	UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK **WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE** **RESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 April 2022** **9.30-11.30AM, MICROSOFT TEAMS**		
Present	Professor Christopher Hughes	CH	Pro Vice Chancellor (Education), (Chair)
	Paul Blagburn	PB	Head of Widening Participation, (Secretary)
	Professor Celia Brown	CB	Professor, Warwick Medical School
	Jackie Clarke	JC	Director of Administration, Social Sciences
	Dr Rebecca Freeman	RF	Dean of Students
	Professor Ruth Hewston	RH	Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (until 10.30)
	Associate Professor Lee Griffin	LG	Academic Director, Postgraduate Taught Education
	Professor Kate Ireland	KI	Director of Centre for Teacher Education (from 9.45)
	Sue Jones	SJ	Head of Student Finance
	Samuel McClenaghan	SM	Deputy Finance Director, Departmental Services
	Dr Ines Molinaro	IM	Academic Director, Warwick Foundation Studies
	Professor Rachel Moseley	RM	Head of Department, TV and Film
	Kulbir Shergill	KS	Director of Social Inclusion (until 10.30)
	Professor Emma Smith	ES	Director of Education Studies; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair
	Dr Chris Twine	CT	Academic Registrar
	Professor Gwen Van Der Velden	GV	Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)
	Professor Derrick Watson	DW	Head of Psychology, Faculty of Science, Engineering & Medicine
	Peter Wreford	PW	Head of Student Funding and Finance
Attending	Amanda Bishop	AB	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, SEM
	Marie Diebolt	MD	WP Outreach Officer (item 042)
	Claire Edden	CE	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Social Sciences; WP Student Advisory Group Co-Chair
	Kathryn Fisher	KF	Head of Disability Services, (representing Dr Hannah Friend)
	Dr Damien Homer	DH	WP Faculty Co-ordinator, Arts
	Cherryl Jones	CJ	WP Access and Lifecycle Manager; Student Success and Progression Working Group Co-Chair
	Brian Karanja	BK	Senior Data Analyst, (representing Faye Murray)
	Dr Tammy Thiele	TT	WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager; Research and Evaluation Working Group Co-chair
Ref	**Item**		
037	**Apologies for absence** Apologies were received from: Isabelle Atkins, (Education Officer, Students' Union); Dr Hannah Friend, (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding); Baljit Gill, (Widening Participation Manager, Assistant Secretary); Dr Letizia Gramaglia, (Head of Academic Development); Dr Elizabeth Hough, (Head of Admissions); Natalie Lloyd, (Deputy Director of Development); Catherine Munn, (Widening Participation Manager); Faye Murray, (Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics); Professor Patrick Tissington, (Academic Director of Employability and Skills); Roberta Wooldridge Smith, (Director of Student Opportunity); Nathan Parsons, (Postgraduate Officer, Students' Union).		
038	**Declarations of Interest** No new declarations were made.		

039	**Minutes of last meeting on 1 February 2022**
	a) <u>A&P and WP Investment and resource allocation (033- WPC010222{Protected})</u> PB is working with ARC to allocate the student premium funding to ensure closer alignment to TEG meeting outcomes and will report at a future meeting.
	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2022 (039-WPC060422{Protected}) were received and approved.
040	**Matters arising from last meeting on 1 February 2022**
	There were no other matters arising from the meeting on 1 February 2022.
	Chair's Update
041	**Chair's Business and Actions**
	CH welcomed new members to the Committee and thanked colleagues who have left for their service.
	There were no updates from the Chair that were not covered in the agenda.
	Monitoring, Policy and Practice
042	**Spotlight - Realising Opportunities Programme**
	A presentation was given to the Committee by the Widening Participation Officer leading the Realising Opportunities Programme (042-WPC060422{Open})
	a) The Head of Widening Participation introduced the Realising Opportunities programme (RO) seeking to showcase the positive work undertaken in Widening Participation, especially in collaboration across the sector, and reminded the Committee that the University has an APP target relating to RO.
	b) The Realising Opportunities programme is a unique collaboration of fifteen leading, research-intensive universities (RIU), working together to promote fair access and social mobility of students from groups under-represented in higher education. The programme provides those who are 'most able, least likely' to apply to university with skills and information to help them make informed decisions about their future and supports their aspirations to progress to a selective university. On successful completion of the RO programme, students have their achievements recognised through admissions processes, resulting in additional consideration and the potential for alternative offers from the RO partners.
	c) Warwick has been part of the RO collaboration since its inception in 2009, recruiting students in Year 12 from targeted schools and colleges in Coventry and Warwickshire and supporting them throughout the two years of their level 3 studies. Alternative offers for RO applicants were introduced in the 2015/16 admissions cycle with all academic departments incorporating an 'RO alternative Offer' of up to 2 A Level grades or equivalent.
	d) The unique collaborative aspect of the partnership supports the University in engaging with selected groups of students across the country as well as allowing the sharing of good practice amongst participating universities. Its robust evaluation has enabled the partnership to build a joint narrative in response to key themes including contextual admissions and the impact of the pandemic on these vulnerable groups.
	e) RO supports students' geographical mobility as participants travel further away to enrol, on average, than non-participants from similar backgrounds. It also helps consolidate Warwick's place in the region as the University have consistently enrolled more RO participants from our own cohort than from anywhere else and our intake from other Midlands partners has also increased since 2016.
	f) The RO programme has gathered a large amount of longitudinal data through its access to over 900 participants per year and data can show trends and where barriers exist. Based on the most

recent RO cohort of students, the vast majority (88%) of participants applied to university at the end of Year 13, double the overall proportion of 18-year-olds. The proportion who applied to a RO Partner university or other RIU increased from 78% to 83% between 2019 entrants and 2020 entrants. An APP collaborative target aimed for 54% applying to research intensive universities; this started out at 42% and is now at 52%. The impact of participation in RO leads to good degree outcomes with 28% of students attaining a first class degree, 53% a 2.1, 26% have progressed to further study. The data has also provided insight into the effects of the pandemic on applications to university; 51% applied to RO partner, compared to 36% the previous year.

g) Future initiatives include delivering a hybrid model with Birmingham University, targeting access to students in 'cold spots' further away. Career support is being developed with RO graduates in Newcastle University, and parental engagement is being expanded. At Warwick, RO will work more jointly with other programmes, such as the Warwick Scholars Programme. RO also has a political impact in collaboratively developing political statements. Political impact was evident in the invitation to RO to House of Commons in discussions around the importance of contextual admissions, dispelling myths about alternative offers. CH indicated that the programme has really caught the eye of government, with the former OfS Director Chris Millward very supportive. KS commented on parental engagement, citing the impact on women from an Islamic background, where parents are reluctant to let their daughters go away to university and questioned how best to reach out to parents and making them feel comfortable on campus. MD described collaboration with areas already working with these students, community engagement and working in schools to present to parents.

h) PB referred to the opportunity to use RO as a positive case study highlighting where collaboration works and impact students, and stated that impact went beyond the admissions piece. Robust, independent evaluation is undertaken by the Institute for Employment Studies, providing credibility in APPs. The programme benefits from strong governance, with a group of PVCs, supporting and overseeing direction. PB aims to promote RO both internally and externally to inform policy making decisions. GV highlighted the good research base to inform some of the current discussions on campus, and suggested sharing the data with academic departments looking at entry data, although small numbers may make this difficult, but advocated a brochure detailing WP activity and strategy, to address concerns and myths. PB is exploring the development of a communications strategy, with annual impact reports, distilling information, outcomes, and key facts about key WP programmes.

i) The RO Partnership is undergoing a review of its key priorities, with a view to refreshing its strategy in the context of a changing regulatory landscape. Discussions are underway on the next level of partnership engagement up to 2025. PB thanked MD for the commitment and longstanding engagement with RO, particularly during the recent pandemic.

RECEIVED:

The Committee **noted** the information presented in the report.

043	**Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Programme update and Review of WP PGT**

The Committee received a report from the PGR Scholarships Coordinator, Doctoral College, (043-WPC060422{Open}) and a verbal update from the Head of Widening Participation

a) The Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme (WTMSS) was launched in 2015/2016 and has been offered each academic year since. Originally, the needs-based scholarship was funded by HEFCE and Warwick funding combined but is now fully funded by the University.

b) The report offered a summary on applications; numbers appear consistent, although slightly lower during the pandemic, possibly reflecting the national picture. It was noted that the WTMSS was last reviewed in 2017-18 and offered as a fee discount, with the introduction of the Postgraduate loan offering maintenance support.

c) The governance of the WTMSS requires some review as it was felt that the scheme did not relate to the core work of the Doctoral College. It was suggested that an equivalent body for governance

	structure and an equivalent group was required for the WTMSS and possibly for oversight of PGT more generally. A review needs to assess whether WTMSS is driving change, reaching the right students, and improving their student experience. KS cited the need for diversity in PG, and the need for formal governance, a body to refer, for example, Sanctuary Scholarships and research culture. CH advised that some would sit in the Doctoral College and that Dan Branch is exploring this area.
	d) DW asked whether some groups of students are less likely to take up loans, as this would impact on them. CH noted that this would be a part of the work currently being undertaken on scholarships in general. CJ reflected on involvement at the start of the WTMSS, when it was match funded by the government, to offer financial support for fees and maintenance costs. Now the amount available is rather a fee contribution for the majority of students. CT detailed current examination of PGT bands and elasticity of demands, as a university, Warwick is at the upper end of the market. Now that the WTMSS only partly covers fees, freezing fees in some areas would provide a control group to gauge any impact on demand. The recently introduced alumni discount has also had an effect, and a piece of work around Arts scholarships and budgets is ongoing. There is a need to unpick the governance issue and explore whether the funding is being used in the most optimal way to address barriers around PGT study. Speaking to some of the current students would form part of the review.
	e) The WTMSS will continue this academic year in its current form, with plans to review and develop in future years, potentially aligning it closer to university policy on transition and attainment, the student experience and support.
	RECEIVED:
	The Committee **noted** the update.
	ACTION:
	LG, PB and CT to prepare recommendations for consideration.
044	**Social Mobility Student Research Hub**
	The Committee received an update from the WP Faculty Coordinator and the WP Evaluation and Evidence Manager (044-WPC060422{Open}) for information.
	a) The report highlights the recent award of funding from Research England's 'Enhancing Research Culture Fund 2022' to create the University of Warwick's Social Mobility Student Research Hub. The principal aim of the Research Hub is to improve access to, and participation in, research for students from currently underrepresented groups, including those from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, care leavers, and refugees. To achieve this aim, the project will fund up to twenty UG and PGT students from underrepresented backgrounds to provide opportunities to undertake research projects exploring issues around social mobility, Widening Participation, inequality, diversity and inclusion. The students will be given the opportunity to design these research projects in groups or as individuals, supported by PGR students who will be recruited to act as mentors. Successful applicants will be paid a stipend of £1000 in instalments and have access to workshops and training days, with opportunities to present at external/student led conferences. A conference is being planned for the end of the project to celebrate success and disseminate the research.
	b) Since receiving confirmation of funding in February, significant progress has been made in developing the project, and in creating a team of colleagues to undertake this and to support students and mentors. In total, eighteen UG and PGT students from a range of non-traditional backgrounds, academic departments, and year groups have been selected to undertake research projects, based on applications forms they submitted detailing their background characteristics and their initial project ideas. Interviews for PGR mentors will be conducted in the next two weeks and project planning processes have been set out for workshops, conferences, and outputs between April and September 2022.

	c) The co-creation drive ensures students are central to this, with initial ideas based on students' own personal experience, and collaboration between the Research and Evaluation Working Group. This will act as pilot to inform a future social mobility observatory at Warwick, a pioneering, sector-wide first, which will focus on co-creation to put students at centre of WP research and evaluation, building more research diversity amongst our student body. d) There was strong support for the proposal, noting the aligned focus on a number of principles hoped for at Warwick, in terms of co-creation, working across the academic and professional divide, and suggested linking this programme in with existing programmes such as the Undergraduate Research Support Scheme (URSS).. GV pointed out that it would be useful for the test submission of the University's TEF next year. As part of that, looking at educational gain in UG research, this provides a prime example of how the University involves all students. The student voice and principles of learning will need to be disseminated across the University widely and departments can gain some learning from this venture. **e)** Funding is currently awarded for this year, with hopes of extending the work further depending on future funding, requiring collaborative working and fostering relationships across the institution to increase future sustainability. **RECEIVED:** The Committee **noted** the report and offered strong support to this programme. **ACTION:** TT, DH and GV to take this forward.

045	**Future of Access and Participation**
	
	The Committee received an update from the Head of Widening Participation (045-WPC060422{Protected})
	
	a) Further detail has emerged from the Office for Students (OfS) on the next steps and core areas of focus for institutions to consider. The paper provides an overview of the plans and process for A&P reform. In April 2022, the OfS will issue guidance to providers with access and participation plans asking them to request a variation to their plans for 2023-24 to address the new priorities. These priorities include:
	   i. Strategic engagement with schools and other organisations to help raise the attainment of young people from underrepresented groups across England.
	   ii. Development of more diverse pathways into and through higher education through expansion of flexible level 4 and 5 courses and degree apprenticeships.
	   iii. Access for students from underrepresented student groups leads to successful participation on high quality courses and good graduate outcomes.
	   iv. More robust evidence of what works through a renewed focus on independent evaluation. e. Accessible plans so that prospective students, their parents, and other stakeholders can easily understand what providers will do.
	
	b) The APP monitoring return for 20-21 academic year will be less onerous and largely desk based by the OfS, examining progress made against their APP dashboard, financial statements in the University's annual accounts, and assessment of progress before being signed off.
	
	c) Guidance is expected mid-April, with submission in the summer, and variations will take effect from September 2023. The OfS have created a template for an executive summary of the APP, in order to be more coherent to certain audiences. The current plans run to 2025, this will be brought forward a year so institutions will be expected to rewrite their plans next academic year reflecting on new key performance measures and looking ahead to 2028.
	
	d) Over the last two months, much has come from the government: elements of where A&P and widening participation sit within the wider policy agenda, including the Schools' White Paper, policy statements on funding and financing HE, and an interpretation of what 'levelling up' might

look like. There is focus on students, particularly evidence of cost-of-living challenges and how this impacts students now and in the future.

e) The Head of Widening Participation recommended taking a collegiate approach, and the formation of one group following this committee and another to look at variations of plan holistically and strategically, before reporting to this Committee.

f) CE cited the challenge around GCSEs and the impact faced by some departments. CH added the issue of schools' engagement, where KI has been asked by the VC to look at how the University brings together its approach to schools, through a range of different departments and projects, how much the University does, and how schools and others understand the impact of the University's work. Recent policy reforms are shaping how universities work with schools, identifying the need to be more coherent across the different elements of the University's work and KI is on working groups involving local authorities, who have a close insight into schools, especially around schools' improvement. KS has given detailed feedback, and would be keen to make the links with the Social Inclusion strategy, Widening Participation and perceived civic duties as a university and suggested a vision of our regional strategy should be included, with a balance between the requirements of government and Warwick's visions for the impact on young people in the region.

RECEIVED:

The Committee **noted** the OfS stages of access and participation reform and **approved** the formation of a working group to support the development of APP variations.

046	**WP Working Group updates- WP Student Advisory Group**
	The Committee received a verbal update from the Co-chair of the WP Student Advisory Group
	(a) CE briefed the Committee on updates on the Student Advisory Group (SAG). This group started last year and currently has up to fourteen members, with good overall attendance. Great efforts were made when recruiting to ensure members were representative of the WP community, consequently the group includes PG students, mature students, both WP programme and non-programme students, and has been able to attract those students who wouldn't normally engage. The SAC has been co-chaired by the SU WP officer.
	(b) The group discuss strategic issues, with members responding well. It provides an opportunity for students to engage with University policy in matters that concern them and impact change. Members have been involved in student research, and are delivering sessions at the forthcoming Sense of Belonging conference for staff and students. Further discussions have covered bursaries, and the financial cost of the pandemic. The Head of Widening Participation has been invited to a future meeting of the group to talk about the APP.
	(c) Going forward the focus will be on recruitment of new members next term, offering current members the option to continue, so the group may include alumni. Transparency will be enhanced by the development of a SAG webpage, and additional support will be offered to the SU WP officer role.
	(d) GV shared that faculty student engagement coordinators are looking at student representation, and wondered if they could be involved in the SAG to embed learning from the group. CE is looking at ways of engaging students in faculty education committees, and is conscious of not having too many staff involved. CE to discuss with the Co-chair about inviting the co-ordinators to a future meeting.
	RECEIVED:
	The Committee **noted** the update and indicated strong support for this group.
047	**Any other business**

	a) KS highlighted Nick Barker's work leading on the National Science competition, which was piloted last year with 1500 participants. This year 3600 pupils have registered from 52 schools. Discussions with UCAS indicate their interest in working with this. b) KS informed the group that Social Inclusion with be holding a conference in June with the Inclusive Education team. Discussions with PB will ensure the WP angle is included, and CH has been invited to be on the panel. c) GV congratulated Robin Naylor on winning a National Teaching Fellowship for his work on contextual admissions and other work undertaken over many years. While this was actually won in 2020, it was not awarded that year due to the pandemic and was formally awarded two weeks ago at a national event. The Committee offered congratulations to Robin, who has been highly influential across the sector. There was no other business.
Close by 11.30 **Next meeting: 24 May 2022, 9.30-11.30**	