online form. The feedback has been collated into overarching themes and potential next steps suggested as a result.
- (b) Feedback was positive, and indicates that some areas require further clarity, specifically concerning data, the regional context and language. However the student lifecycle approach, and the focus on the positive aspects of the University were lauded with a recognition that aspects of the Strategy require significant culture change across the institution.
- (c) A number of institutional strategies are currently in development with significant overlaps and partnership working is vital across the University, particularly with the Social Inclusion Strategy, with clear leadership and robust implementation.

- (d) The WP Strategy will be presented to Council in July. A working group comprising WPC members and students will be formed to explore and define the next steps of the implementation plan to ensure traction.

NOTED:

The Committee endorses the draft Widening Participation Strategy and welcomes further details of the implementation plan. Any Committee members who wish to join the working group to explore this should inform the Head of Widening Participation.

56/18-19

### **Student Recruitment Strategy**

RECEIVED:

An oral presentation from the Director of Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions on the draft Student Recruitment Strategy

- (a) The strategic aim of the draft Student Recruitment Strategy is to attract the brightest and best students from across the UK and the world, those who can most benefit from a University of Warwick education, achieving modest growth in student numbers to 32,000 by 2030.
- (b) The Director highlighted the most pertinent objective of the Strategy to WP Objective 3: Reduce Barriers to entry and promote social inclusion:
- Actively promote the University as a place that thrives through having a diverse population
  - Support the development of a range of routes to Warwick, such as Warwick Scholars and Degree Apprenticeships
  - Develop progressive policies that support admission of students from non-traditional backgrounds and qualifications to ensure wider accessibility to Warwick courses
  - Actively promote Warwick's full range of provision, including non-traditional programmes such as Degree Apprenticeships
  - Articulate and publish clear entry requirements for the five most popular (by volume) qualification types within the UK for all departments with undergraduate provision
  - Examine interpretation of overseas qualifications against our entry requirements, ensuring clarity and competitiveness
  - Continue to use Contextual Offers in the undergraduate admissions process to achieve fairness and equity of access to the University by those whose education may not support them to achieve our standard entry requirements
  - Consider entry with advanced standing where applicable
- (c) This is an ambitious Strategy and clearly references its intersections with other strategies across the institution, although the forthcoming Augar Review of Higher Education may present some challenges to its implementation.

NOTED:

The Committee notes the details presented on the draft Student Recruitment Strategy and welcomes further updates.

**Closing the Black Attainment Gap**

RECEIVED:

A paper from the co-chair of the Student Learning Enhancement and Engagement Committee on a range of recommendations to close the Black attainment gap (WP 23/18-19)

- (a) The context within which the paper originated was detailed by the Co-chair of the Student Learning Enhancement and Engagement Committee (SLEEC). This group has responsibility for examining the student learning experience to ensure environmental factors are not negatively impinging on the experience of some groups. This initial exploration has focussed on two communities at Warwick – LGBT+ and Black students - with further communities to be studied in the future. The focus of learning has been directed by the Students' Union, and the abundance of work in this area has been incorporated into this paper.
- (b) The paper demonstrates the significant synergy with WP aims to address the attainment gap which form part of the Access and Participation Plan. This area of work is furthermore relevant to TEF submissions next year.
- (c) To ensure collaboration and oversight of work in this area, it is proposed that the Race Equality Taskforce steers further exploration, while SLEEC and WP continue to work collaboratively. Furthermore, the Student Success and Progression group is currently drawing up recommendations on curriculum content and pedagogical practice.
- (d) Initial in-depth exploration of the experiences of these groups will engender changes in practice, and broaden understanding and engagement. Further research will be necessary in time, to explore impact on different groups.
- (d) Ownership of this research is at grass roots level, with a great level of energy being displayed. It is acknowledged that this is an increasingly central area of work; resource will be required to take it forward.
- (e) The Race Equality Task Group will be meeting shortly and will report into Social Inclusion.

NOTED:

The Committee notes the paper on Closing the Black Attainment Gap, and welcomes further updates.

**Widening Participation Development Fund**

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Widening Participation Manager on the Widening Participation Development Fund (WP 24/18-19)

- (a) The Widening Participation Development Fund has been running annually since 2014-15 to support Faculty and departmental widening participation initiatives that align with WP strategy and the former Access Agreement.
- (b) Successful proposals have demonstrated innovation, feasibility, value for money and support the aims of the Fund. They have encompassed a wide range of impactful initiatives, with a significant focus on outreach.
- (c) Some limitations of the Fund have been exposed over time, particularly its alignment with the new WP aims and objectives. It may be that the funding for this programme may have greater impact if used in an alternative way. It is therefore timely to undertake a comprehensive review of the Fund, to ensure it

continues to be fit for purpose, especially in light of recent changes to the OfS requirements and the new WP Strategy.

- (d) Therefore it is proposed to pause this Fund for the 2019-20 cycle, to ensure sufficient time to consider, plan and embed the new WP and Access and Participation Plan priorities. By repurposing the Fund to robustly map to new strategic priorities, WP efforts will be aligned going forward.

APPROVED:

The Committee approved the suspension of the Fund for the 2019-20 cycle, in order to undertake a review of its operation, as part of the WP implementation plan.

59/18-19

**Widening Participation Working Group Updates (standing item)**

REPORTED:

An oral update from the Co-Chairs of the WP Evaluation and Research, and the Student Success and Progression working groups

- (a) WP Evaluation and Research working group  
No report at this meeting
- (b) Student Success and Progression working group  
(i) The focus of this group has been repurposed due to the work in this area by a number of different groups, so that the same target group of learners are not inundated.  
(ii) The group had refocussed on three areas:  
(A) Careers – the group has identified a cultural and social gap in accessing professional careers, with access to graduate careers subject to being able to understand ‘unwritten rules’. Therefore Careers will pilot a targeted initiative to address this next year.  
(B) Education Conference – the group participated in the recent Education Conference at Warwick, holding a workshop exploring good practice in supporting students from a WP background. This proved engaging and facilitated further discussion in this area.  
(C) Attainment gap – the group has been examining this, with some overlap with the SLEEC study, and will present a paper on current work at the next WP Committee meeting.

60/18-19

**Any other business**

None reported.

61/18-19

**Date of next meeting**

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on **Tuesday 2 July 2019, 3.00-5.00pm in CMR 1.0, University House**