UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Widening Participation Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Widening Participation Committee
Thursday 29 November 2018

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), Delyth
             Chambers (Director of Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions Service),
             Hannah Friend (Director of Wellbeing and Safeguarding), Professor Lorenzo Frigerio
             (Head of Department, Life Sciences) (to 4pm), Jonathan Heron (Institute for
             Advanced Teaching and Learning), Andrew Higgins (Director of Academic Office),
             Kate Ireland (Director of Centre for Teacher Education),Larissa Kennedy (Education
             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), Dr Chris Twine (Academic Registrar), Despina Weber (Head of Disability
             Services)

Apologies:   Matt Ferguson (Director of Development), Professor Louise Gracia (Dean of
             Students), Anne Hollingshead (Director of Centre for Lifelong Learning), Ellie King
             (Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU), Rory McIntyre (Senior Assistant Registrar,
             Strategic Planning and Analytics), Professor Colin Sparrow (Academic Director,
             Graduate Studies),

In attendance: Baljit Gill (Assistant Secretary, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager),
             Claire Edden (Widening Participation Officer) (item 8), Maria Fox (Widening
             Participation Officer) (item 7), Tammy Thiele (Evidence and Evaluation Manager)
             (item 6)

15/18-19     **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

**16/18-19**  **STRATEGIC ITEM FOR DISCUSSION: Draft Widening Participation Strategy**

RECEIVED:

A draft outline Widening Participation Strategy (WP. 6/18-19 restricted) presented by the Head of Widening Participation and Outreach.

(a)     This draft Strategy offers an initial document, which builds on the WP activity undertaken at Warwick and the new Social Inclusion area. It aligns to the University Strategy, building on the strong foundations developed over recent years.

(b)     As detailed in the OfS guidance, previous targets have progressed to a distinct focus on reducing the gaps between WP and non-WP learners. To enable this, a lifecycle approach is integral, with target groups across the lifecycle providing clarity to WP endeavours.

(c)     The document reiterates the University's aim of becoming a sector lead in WP, and has challenging KPIs to drive change for real impact. To succeed, the Strategy will demonstrate greater ambition, and aim to change systemic barriers faced by many of our potential and current students. It is an ambitious strategy, but will provide the vehicle to becoming a more diverse institution, more purposeful, proactive and progressive.

(d)     Through this strategy, it is hoped to embed the ethos of WP across the institution, interrelating it to other strategies and exploring the impact of intersectionality of characteristics, to facilitate support for students from all backgrounds to thrive and succeed at Warwick.

(e)     It will be a very useful document for the Committee and the Working Groups, giving an overview of the operation of WP across the University, institutional aims and targets, and setting a context for departmental plans.

(f)     The focus on evidence-based indicators are viewed as fundamental for meaningful implementation; data driven strategies prove to be more impactful. The methodology utilised within the evidence base deploys quantitative analysis within a qualitative space, exploring experiences of deficit. It is important to frame engagement accurately, and further explore the experience of resilience employed by many under-represented groups. It is also vital to capitalise on opportunities of developing different models of engagement, for example, with Coventry as the City of Culture.

(g)     Concerns were raised that it may present a deficit model, with emphasis on the student to adapt to the institution, rather than the institution responding to student need. It was stressed that this is a sector-wide issue, and that institutions need to change, not students. Warwick requires real change as an institution to embrace diversity, and this would also require deep and meaningful work around committee membership, pedagogy and teaching. The inclusion of students in this process in peer-to-peer engagement is a positive move and the establishment of the Student Advisory Group will play an important role in this. Concerns around governance and tokenism were raised. It was noted that it is difficult to identify students from under-represented groups, and alternative ways of engagement before, during and after their studies need to be explored and developed.

(h)     It was agreed that this Strategy requires whole-institution commitment; the Academic Resource Committee and Teaching Excellence Group (TEG) could provide mechanisms to support this, as would the University's Inclusion Strategy. The draft WP Strategy reflects the Student Recruitment Strategy at points of intersection, and this will develop over time. The Education Strategy makes it more meaningful for students to co-create, and they need to be engaged before sub-strategy levels. Intersectional points of strategies, for example, the Education and Social Inclusion strategies, are increasingly radical and progressive. Understanding should be developed on engaging

students before ratification, communicating the strategy to, and with, student body. The University should be responsive to the student voice, working with them at all levels; this would potentially engender huge benefits in identifying issues and solutions, and exploring ways of working in different ways. They should also be compensated for the efforts they make to this end.

(i)     It was further agreed that the Strategy offers an excellent framework for articulating institutional priorities, and exploring what has worked well. Discussion and actions are vital on the 'softer side' of the student experience – how to engage with students and their expectations, cultural expectations and reputation of the University. This requires a whole-institution approach, with staff engagement imperative, to engender cultural change. It provides an opportunity for a consistent, explicit institutional approach to diversity and inclusion.

(j)     In outreach work with young people from non-traditional backgrounds, accessibility is key but remains challenging, engaging and enthusing these learners and developing real understanding of their context, the barriers faced and why Warwick is not seen as a realistic option for many.

(k)     The draft Strategy further explores postgraduate study as an example of a positive outcome, whether accessed at this institution or another. The draft Employability Strategy has defined success as a definition constructed by the students themselves and this requires consideration in this Strategy.

(l)     The Committee's role is to commit to this Strategy and take ownership to drive it forward. The Strategy will need a robust delivery plan which may have financial implications and new investment commitments. To ensure operational effectiveness and application, the structures of departments will play a key role in considerations around flexibility and autonomy.


RESOLVED:

The Committee endorsed the draft WP Strategy.
Consultation is key for institutional commitment and support for its implementation.
The Head of Widening Participation will embark on a consultation in January 2019.
Core communications will be mapped out for dissemination, both online and before Committees and Boards across the institution.
Further developments will be presented to the Committee in due course.


17/18-19     **Minutes**

CONSIDERED:

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

(a)     10/18-19 Correction of 'immobilise' to 'mobilise'.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the WP committee held on 11 October 2018 be approved, subject to correction.


18/18-19     **Matters Arising**

NOTED:

(a)     5/18-19 WPC membership

The membership was agreed and Senate will formally be informed of any changes: Senate has been informed of WPC membership changes.

(b)    7/18-19 Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme
That the Committee supports a review of scholarships across the institution, examining target learners, utilising both qualitative and quantitative data: Discussions are ongoing with the Head of Widening Participation to explore the criteria employed.

(c)    Professor Richard Tunstall is to represent Warwick Medical School on the WP Committee from 29 November 2018


19/18-19    **Chair's Business**

(a)    The University's Education Strategy which has a large WP component, was formally passed by Senate in March, and has now been strongly endorsed by Council. This indicates significant institutional engagement with WP.


20/18-19    **Widening Participation Outcomes from 2018-19 cycle**

RECEIVED:

A presentation from the Widening Participation Evaluation and Evidence Manager on the outcomes for WP groups from the 2018-19 entrant cycle, including progress towards access agreement targets

(a)    The presentation reports an analysis of data in relation to the University's Access and Participation Plan performance targets and annual milestones, specifically around enrolments from target groups, and differential attainment.

(b)    Though the number of entrants from low NS-SEC groups has increased, the number of students from quintile1 POLAR 3 decreased for the 2018/19 entry compared to 2017/18 entry. LPN applications for both years were compared in a snapshot taken in June; this indicated that the actual number of applications in 18/19 was 161, against a target of 175, compared to 17/18, actual numbers were 189 against a target of 165.

(c)    Applications and enrolments from schools in Coventry and Warwickshire rose slightly, as did entrants from a BAME background.

(d)    There has been a decrease in the number and proportion of students who received conditional and/or unconditional offers in 2018/19 compared to 2017/18 as well as a higher proportion of rejected students. LPN applicants are less likely to receive an offer, also less likely to receive a firm offer.

(e)    The data indicates progressive increase in BAME applicants, with some BAME groups no longer under-represented, although this does vary between departments.

(f)    The Research and Evaluation working group is exploring differences in students' degree outcomes based on their background characteristics. This includes data for 3,045 home students registered on three-year classified degrees entering the University between 2014/15 and 2015/16, and then graduating three years after their entry. Differences in students' UCAS points and degree outcomes based on socio-economic status (POLAR 3 and NS-SEC), gender, age, ethnicity and school type has been analysed.

(g)    The study indicates ethnic and gender differences in attainment at entry and degree level. Students from grammar schools and further education colleges achieve higher entry grades and proportion of 'good degrees' (1st/2.1) than students from comprehensive schools. Compared to females, males are approximately 65% less likely to get a 'good degree'. NS-SEC and POLAR 3 differences were not significant. Compared to White students, BAME students

were approximately 60% less likely to get a 'good degree'. When controlled for other variables, ethnic and gender differences remain the same while school type differences are no longer significant.

(h)     Analysis at Faculty level is ongoing, however initial findings indicate White students achieve the highest proportion of good degrees across all faculties.

(i)     Findings are consistent with SPA analysis indicating that: Warwick has a higher proportion of Black student intake than most other Russell Group HEIs at UG and PGT levels; Warwick makes fewer offers to Black UG students than their White counterparts; there is a big difference in the percentage of Black and White UG students at Warwick getting a 1st class degree in both Science and non-Science subject types, although the attainment gap (good honours) appears to have been narrowed significantly in Science subjects over the past 5 years. Graduate outcomes appear to be positive for black students, although Warwick UK domiciled Black PGT graduates have the lowest positive outcomes in the Russell Group.

(j)     There are concerns around terminology, that BAME and Black appear interchangeable, although all efforts have been made to unpick this, as BAME data may mask the Black student experience. It must be noted that until recently there was little differentiation in the BAME group; even now, small numbers of students from specific demographic groups limit the analysis, therefore it is important to complement quantitative data with qualitative input.

(k)     Statistics around offer-making prove disappointing, indicating a need to be more inclusive in all areas, from Marketing to Recruitment.

RESOLVED:

The Chair recognised the level of work that has gone into this analysis, particularly as the data has only just been received from SPA. The report gives context to the previous item on the WP Strategy.
The presentation to be circulated to Committee members.


21/18-19     **Widening Participation Programmes Contextual Offer Making**

RECEIVED:

A paper on the expansion of alternative offers to all post-16 Widening Participation programmes (WP 7/18-19)

(a)     The paper provides an overview of WP provision with a recommendation that the admissions offer is transparent and consistent across all post 16 programmes to enhance greater progression to Warwick

(b)     The WP team run four large-scale post-16 WP programmes, only one of which currently provides students on the programme with an alternative offer. When alternative offers were introduced for the Realising Opportunities programme in 2015/16 the expectation was that the impact would be reviewed to consider wider rollout to other post 16 schemes.

(c)     As a means of direct comparison, twelve other universities deliver the Pathways to Law programme to over 300 students each year and 75% of universities offer a guaranteed reduced offer to programme participants

(d)     The Committee were invited to consider and commend a lower offer for students who have undertaken a post-16 widening participation programme at the University of Warwick.

RECOMMENDED:

The Committee strongly commended this proposal, with the caveat that applications for Economics require A level Mathematics so not all offers can be guaranteed. The proposal will go before the Student Recruitment Steering Group.


22/18-19      **Care Leavers Report**

RECEIVED:

A draft paper on the University's provision and support for Care Leavers
(WP 8/18-19)

(a)    This paper followed the presentation of WP.10/17-18 to the Committee in May 2018. The paper considers how the institution can enhance its offer and prioritisation of support for care leavers, and explores examples of best practice

(b)    Key recommendations on the University definition of a care leaver comprise of increasing the upper age limit to 25; removing the requirement for prior full time education; the inclusion of part time students; and having spent thirteen weeks in local authority care in the last fifteen years. These changes would better meet the needs of the cohort and reflect their educational experiences, and would furthermore be in line with the Children's Act.

(c)    While the University currently offers 365 day/year accommodation, this can result in the student having to move at least three times a year, paying additionally for accommodation over the summer period and having to spend a week in a holding area whilst waiting for rooms to become available. The accommodation is furthermore allocated across several different teams

(d)    Key recommendations on accommodation involve offering care leavers priority to choose their accommodation, offering consistent 365 day/year accommodation and guaranteed accommodation for duration of course. Accommodation to be allocated ensuring students have a single point of contact.

(e)    Operationally the recommendations around accommodation would not be possible within the existing framework.

(f)    It was noted that the terminology referred to in the paper should be considered: 'duty of care' should be replaced by 'promote positive outcomes'

RESOLVED:

The Committee strongly supported the recommendations. A further paper on progress to be presented at a future meeting.


23/18-19      **Faculty of Arts Report to FoA Education Committee**

RECEIVED:

A report discussed at the FoA Education Committee as part of a review of WP provision across the Faculty (WP 9/18-19)

(a)    The working party was formed of colleagues from the Faculty who were either already participants in Department or institutional Widening Participation activities, or who expressed an interest in working in this area.

(b) The report presented an overview of existing WP activity in the Faculty and set out key discussion points and recommendations for future work in this area.

(c) Significant, innovative work on widening participation is ongoing across the Faculty, sometimes on a departmental level and often in cross-department, collaborative ways.

(d) Issues around Widening Participation have a particular character for Arts subjects. The current wider cultural emphases on (a) STEM and (b) Employability are likely to impact significantly on the uptake of Arts subjects at higher levels by pupils with protected characteristics, because of the widespread misconception of the relationship between arts subjects and future employment prospects.

(e) While the Faculty's WP figures seem acceptable for low SEC, LPN, BME, colleagues noted that participation by mature students was low across the Faculty and that this group suggests a particular focus point for a future strategy. The working group perceives a gap between offers made to and enrolment by WP applicants across the Faculty.

(f) The working party recommends:
(i) A Faculty WP plan, with a clear sense of purpose and evaluation embedded in every initiative from the planning stage to be developed by the new Faculty Widening Participation Co-ordinator
(iii) Ensure that knowledge about WP is institutionally and not individually held. For example, the production of a Faculty reference resource kit
(iv) Consider a wide range of subject-specific initiatives designed to target different age groups

NOTED:

The Committee noted the report and welcomed further updates when appropriate.


24/18-19 **Widening Participation Working Group Updates**

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
The Co-Chair pointed out that much of the progress made has been presented in *item 6*. The working group has a number of objectives, including:
(i) Developing a greater understanding of the data available from the Strategic Planning & Analytics Office (SPA) to enable the working group to undertake analysis
(ii) Co-ordination between Faculties and the central WP team, through population of the newly created Repository which will identify all work being undertaken across the University
(iii) While the presentation in *item 6* had utilised 'parsimonious' data, restricting analysis by degree on undergraduate, full time students, this will be extended to broader data sets to explore a wider range of outcomes
(iv) The Evidence and Evaluation Manager is also examining contextual data to inform practice.

(b) Student Success and Progression working group
The group have held two meetings since formation in September which have focussed on framing direction. They have formed two sub-groups to focus on the following areas:

(i) Exploring the experiences of current WP students at the University through focus groups. These will encompass both those students who have participated in a programme, and those who have not, to identify gaps in the University's support.

(ii) Analysing research and sector practice in support of WP students. This will begin in January 2019.

(c)     Representatives sit on both working groups to ensure collaboration and avoid duplication.

RESOLVED:

The Co-chairs to present regular updates at the WP Committee meeting


25/18-19     **Any other business**

(a)     The Head of Widening Participation to circulate the Access Agreement 2018-19 monitoring return to the Committee via email in January 2019

(b)     The Committee offered congratulations to Paul Blagburn, Head of Widening Participation, on his election as Chair of the Russell Group Widening Participation Association.


26/18-19     **Date of next meeting**

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on **Wednesday 13 February 2019 at 2.30pm in Senate House Council Chamber**.