

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Widening Participation Committee  
Thursday 11 October 2018

Present: Professor Chris Hughes (Chair, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education), Paul Blagburn (Secretary, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach), Anil Awesti (Centre for Lifelong Learning, Co-Chair of Student Success and Progression Working Group), 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), Andrew Higgins (Director of Academic Office), Larissa Kennedy (Education Officer, Warwick SU), Ellie King (Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU), 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 Jeremy Smith (Head of Department, Economics), Professor Patrick Tissington (Academic Director of Employability and Skills) (until 3.40), Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar), Despina Weber (Head of Disability Services)

Apologies: Matt Ferguson (Director of Development), Hannah Friend (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding), Kate Ireland (Director of Centre for Teacher Education), Anne Hollingshead (Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning), Kate Hughes (Regional Partnerships Director, External Affairs), Dr Richard Hutchins (Strategy Director, Strategy and Policy), Kate Ireland (Director of Centre Teacher Education), Rory McIntyre (Senior Assistant Registrar, Strategic Planning and Analytics), Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director, Graduate Studies),

In attendance: Nicola Ellis-Thomas (Postgraduate Scholarships, Academic Office) (item 7/18-19), Baljit Gill (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager), Martin Price (National Collaborative Outreach Programme Manager) (item 6/18-19)

1/18-19 **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.

2/18-19

**Minutes**

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the WP Committee held on 23 May 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the WP committee held on 3 July 2018 be approved.

3/18-19

**Matters Arising**

NOTED:

- (a) Access and Participation Plan (53/17-18)

That the recently submitted Access and Participation Plan has been approved.

4/18-19

**Chair's Business**

- (a) Welcome

The Chair of the Committee extended a welcome to the new Director of Social Inclusion, indicating how the role is integral to the dovetailing of Widening Participation with the University's Social Inclusion Strategy.

- (b) Faculty WP Co-ordinators

Three grade 7 Faculty WP Co-ordinator roles have been recruited, with Faculty representatives involved in the selection process. Offers have been made to the successful candidates with formal announcements due shortly, and roles starting in December and January. These roles will provide integral support to academic departments and will work together to promote a coherent, institutional approach to Widening Participation activity.

- (c) Schedule of Business

While the last year has been focussed on building the governance structure and strategic direction of the Widening Participation Committee, the priority going forward will be to deliver on identified targets, addressing the challenges faced. The focus will firmly move to processes, decisions and outcomes to support an ambitious objective in improving social inclusion.

5/18-19

**Widening Participation Committee Membership**

REPORTED:

An updated membership of the Widening Participation Committee for 2018/19 to review current membership and ensure that all relevant areas of the institution are represented. It was agreed that the Medical School would be represented individually in addition to the Science, Engineering and Medicine Faculty.

RESOLVED:

The membership was agreed and Senate will formally be informed of any changes.

6/18-19

**National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP)**

RECEIVED:

A paper and presentation on the Office for Students (OfS) funded National Collaborative Outreach Programme (WP1/18-19)

- (a) The National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) delivers a sustained, progressive programme of outreach activity in target wards across England to increase participation in Higher Education. This is currently funded until July 2019.
- (b) It is data driven, with ward-based allocation and targets. Seven wards in Warwickshire fulfil the criteria for funding and ThinkHigher (NCOP) works in collaboration with local HE, FE and local government partners to address local challenges.
- (c) School census data identifies those schools with the largest number of pupils from NCOP postcodes, resulting in the target selection comprising Y10/11/12 pupils from thirteen secondary schools, two Further Education Colleges and one Sixth Form College.
- (d) Despite Warwickshire having the second lowest funding allocation, ThinkHigher achievement in this area is very positive within those constraints. Efforts focus on enabling the young people to make informed decisions about their future, rather than recruitment to the partner universities.
- (e) The programme takes an evidence-based approach, and will be evaluated utilising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, tracking participants through HEAT. A key focus will be expanding understanding of the barriers faced by this cohort of young people, which can inform other work undertaken across the University by the WP team and departments.
- (f) The programme has proved challenging, particularly working with the target schools, where schools themselves face challenges in high staff turnover and low levels of pastoral support.

NOTED:

The Committee noted the development of the Programme and commended the work undertaken by the team. Further feedback to be presented before the Committee in the summer.

7/18-19

**Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme (WTMSS)**

RECEIVED:

A paper on the outcomes and beneficiaries from the Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme (WP 2/18-19)

- (a) The Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme (WTMSS) was introduced in 2015-16, initially as part of a HEFCE-funded initiative, subsequently funded by the University, to support under-represented groups of learners at taught postgraduate level. Support at this level is integral to the University's lifecycle approach to widening participation.
- (b) The assessment and allocation criteria has relied heavily on assessments made at undergraduate level for maintenance grants. From 2019 the cohorts applying for postgraduate admission will no longer have had access to these grants at undergraduate level; therefore review of the assessment criteria for this scholarship is required.

- (c) The issue is compounded by the passage of time since enrolment on undergraduate study; personal circumstances may have changed, including socio-economic situation, geographical area of residence and caring responsibilities.
- (d) Exploration of similar offers across the sector reveals that few universities continue to provide such a scholarship; furthermore any WP criteria tends to focus more on subject-specific gender disparities.
- (e) Currently 37% scholarships have been awarded to Warwick Alumni; one suggestion is that the WTMSS should be focussed on this group as the University will have data relating to hardship.
- (f) Promotion of the Scholarship has reduced recently, but with no corresponding drop in applications. The Postgraduate Officer concurred that it was a welcome and well-known support stream in the postgraduate community.
- (g) A further consideration is the level of funding available; currently the award is £5k pa, while PG fees are significantly higher. This raises the issue of scholarships in a wider context and the extent to which they address barriers faced by certain groups.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee supports a review of scholarships across the institution, examining target learners, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data. Discussions to be continued with the Head of Widening Participation.

8/18-19

**OfS Access and Participation Consultation**

RECEIVED:

A paper outlining the University response to the OfS regulatory consultation on Access and Participation (WP 3/18-19)

- (a) The Head of Widening Participation and Outreach outlined the core features of the consultation on the implementation of the regulatory framework, which has a deadline for responses of 12 October 2018.
- (b) The focus of the consultation represents a significant shift and covers: Access and Participation Plan and Monitoring Cycle; Monitoring of Plans; Targets; Funding and investment in access and participation; Evaluation; Data and transparency.
- (c) The Head of Widening Participation and Outreach reported a largely positive response to the changes, in that the OfS propose moving to a three year cycle, thus reducing the administrative burden on universities and enabling a longer term approach. The report would be more focussed on outcomes and impact, with a recognition of success and progression across the student lifecycle in WP activity.
- (d) However there is some uncertainty around the detail; further clarity is needed on the definition of 'high risk' institutions, and the subsequent penalties. The new focus on reducing access and achievement gaps between groups may be unhelpful.
- (e) There was also a need for more clarity around funding, in recognition that spend on success and progression is complex.

RESOLVED:

It was agreed that the work of the WP Committee has been forward-thinking in terms of much of the focus of the framework, particularly the emphasis the University is

placing both on an institutional, lifecycle approach and the importance of a robust evaluation strategy to demonstrate impact. The Committee will receive a further update on the conclusions of the consultation, particularly in light of the 2018 Post 18 Education Review.

9/18-19

### **WP Student Mobility Programme**

REPORTED:

A paper outlining a new programme to promote short term student mobility for WP groups (WP 4/18-19)

- (a) This paper has been taken to the Alliance Board, which supports the pilot of a short WP Study Abroad Global Leader Experience delivered in partnership with Common Purpose. This pilot supports the wider Monash Warwick Alliance Education Strategy, and enable a collaborative approach to providing shorter term international mobility opportunities.
- (b) The positive impact of international student mobility is well-documented, particularly for students from under-represented groups; however these students are less likely to consider taking a study abroad placement.
- (c) The pilot cohort at Warwick will be first year students who are part of the Warwick Scholars Programme, while Monash University will target second year low SES students in Australia and Malaysia. They will be offered a seven-day mobility experience next summer.
- (d) Participants will co-create their programme, with a focus on core skills and participation would be acknowledged on students' academic records.
- (e) This is also identified as an important opportunity for disabled students, for whom there are additional barriers.
- (f) A query was raised on the level of spend this pilot would incur but it was acknowledged that this tranche of funding had been ring-fenced to support the Alliance.
- (g) It was agreed that robust evaluation was vital to gauge impact and value of investment.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted this report and will welcome further updates when appropriate.

10/18-19

### **Widening Participation Success and Progression Working Group**

REPORTED:

The terms of reference and membership for the Widening Participation Success and Progression Working Group (WP 5/18-19)

- (a) The Co-chair of the Widening Participation and Success and Progression working group outlined the terms of reference and membership of this new group, and welcomed comment from the Committee.
- (b) The challenges of embarking on this relatively new area will focus the direction of this group. Identifying target students will be required for success in this area, as it cannot be assumed that the same students who faced barriers to access will be those who face challenges in progression.
- (c) This group will be working closely with the WP Evaluation and Research working group to avoid duplication and build a strong evidence base to inform practice.

- (d) The two groups will regularly report on progress to the WP Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Chair of the Committee thanked the Co-chair of the working group for accepting this role, and agreed that this offered an opportunity to mobilise expertise across the institution and develop best practice.

11/18-19

### **Widening Participation Programme Development update**

RECEIVED:

An oral update from the Head of Widening Participation on the IntoUniversity and Access to Warwick programmes

- (a) Into University
- (i) Following a programme of intensive training, the Into University Centre Manager and Education Workers are in place and the Centre is now open.
  - (ii) There has been positive school engagement, and a pledge of £100k has already been received through the University Development team.
  - (iii) The WP Committee will be offered a visit to the Centre, with the formal launch scheduled for the spring term 2019.
  - (iv) The charity is expanding in Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool, and locally there may be future potential to open other Centres in North Warwickshire and Solihull.
- (b) Access to Warwick
- (i) The Widening Access Officer is now in post and is working to engage internal and external stakeholders.
  - (ii) It is evident that while pupils are making applications to Warwick and receiving offers, they are not subsequently achieving the grades needed. It is further recognised that when learners from a WP background access the University, further support can ensure they progress and succeed; therefore the academic body will be vital in supporting the development of a programme of activity, admissions and transition-related activity and academic skills' development.
  - (iii) The programme is due to launch after Easter, and will target schools in a twenty-five mile radius of the University. Development of the Warwick programme will consider the experiences, impact and challenges at comparative schemes at Manchester, Newcastle and Bristol.
  - (iv) The Widening Access Officer will be invited to provide an update on progress to the Committee.

12/18-19

### **Widening Participation Committee Schedule of Business**

REPORTED:

A proposed schedule of business for the Committee for the 2018/19 academic year (circulated)

- (a) The purpose of the schedule of business will be to provide structure and direction to the WP Committee, and ensure the timings and volume of business are relevant and appropriate. It will consider statutory agreements and external requirements to inform the future development of WP at Warwick.

- (b) There will be representation from the Working Groups at each meeting.
- (c) The focus of the next WP Committee meeting will be the formulation of the Widening Participation Strategy and targets to inform institutional work.

RESOLVED:

That a structured approach will enable focussed and timely planning; feedback on the schedule of business is welcomed.

13/18-19 **Any other business**

No other business reported.

14/18-19 **Date of next meeting**

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on **Thursday 29 November 2018 at 3pm in CMR 1.0, University House.**