Transcript for Clip 2 of Student Response to the 2019/20 Access and Participation Plan Monitoring Return.

Associated audio file at <https://www.bath.ac.uk/announcements/student-response-to-the-2019-20-access-and-participation-plan-monitoring-return/>

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00:00:04,500 --> 00:00:09,780

So after talking about the main targets and activities of the access and participation plan,

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let's move on to another section which is working with students. So the university set out

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ways to work with students to achieve the aims of the access and participation plan.

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It doesn't mention the students union a lot, and those commitments have been followed through. The SU is a part of the main app monitoring group.

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And this year, this has also been divided into subgroups representing the key stages of the student lifecycle.

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So access, continuation, success and attainment.

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However, this is really a development from 19/20, which we're dealing with here here from Mike Nicholson.

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So if we take, for instance, the access monitoring group,

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I think that first year we we were just finding our way back in 19/20 about what

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00:00:56,550 --> 00:01:02,130

involved and who we needed in the room and what the remit of the group was.

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00:01:02,130 --> 00:01:07,260

And I think if you looked at what we achieved that year.

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There wasn't an awful lot of kind of engagement in the way that we might have hoped rule forward a year,

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00:01:13,410 --> 00:01:17,730

particularly because I think there was the continuity with the SU membership.

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So there were some people who were on for more than one year.

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I think we found probably much greater depth of engagement.

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So, again, here there is a focus on the development of the monitoring groups,

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00:01:31,140 --> 00:01:38,760

but particularly the development of student involvement in this work, which is really moving in the right trajectory.

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I think one of the things that we are beginning to find is that as the there is a growing

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awareness amongst the wider student community around access and participation issues,

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there are particular representative groups of students who want to get involved,

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who are interested in kind of contributing their expertise and experience to helping inform the discussion.

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00:02:02,310 --> 00:02:10,290

And I think that that's going to be the way forward next for us to explore all the ways in which the

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00:02:10,290 --> 00:02:16,680

enthusiasm and engagement can be captured and harnessed with regards to involvement of current students.

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00:02:16,680 --> 00:02:24,030

So not student officers, we can see a positive trajectory building both in the monitoring and the evaluation stage,

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00:02:24,030 --> 00:02:27,810

particularly with the creation of the app evaluation manager role.

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00:02:27,810 --> 00:02:32,520

There is extensive research that happens at the university that deals directly with students to figure

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00:02:32,520 --> 00:02:38,250

out how active participation activities are going and whether they're heading in the right direction.

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00:02:38,250 --> 00:02:45,910

The team also works directly with students by recruiting student ambassadors. Hear from Andrew Ross here.

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00:02:45,910 --> 00:02:56,190

So we recruit in the region of 150 to 200 ambassadors a year from a diverse range of students from across the institution.

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00:02:56,190 --> 00:03:01,060

And they represent the student body at all of the outreach activities.

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00:03:01,060 --> 00:03:07,770

So we try and focus majority of our outreach activities on the student voice and student experience.

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00:03:07,770 --> 00:03:13,020

And even where there are staff present, we will try and bring in that student voice throughout.

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00:03:13,020 --> 00:03:19,290

And we're planning in the future to introduce the student voice into the planning and the strategy

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00:03:19,290 --> 00:03:27,790

around the outreach activity through a sort of advisory board of a smaller cohort of the ambassador pool.

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00:03:27,790 --> 00:03:34,680

So these ambassadors are part of the monitoring and evaluation work, but they also do outreach directly in schools,

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00:03:34,680 --> 00:03:39,180

delivering summer schools, sustained activities, mentor A-level students.

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00:03:39,180 --> 00:03:43,410

And these are really crucial part of the work, really creating those role models,

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00:03:43,410 --> 00:03:50,250

which is why it's essential that those ambassadors have lived the experience of not being a hegemonic identity at the university.

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00:03:50,250 --> 00:03:57,030

However, this is not an easy endeavour at all, especially at a university such as Bath.

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00:03:57,030 --> 00:04:03,810

Let's hear from Marian Mackintosh and Andrew Ross. That is difficult to do in practise.

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00:04:03,810 --> 00:04:11,430

I think the focus of our work up to now has been about gathering information from different student groups.

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00:04:11,430 --> 00:04:20,340

So so, for example, Low-Income Students are a big area of concern for us.

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00:04:20,340 --> 00:04:24,990

And we take the opportunity because we annually survey those students.

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00:04:24,990 --> 00:04:34,710

We take the opportunity to introduce extra questions into that which inform our access and participation work so that they're there,

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00:04:34,710 --> 00:04:41,340

built into the evaluation in terms of in terms of presenting their experience.

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00:04:41,340 --> 00:04:49,740

But I couldn't say that and that it's that it's something across the board that we gather information

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00:04:49,740 --> 00:04:59,950

from from all backgrounds in in in all the student lifecycle areas that we that we look at.

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00:04:59,950 --> 00:05:08,330

I thank you both, took a breath at the same time and I was just going to add about the ambassador pool in that we do

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00:05:08,330 --> 00:05:15,380

try and get as many people with lived experience of various different backgrounds as possible.

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00:05:15,380 --> 00:05:24,090

We. We use the student groups that exist within the student union to signpost the ambassador roles,

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00:05:24,090 --> 00:05:32,300

we use our academic colleagues across the institution to signpost the roles and where we.

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00:05:32,300 --> 00:05:36,350

We're getting into the realm of slightly more targeted approaches to recruiting

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00:05:36,350 --> 00:05:42,150

ambassadors so that we make sure that we have that representation across all students.

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00:05:42,150 --> 00:05:49,800

The efforts to create this cohort of ambassadors with lived experience that are not traditionally represented, a bath is really commendable.

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I have to say it is unfortunate that this exercise is happening this year when realistically the results are going

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00:05:54,960 --> 00:06:02,490

to start coming in in a year or so with the changes that happen with access and participation and the office for students.

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00:06:02,490 --> 00:06:12,030

Talking about student engagement, however, throws up some concerns about the difficulty of understanding the access and participation plan itself.

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00:06:12,030 --> 00:06:17,220

This area is really intricate and it's really difficult to understand.

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00:06:17,220 --> 00:06:25,080

And it's a lot of information and data that a person's brain finds it quite difficult to retain in a short amount of time.

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00:06:25,080 --> 00:06:33,720

So I think I hope that this submission helps for future officers and also students looking at kind of broader engagement,

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00:06:33,720 --> 00:06:42,990

but also kind of like prompts the university to be a bit more clear and concise in a way,

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00:06:42,990 --> 00:06:47,760

about about the access and participation plan and what it aims to achieve.

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00:06:47,760 --> 00:06:56,040

We have stuff in the student's union that is partly APP funded and they don't really have a clear idea of what a WP student is.

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00:06:56,040 --> 00:07:04,110

So I think there is a joint piece of work, of informational work that we could be doing together in the future to make sure that whoever comes next,

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00:07:04,110 --> 00:07:06,960

given that hopefully the students submission is something that stays,

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00:07:06,960 --> 00:07:16,650

that enables a more straightforward and kind of like, oh, what's the word for a streamlined submission in the future?

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00:07:16,650 --> 00:07:21,870

I think a bit more clarity for, you know, for offices and for the students union,

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00:07:21,870 --> 00:07:26,400

but for the community at large in terms of just the key headline aim.

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00:07:26,400 --> 00:07:33,240

So these are the six institutional targets of the university. This is how we set out to achieve them in the future.

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00:07:33,240 --> 00:07:41,920

So someone does not have to navigate through the whole document and try to pluck out that information. From talking to the APP and admissions team

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00:07:41,920 --> 00:07:45,360

this has become a quicker area where we could work together to produce more concise

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00:07:45,360 --> 00:07:49,590

briefs for consumption by people who are not very knowledgeable about this area,

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00:07:49,590 --> 00:07:56,820

which realistically is most people at the university. This is a strategic area work and of huge importance for universities.

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00:07:56,820 --> 00:08:02,790

And students should care about what the institution is doing to break down barriers to access and participation.

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00:08:02,790 --> 00:08:06,900

But it's hardly ever going to happen if they have to get through a 40 page,

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00:08:06,900 --> 00:08:13,230

really thick document in terms of engaging with students and particularly looking at the evaluation work.

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00:08:13,230 --> 00:08:21,570

There is an everlasting problem in the SU that we have with students being over surveyed, particularly students from non hegemonic identities.

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00:08:21,570 --> 00:08:26,790

However, Mike Nicholson brought up this issue before I had the chance to mention it myself.

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00:08:26,790 --> 00:08:32,100

There are particular groups of students who are underrepresented in the community and

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00:08:32,100 --> 00:08:38,720

they are constantly being asked of the representatives of the particular characteristic,

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00:08:38,720 --> 00:08:46,380

you know, what could the university be doing to improve their circumstance? And they keep telling us what their concerns are.

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00:08:46,380 --> 00:08:51,840

But maybe the action then that doesn't translate into action. And I think that's something we've got to get away from.

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00:08:51,840 --> 00:09:00,540

Consultation is not the same as engagement. And this is very much something that a lot of departments, academic and professional need to learn.

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00:09:00,540 --> 00:09:06,030

It's no secret that students from underrepresented identities are very, very small groups at the University of Bath,

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which, as we explored earlier, is difficult and intimidating in itself.

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00:09:10,320 --> 00:09:14,310

Those students are asked the same question time and again from different departments that

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00:09:14,310 --> 00:09:19,920

do not communicate with each other and with promises hardly ever translating into action.

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00:09:19,920 --> 00:09:25,650

Primarily, this is an issue with data collection and retention, different departments of this university.

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00:09:25,650 --> 00:09:30,660

Research on, for instance, the experience of black students and tell nobody else about it.

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00:09:30,660 --> 00:09:38,730

Then in our area does the same thing and another and nobody ever thinks that it would be a great idea to pull all this data in one place

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00:09:38,730 --> 00:09:45,510

so that we can draw from the work that has already been done and actually putting recommendations that have been already made into action.

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00:09:45,510 --> 00:09:54,120

The issue is currently involved in a working group called the Student Voice Framework, which aims to address this huge shortfall.

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Secondly, there is a clearly identifiable issue in terms of the data that different departments receive.

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00:10:00,900 --> 00:10:08,970

I know this to be a reality for a lot of departments, but in the SU we have staff rules and activities that are funded by the access and participation plan,

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00:10:08,970 --> 00:10:16,740

and yet we are still unable to receive student data that would show us whether students from target groups are engaging with our activity.

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00:10:16,740 --> 00:10:22,290

This essentially makes evaluating our work from another perspective difficult, if not impossible.

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00:10:22,290 --> 00:10:27,510

And it brings up the question of just how many pockets within the university are funded by app,

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00:10:27,510 --> 00:10:32,790

but have no means of effectively evaluating the efficacy of their activities.

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00:10:32,790 --> 00:10:36,660

Overall, there are some factors that we need to take into consideration when assessing the

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00:10:36,660 --> 00:10:44,070

work we do when assessing working with students as part of access and participation,

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00:10:44,070 --> 00:10:47,310

there are things that could have happened, such as working with liberation,

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00:10:47,310 --> 00:10:52,950

executive committee of the SU, a commitment that was in the APP, which does not seem to have happened.

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00:10:52,950 --> 00:11:00,750

Then we have the students union, which is increasingly and obviously being seen and dealt with as an active partner in this process.

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00:11:00,750 --> 00:11:06,120

We do, however, still have problems when it comes to data handling, as I talked about just now.

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00:11:06,120 --> 00:11:08,760

Then we have the curriculum transformation work,

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00:11:08,760 --> 00:11:16,490

which appears to have involved students in the first stages with APP funding given out to a staff roles specifically focussed on inclusivity

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00:11:16,490 --> 00:11:23,930

How much this high level commitment has transferred into action and changes to individual departments curricula is still a mystery.

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00:11:23,930 --> 00:11:27,770

We do know from reading a report from the curriculum development officer that the

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00:11:27,770 --> 00:11:32,660

university senior leadership took a decision to not make it mandatory for departments,

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00:11:32,660 --> 00:11:42,230

academic departments, to provide information on how students are going to be engaged with the following phase of curriculum development,

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00:11:42,230 --> 00:11:46,460

which, as I already mentioned, is actually a huge fallacy.

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00:11:46,460 --> 00:11:53,930

What has really stood up to me the most, however, has been the willingness from the and admissions team in particular to develop.

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00:11:53,930 --> 00:12:00,650

This is all a relatively new process and it's clear that some things are working and some just aren't.

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00:12:00,650 --> 00:12:02,930

What has become clear to me, however,

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00:12:02,930 --> 00:12:09,950

is that this team is really keen to engage with students in the proper way and regard the students union as a key partner rather than an afterthought.

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00:12:09,950 --> 00:12:16,470

And I do believe that this paves the way very nicely for for a collaborative and successful future.

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00:12:16,470 --> 00:12:33,552

However, again, and I'm going to say this again, it does need a senior managerial approach and in particular commitment.