Visible students/invisible needs: Widening Participation research, policy and practice
Programme

- 10:00 - 10:15 Refreshments and Registration
- 10:15 - 10:25 Welcome and Introduction
- 10:25 - 11:00 Group activity: What are the challenges and opportunities for widening participation
- 11:00 - 11:30 Introducing Fair Access Research
- 11:30 - 12:00 SUBU and widening participation
  - student experiences
  - #liberatemycurriculum
- 12:00 – 12:30 Group Activity: How does my programme engage with diversity?
- 12:30 – 13:00 Group Activity: Evaluating your practice
- 13:00: 14.00 Poster exhibition, lunch and building networks
Fair Access Research Project

Learning together to promote opportunity, equality and achievement

Dr Vanessa Heaslip & Dr Clive Hunt
Principal Investigators
The focus of our research will be students who are potentially underrepresented and marginalised in higher education:

- Mature students
- Students with disability or additional learning needs
- Students from Black, Asian or minority ethnic origins
- First generation / first in family to attend higher education
- Students from low income families and socio-economic groups 4-7
- Students applying from Lower Participating Neighbourhoods
- Care Leavers
Our inter-disciplinary research involves a mix of students, professional, and academic staff. Together we will:

- examine the student journey of people from underrepresented backgrounds
- use research to inform policy and practice, both internally and externally
- develop a longitudinal approach to facilitate continued improvement

We aim to make a difference to students by undertaking research to transform practice across the university and sector. Through learning together, our practice-led research will shape new understandings in the area of fair access and widening participation to higher education.
Within the project we are exploring:

- Admissions
- Student Experiences
- Attainment
- Attrition
- Use of Services in Bu
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Findings: Admissions Review

• A review of the admissions and enrolment data for all applicants to BU between academic years 2010/11 to 2014/15. This review compared applications and enrolments of students from WP categories (Disability, Low Participation Neighbourhoods (LPN) Care leavers and Acorn data) and compared these to application and enrolment data of students who are not from WP backgrounds. The review identified:
  – BU had a sustained number of applications from students from WP backgrounds, there were some small differences at School/Faculty level. In addition, there were also slight differences with regard to the conversion of WP applications to enrolments and this is worth exploring further.
  – BU does not recruit the national benchmark of students from LPN, yet the recruitment of these students is largely consistent across Schools. Therefore, more work needs to be undertaken to explore these students’ experiences of the recruitment cycle and how this can be used to improve practice, including more targeted course marketing to students in LPNs as well as increasing conversion of LPN applications to enrolments.
  – 1257 applicants did not specify on their application form if they had a disability or not and the reasons behind this needs to be explored.
  – 0.7% of BU’s total enrolments are Care Leavers, which is slightly above the national average. Yet again, there were slight differences regarding conversion of Care Leaver applications to enrolments and this needs further exploration.
Findings: Admissions Review(2)

• A review of attrition data for all BU students studying between academic years 2010-11 and 2013-14 was undertaken. This was to ascertain whether there are any differences in patterns of attrition for WP students compared with those with no WP flags, as well as students with multiple flags. The flags used were: LPN, BME, first in family, disability and socio-economic group (SEG).

• Whilst the analysis of this data is still underway, some preliminary findings highlight that the largest proportion of attrition takes place in Level C (in line with national research) and the key WP flag that has the highest attrition is first in family, which accounts for about 40% of all those who withdraw.

• Attrition is also highest in students from SEG 1-3, rather than those traditionally considered as more at risk (SEG 4-7 and 8).

• With regards to attainment, one of the most interesting findings so far is that when compared to the attrition data, initial data analysis suggests first in family students may do proportionally better than second generation students: a finding that warrants further, systematic investigation.
External Projects/Links

• Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA) NETT (Leading Additional Admission Assessments). Presented at SPA 10th National Conference
• Office for Fair Access (OFFA) - How does current research seek to identify impact of outreach: a systematic review
• Evaluating outreach symposium (Warwick, Bristol, Sheffield, Sutton Trust, OFFA)
• Festival of Learning
• Organisational learning and Widening Participation
Moving Forward....

• BU University wide questionnaire about student experiences......

• Qualitative research to explore the quantitative findings in more details...capturing the student voice.

• Opportunities to engage with YOU......
Project Team:
Dr Vanessa Heaslip (Nursing) Co Principal Investigator
Dr Clive Hunt (Engineering) Co Principal Investigator
Dr Maggie Hutchings (Education)
DR Sue Eccles (Media and Communication)
Professor Colin Pritchard (Social Work)
Dr Jon Williams (Physiotherapy)
Dr Alex Wardrop Post Doctoral Researcher
Jane Devekey (Students Union)

If you would like more information on the project please contact Dr Vanessa Heaslip vheaslip@bournemouth.ac.uk or Dr Clive Hunt CHunt@bournemouth.ac.uk