

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Widening Participation Committee  
Wednesday 23 May 2018

Present: Professor Chris Hughes (Chair, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Education), Paul Blagburn (Secretary, Head of Widening Participation and Outreach), Emily Dunford (Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU), Matt Ferguson (Director of Development), Professor Lorenzo Frigerio (Head of Department, Life Sciences), Professor Geraldine Hartshorne (Head of Clinical Faculty, WMS), Dr Richard Hutchins (Strategy Director, Strategy and Policy), Liam Jackson (Education Officer, Warwick SU) (until 12.00), Dr Ines Molinaro (Academic Director, Warwick Foundation Studies), Professor Robin Naylor (Director of Studies, Economics, Co-Chair of WP Evaluation and Research Working Group), Professor Jeremy Smith (Head of Department, Economics), Despina Weber (Head of Disability Services).

Apologies: Sue Bennett (Director of Student Careers and Skills), Delyth Chambers (Director of Student Recruitment Outreach and Admissions Service), Professor Louise Gracia (Dean of Students), Kate Hughes (Regional Partnerships Director, External Affairs), Kate Ireland (Director of Centre Teacher Education), Samuel McClenaghan (Deputy Finance Director), Professor Fergus McKay (Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning), Rory McIntyre (Senior Assistant Registrar, Strategic Planning and Analytics), Dr Nick Monk (Director of Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning), Dr Rachel Moseley (Head of Department, TV and Film), Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director, Graduate Studies), Professor Patrick Tissington (Academic Director of Employability and Skills), Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar), Teng Zhang (Head of Student Finance and Funding).

In attendance: Siobhan Bennett (Student Engagement Manager, Careers and Skills), Claire Edden (Outreach Officer, Student Recruitment Outreach and Admissions Service), Baljit Gill (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager), Gemma Hearnden (Student Funding Manager), Cheryl Jones (Widening Access and Lifecycle Manager).

37/17-18 **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.

38/17-18

**Minutes**

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the WP Committee held on 10 April 2018.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the WP committee held on 10 April be approved.

39/17-18

**Matters arising**

NOTE: No matters arising from the minutes of the WP Committee held on 10 April 2018 that were not covered on the agenda.

40/17-18

**Chair's Business**

(a) Widening Participation Annual Report

The Widening Participation Annual Report and the recent Guardian article on the A level Bootcamp have been well received by the University Council. The Council confirmed Widening Participation to be a substantive item in future discussions.

(b) Education Conference

The Education Conference held at the University on 15 May 2018 was successful and the panel session on WP Strategy was very well attended. The Head of Widening Participation confirmed that the audience was receptive and engaged, demonstrating an appetite for discussion in this area. The session proved well aligned to other discussions throughout the day. The Co-Chair of WP Evaluation and Research Working Group highlighted the good levels of attendance, participation and enthusiasm.

(c) Advance HE

Chris Millward, Director for Fair Access and Participation, Office for Students recently presented at the PVC and DVC network meeting at Advance HE (merger of the Equality Challenge Unit, the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education). He emphasised the importance of access and attainment, and reiterated the focus on progression and success. Next year's targets will be increasingly ambitious; institutions will be encouraged to take a long-term incremental view in their Access and Participation Plans.

(d) Warwick-Monash Alliance Steering Committee

The Committee have agreed to pilot a bursary for students studying abroad, and to explore the feasibility of shorter placements.

(e) IntoUniversity

Interviews for the Centre Manager of the proposed Hillfields' site will be taking place on Thursday 24 May, supported by the WP Manager. It is anticipated that the Centre will launch in the autumn. The WP team will be visiting an established Into University Centre in Nottingham and initial conversations with target schools have been positive. The Centre staff will not be employed by the University, although there will be opportunities for staff and students to volunteer. The Director of Development will have further discussions with the Chair and the Head of WP regarding resources to secure funding.

41/17-18

**Looked After Children and Care Leavers Report**

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the University's approach to engage and support Looked After Children and Care Leavers (WP.10/17-18)

REPORTED:

- (a) That looked after children demonstrate the most negative outcomes of all groups and the students from a care background are underrepresented in the higher education sector as a whole, with only 6% of care leavers entering HE.
- (b) A recent Freedom of Information request revealed the disparity across the sector in the number of care leavers studying at individual universities, with Warwick featuring low against comparable Russell Group institutions.
- (c) This group of learners face unique and complex challenges, often having disrupted educational backgrounds due to numerous placements and a history of trauma and neglect, and entry requirements at selective universities may present a barrier to progression.
- (d) Furthermore, due to interruptions throughout compulsory education, they are unlikely to apply at a traditional age, thus the level of mature learners is comparatively high. Alternative entry routes, such as the 2+2 Degree, may therefore be more attractive as a means of studying at Warwick.
- (e) The paper suggests prioritisation of care leavers, with precise targeting and a commitment to staffing resources and a review of the definition of 'care leavers' aligned to the Local Authority definition, to accommodate older learners. A multi-faceted approach is required, with in-depth exploration of the data to develop a more robust pre- and post- application support programme for this group. It is recognised that support mechanisms for this group would also be of benefit to other non-traditional learners.

RESOLVED:

That a detailed action plan to be presented at a future meeting, recommending a more appropriate definition, and exploration of steps required to improve and consolidate Warwick's offer for care leavers based on research across the sector.

42/17-18

**Access and Participation Plan**

RECEIVED:

The University's 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan submitted to the Office for Students (WP.11/17-18) [Restricted]

REPORTED:

- (a) That the University's 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan was submitted to the Office for Students at the end of April, and incorporated feedback and comments from the Committee.
- (b) That the Plan demonstrated increased ambitions and investment in the success and progression of Warwick students.
- (c) That the Plan outlined a proposal to introduce a Student Advisory Panel to foster greater student engagement in WP practice development, from pre-entry and access to progression and success. Discussions continue with the Students' Union to engender coherent student views, co-creation and delivery, thus developing a holistic model across the student lifecycle.

- (d) As yet there has been no feedback from OfS but it is recognised that this Plan will offer an ambitious, challenging approach going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the submitted Plan provides a good framework for ambitions to embed WP across the University, supporting a whole institutional approach across the student lifecycle. Any feedback on the Plan from OfS will be shared at the next meeting.

43/17-18 **Student Mobility for WP Groups**

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the engagement of WP groups related to study abroad opportunities (WP.12/17-18) {Restricted}

- (a) The benefits for students studying abroad is noted but also the disparity in engagement, particularly of students from a widening participation background. This is common across the sector and reflected at Warwick, where long programmes abroad are typically on offer.
- (b) Departmental uptake and demographic breakdown identifies variance amongst students from BME, disability, LPN and low SEC backgrounds, with a distinct interplay with the bursary offered.
- (c) Further analysis is required to identify factors influencing the decision not to participate, exploring the financial and curricula barriers deterring engagement and promoting mobility opportunities earlier in the student lifecycle.
- (d) Further development of the current relationship with Monash University may broker impactful, co-created short-term opportunities.

RESOLVED:

Further research to be undertaken to identify student aspirations, bursary support and continuation of efforts to embed employability into the curriculum. An interim report presenting these findings to be submitted to Committee early in the next academic year.

44/17-18 **Widening Participation Development Fund**

RECEIVED:

An update on the Widening Participation Development Fund (WPDF) programme and recommendations related to the future of the scheme (WP.13/17-18) (tabled)

- (a) The Widening Participation Development Fund was created in 2014 to enhance WP activity across the University by providing seed-funding to develop innovative practice and research, with a focus on evaluation and sustainability.
- (b) £200k is ring-fenced within the WP budget to provide approximately £100k pa catalyst funds for proposals. Projects are expected to be long-term in nature, funded up to two years and can bid up to £50k over two years.
- (c) A dissemination event will be held on 27 June, focussed on WPDF projects, sharing good practice, and the application process for the 2018-19 round of funding, thus raising the profile of the funding across the University and support for potential projects across the student lifecycle. It is anticipated that this will be expanded to a larger, external conference next year

- (d) The WPDF links with the Research and Evaluation Working Group and provides a means to demonstrate coherence with Faculty/departmental plans.
- (e) A panel involving members of the WP Committee will make decisions on proposals later this summer.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorses the launch of the new round of funding.

45/17-18

**Update from Working Groups**

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Co-chair of the Widening Participation Evaluation and Research Group on progress to date and the Head of Widening Participation on the development of further groups

- (a) The Evaluation and Research Group has met twice and has a good membership base, identifying two priorities:
- (b) The co-ordination of information-gathering to identify WP activities and evaluation that is being undertaken across Faculties and departments. A real-time online Repository is in developed, in line with a similar tools used by the Education and Endowment Foundation. This will record both core WP activity and key activity from across the University. The template allows users to record the nature of activity and its aims, number of participants, target age group and their recruitment, schools targeted, evaluation methods. This will support evidence of evaluation as outlined by OfS.
- (c) Analysis of the Warwick student population, to identify our target students through the demographics of our learners and examine the impact of the intersectionality of characteristics on the student experience, progression and success across the student lifecycle.
- (d) The Head of Widening Participation agreed that the meetings had been productive, will evolve over time and will be instrumental in shaping the institutional approach.

RECOMMENDED:

That in-depth details of the Research and Evaluation Group's aims and progress to be presented at the next meeting.

46/17-18

**Students with dependents**

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the SU Postgraduate Officer on some initial work looking at the support for students with dependents.

- (a) A SU working group had identified the paucity of information for students who are parents. Therefore the working group has updated the SU website to address this gap, including relevant information and support for student parents.
- (b) That the data related to the number of students with dependents was not easy to obtain

- (c) This has included location of rooms for the expression of milk, information on mitigating circumstance specifically for student parents, difficulties with childcare and supervisions.
- (d) However the SU PG Officer's term in role is coming to an end leaving a gap in responsibility for the maintenance and updating of this site.
- (e) The report seeks a department to take on responsibility for the site going forward within the institution To support this it is also vital to have data on student parents at Warwick, of which there is currently an absence.

RECOMMENDED:

That this resource would be best placed within the remit of Equality and Diversity. Discussions are recommended between the SU and Equality and Diversity, together with an exploration of how the relevant data might be gathered. The Chair thanked the Officer on behalf of the WP Committee for the work undertaken.

That the Warwick Bursary Scheme incorporates criteria that may provide a more detailed picture of students that fit into this category and the Student Funding Team would look into this.

47/17-18

**Any other business**

No other business reported.

48/17-18

**Date of next meeting**

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday 3 July 2018 at 2pm in CMR 1.0, University House.