



WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation & Social Mobility at Warwick

Issue 1
Autumn & Winter 2023

Welcome back to our newsletter!

...and our first edition under our new team name, Widening Participation & Social Mobility! Inside this issue, we'll be reflecting on some of the exciting things we got up to over the summer months and putting a spotlight on IntoUniversity Coventry Centre as we celebrate five years of partnership. Read on to hear from Paul Blagburn about our departmental updates including why we have changed our name from Widening Participation and Outreach. We hope you enjoy this issue!

A foreword from the Head of Widening Participation, Paul Blagburn:

A new academic year brought a lot of change at the University and I'm excited to announce a new name for our department. In recognition of our longstanding focus on supporting people from underrepresented groups across the whole student lifecycle, from primary school to postgraduate, we have changed the name of the team to the Widening Participation and Social Mobility Team. Our team has five core areas of focus, Evaluation and Evidence, Educational Partnerships, Academic Engagement and Internal Community, Sustained Engagement, and Access and Student Success.

Together, these areas form part of the University's approach to widen access to higher education and support an environment where students can thrive at Warwick and beyond. What this means in practice is that we are using evidence and evaluation to further enhance our policies and practices, develop deep and meaningful partnerships to address equality gaps, ensure all areas of the University are focused on widening participation and social mobility, and through high-quality sustained activity we support people to make informed decisions about their futures, increase diversity at the University and support positive student experiences.

I also wanted to share some of our recent successes. The University has received national recognition for its contribution to social mobility. We were shortlisted as 'University of the Year' in the UK Social Mobility Awards, and our Warwick Scholars Programme won the 'University Progression Initiative of the Year' at the Student Social Mobility Awards. We are proud of this recognition but acknowledge this is only achieved through collaboration with others that are committed to supporting equality of opportunity and advancing social mobility. Wishing you a successful year ahead and I hope many of you are able to engage with the team to support students to reach their potential.



A SUMMER FULL OF ACTIVITY!

MAY

Slice of Science Schools Day 2023

In May, the Widening Participation and Social Mobility division of the University's Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine held the Slice of Science Schools Day 2023. The day was filled with interactive workshops, presentations as well as engagement with University staff and students. Intended for widening participation, female-identifying, year 9 students in the local area, the aim of this event was to **inspire young women to learn more about STEM-based subjects**, to raise aspirations and encourage young women to think about applying for STEM courses in the future. We also hoped that teachers in attendance would share any gleanings from the exciting sessions with their schools.

We had **~80 students** in attendance from 5 local schools. The students experienced **four interactive sessions** led by staff and students from Computer Science, WMG, Physics and Psychology. They had interactions with current students throughout the day, both with student Ambassadors assisting the event and a student panel at the close of the day. The panel also included an alumni from Warwick Medical School via video link and a local sixth form student studying STEM subjects at WMG Academy.

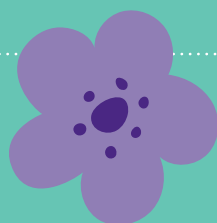
To find out more about upcoming events and activities offered by the 10 departments in Warwick's Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine check out their webpage: warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/semsscienceinschools/menuofactivity



JUNE

Midland Academy Trust Visit

In June, we were delighted to welcome four schools from the Midland Academy Trust; The Nuneaton Academy, The George Eliot Academy, Hartshill Academy and Heath Lane Academy. The year 9 students took part in a campus tour and then split into groups to experience four different academic taster sessions from Chemistry, Politics, Arabic and Korean, and Film Studies. We hope the students and staff enjoyed this taste of university life.



FABfest

FABFest took place on Wednesday 28th June, welcoming **over sixty pupils** from five Coventry and Warwickshire secondary schools to the Faculty of Arts Building. The day was targeted at Year 8 students with the aims of allowing them to **experience and explore a range of subjects and to inspire students to think about future subject choices in the Arts and Humanities.**

During the day, pupils had the opportunity to explore a range of subjects through a wide range of **academic taster sessions.** Sessions included curriculum subjects, such as English, History and Modern Languages that pupils may already have had the opportunity to study at school, in addition to brand new subjects such as Film and Television Studies, Classics and Creative and Media Industries. A key aim for the day was to inspire students with the exciting topics they can study within Arts subjects during a range of interactive and engaging sessions and also demonstrate the skills gained from continuing their humanities subjects in the future. Chris Bilton from the Centre for Cultural Media Policy Studies said:

“The students joined in enthusiastically and asked some great questions. They picked up ideas and definitions of the creative industries very quickly and were very entrepreneurial! Lots of ideas for next generation creative businesses.”

During lunchtime, pupils also enjoyed the opportunity to explore a range of short drop-in activities, ranging from Chinese Calligraphy to Roman Cookery and Virtual Reality to Medieval Recipes.

Every pupil also had the opportunity to **explore the university campus** with the Creative Learning Team at the Warwick Arts Centre. One of the sculpture trail leaders, Charlotte Brookes, explains further:

“It was so great to have the students with us for FABFest and to give them the opportunity to experience a little of what Warwick students are lucky to have on their doorstep, including Warwick Arts Centre and the Sculpture Park. The students were excited to get hands on with the sculptures, which is a great way of removing the physical and mental barriers for children accessing contemporary art, often for the first time.”



Robert O'Toole who contributed a virtual reality activity during the day has shared: 'FABFest was a great opportunity to meet lively young imaginative minds, and to see what they make of the latest immersive technologies. The school students were fantastic to work with as we explored how we can bring dinosaurs back from extinction in an engaging and creative way.'

For more information about Arts and Humanities outreach opportunities, please visit our website: warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/outreach2/



JULY

WMG Work Experience Week

In July, we welcomed a talented group of young people to WMG at the University of Warwick for an exciting week of work experience. The programme for **Year 10 students** took place from **10 to 14 July** and was a joint venture between Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) and the Widening Participation (WP) Team. **Thirty students interested in pursuing careers in engineering or science** were successful in gaining a place, having undergone a competitive application process.

Over five days, the students worked with engineers who shared their expertise and led team projects which demonstrated sustainable technology, linking to areas of WMG research. The students also attended **sessions led by engineering experts** such as TATA Motors, and visited laboratories and workshops, to gain an insight into engineering careers. Information, advice and guidance was provided by the WP team. The event was ably supported by a team of University of Warwick Student Ambassadors who, in addition to leading a **campus tour and ice-breaker activities**, acted as role models, provided encouragement to the young people and gave a **first-hand perspective on Higher Education**.

The week culminated with a Showcase, attended by families, senior school staff, careers advisors and colleagues from across the university. This was an opportunity for the young people to **present their projects and to celebrate their success**.

The work experience programme was hugely successful and well-received by participants. Many of the Showcase attendees were impressed to see the students' achievements and the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive.

We're pleased to share with you that there will be another week-long work experience opportunity taking place on campus from **8-12 July 2024**. Further information about the application process, eligibility criteria and key dates will be shared with schools during the spring term.



Work Experience Projects

Sun Tracking Solar Panel: If solar panels were able to track the progress of the sun across the sky - how much would more energy be generated?

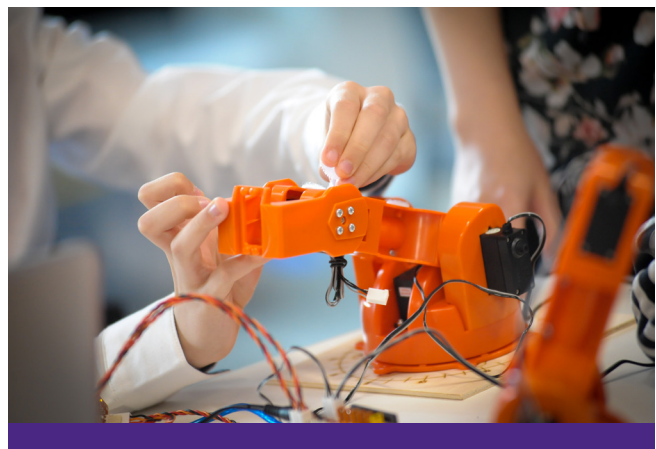
Wind Power: How can wind energy be converted to electricity efficiently? Build a demonstrator to explore how this can be achieved.

Fire Suppression: Build a demonstrator system that can detect and suppress fires.

All Terrain Vehicle: Develop a vehicle that can cross different types of terrain.

Smart Cities: Build a demonstrator to show an aspect of a smart city that you and your team would like to see implemented.

Battery Manufacturing: Develop software to control a robot to build a battery from individual cells.



"I would describe this programme to a friend as an unmissable and eventful opportunity which I would heavily recommend as it has boosted my skills and given me a greater insight into careers, apprenticeships and university as a whole which has inspired me to want to go to university" - 2023 Participant



Pathways at Warwick National Conferences

Pathways to Law

During the second week in August, we welcomed approximately **250 students** from across the country to the Pathways to Law National Conference at the University of Warwick, hosted by the Sutton Trust. During the conference, students had the chance to find out about **university life**, experience academic lectures and meet with lots of legal professionals. This conference gave students the opportunity to find out what it is like to study law at university and whether a career in law is right for them. Throughout the week, there were over 20 employers from the legal field. Students had a **'Meet the Professionals' panel**, followed by spotlight sessions with a range of employers. They then had the opportunity to attend the **university and careers fair** and meet representatives from all the pathways universities as well as more employers. The level of engagement and enthusiasm was fantastic throughout the week.



Pathways to Banking & Finance

During the second week of July, we had the pleasure of hosting **100 students** from across the country for the Pathways to Banking and Finance National Conference organised and run by the Sutton Trust. The conference provided the amazing opportunity for students to further their understanding of what life is like for a university student, from both an academic and social perspective. The conference also shed light on what it is like to study courses directly related to the world of banking and finance, undergoing lectures delivered by Economics and Business professors, not only to inspire students but fundamentally so they can have enough information to assess whether the Banking and Finance sector is the right industry for them. Students also took part in a series of **workshops** harnessing different skills sets such as **public speaking, critical thinking** and benefited from a 'Meet the Professionals' panel and spotlight sessions where they got to build rapport with **industry specialists** and gain some insight into the sector directly from professionals in the field. The week was excellently planned and students remained highly engaged throughout.



Pathways to Engineering

80 students came together at the University of Warwick during the Easter holidays to attend the Pathways to Engineering National Conference hosted by the Sutton Trust. This week provided students with the space to develop their understanding of what it takes not only to study engineering courses at University through attending multiple **lectures run by academics**, but also what it's like pursuing a career in the industry. Students benefited from meeting Engineering professionals who were able to provide great insight into the sector and also listening to students present ideas around engineering projects. In addition to the conferences, students attended an **insight day at a Tilbury Douglas** building site where a Special Educational Needs School was currently being constructed showing the great level of meticulous thinking when constructing a building for specific purposes. Students also benefitted from **visiting Mercedes F1** where they got a chance to meet professionals who shared with them their career journeys and discussed entry points into the sector.

For more information about the Pathways programmes, visit our webpage: warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/pathwaystoprofessions



Sutton Trust Summer School

During the summer we ran our 8th Sutton Trust summer school, inviting over **100 Year 12 students** to stay on campus for **3 nights**.

The students took part in taster lectures, worked on group projects, engaged in social activities and informational sessions, all with the aim of providing them with a **real university experience**. This year, we had **7 subject streams** that students could apply to engage with, ranging from Law to Mathematical Sciences to Classics, Film & TV studies and History of Art. Most of our streams were collaborative efforts, meaning we had **17 departments** involved in the delivery of the academic programme.

On the final night students enjoyed a **3-course formal dinner** with academics and the WP team, followed by a **silent disco** to celebrate their hard work! On the last day of the summer school, participants displayed their groupwork in the form of an **exhibition** to showcase their work and celebrate with departments.

The summer school feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, from both participants and academics! As a team, we're looking forward to planning next year's Sutton Trust summer school! For more information about the Summer School, and how young people can get involved and apply, visit: summerschools.suttontrust.com



'I feel that I have gained more confidence in trying new things, exploring new places and starting conversations with new people. In the future I want to continue to develop my confidence and social skills. To be brave and try new things on my own. Summer School has helped me to understand aspects of university life, mixing lessons and social events. Building my confidence and allowing me to see where I belong.'

- Psychology & Education Participant, 2023

Warwick Scholars

AUGUST

Towards the end of August, we welcomed our new cohort of Warwick Scholars Access students to the university for a few days to **launch the programme, get to know the university** and refresh some important **study skills** ready to start year 13 on the front foot. **184 students** attended the launch event residentials, with a further 33 attending the online launch.

We stayed in student accommodation and spent some time getting to know each other through activities such as a barbecue, a quiz, football, rounders and many games of Uno! One student said "**I enjoyed myself so much and this has made me so unbelievably excited to hopefully study at Warwick!**". We are really looking forward to working with this group throughout year 13 and hopefully welcoming them to Warwick as undergraduates in September 2024. For more information about how young people can be part of the next cohort visit our webpage: warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/whatweoffer/warwickscholars



A Spotlight on IntoUniversity

Celebrating 5 years of Partnership

In Autumn 2018, the IntoUniversity Coventry Centre in Hillfields opened in partnership with the University of Warwick. The centre provides an innovative programme including academic support sessions and one-to-one mentoring opportunities to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to attain either a university place or another chosen aspiration. Since its launch, IntoUniversity in collaboration with the WP team, student ambassadors and academics, students have experienced life on campus first-hand, from Year 6 mini-graduations to Year 8 Buddy programmes. We look forward to another year of upcoming events with these bright young people.

A year on campus with IntoUniversity:

- 3 Buddy Days
- Up to 8 Primary Graduations
- 1 Holiday Programme
- 1 Extending Horizons Programme
- 1 Day of University Life (Year 11)
- Mentoring with UG students all year round



Centre opening in 2018

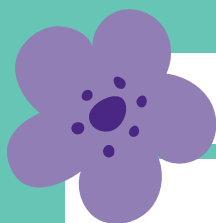
5 years of IntoUniversity Coventry

574 programmes run

3,906 unique students supported

1,381 students visited the University of Warwick

36 IU Coventry students studied at the University of Warwick





Let's Stay Connected!

We are now known as the Widening Participation and Social Mobility Team and you will start to see our new team name reflected across our webpages, communications and social media. However, please be aware that our old name, Widening Participation and Outreach Team may still show while we carry out these updates. As well as a change to our team name, we are also excited to let you know that you may see some changes to the look and feel of some of our communications, we hope you will enjoy these going forwards.

If you would like to hear about upcoming department led events, as well as our own events you might like to sign up for our monthly e-bulletin. Should you wish to sign up, please send us an email stating that you wish to be added to our mailing list.

Our Social Media channels are also a great way to find out what we've been up to and what future activities you can be involved in. Be sure to check out our webpages for helpful resources and find out more information about our team and programmes.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Contact Us

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