

# Advance HE Student Retention and Success Symposium 2023

## The Cost of Student Poverty

01 June 2023

### Session abstracts

**Keynote, 10:15 - 11:00**

Dr Michelle Morgan, Higher Education Consultant

**Oral Presentations, 11:20 - 12:20**

#### Session 1A

##### **Poverty-proofing GCU: In and beyond the cost of living crisis**

Professor John McKendrick, Glasgow Caledonian University

*Case Study (15mins + 5mins Q&A)*

Glasgow Caledonian University presents itself as the 'university for the common good'. The institution has funded our poverty-proofing project as part of its Strategy for Learning. In this presentation, we introduce our work, and open an invitation for others to collaborate. Our project comprises five mini-programmes of work, which we introduce in this presentation: (i) Opportunity knocks for all or the inverse care law? A series of focused analyses of the extent to which there is equity in engagement with GCU services, e.g., to what extent are more disadvantaged students equally likely to engage in the Common Good Award; (ii) (Hidden) cost of the degree; (iii) Benchmarking university costs across HE in Scotland; (iv) Conceiving of student poverty and (v) GCU students' lifeworld.

#### Session 1B

##### **Understanding the impact of paid work on student engagement**

Chris Pomery, Leeds Business School

*Lightning Talk (5mins + 5mins Q&A)*

Student voice findings suggest that the scale and frequency with which students undertake paid work impacts negatively on how much study they do, and how they feel about their prospects of achieving their best grade and of graduating. Framing the impact of paid work as a student problem is unlikely to generate better outcomes for those students who feel they have to undertake paid work. Framing it as a systemic issue, which requires an institutional response, would open the door (a) to recognise that this is a critical issue for all parties, (b) that it is in the interest of institutions to pro-actively assess and understand its scope and scale, and (c) that solutions can only arise through institution-led actions.

#### Session 1C

##### **From The Breakfast Club to The Secret of My Success**

Nina Anderson-Knox, Stephanie Jehan-Spiers, Kellie McAlonan and Matthew Gilmour, University of the West of Scotland

*Oral presentation (15mins + 5mins Q&A)*

Innovation is needed to support our students in the current climate. From our new free breakfast initiative to help students fuel up for their studies, to deepening our commitment to the mental and physical

wellbeing of our students through personalised proactive outreach support when students need it most, UWS has never been more committed to our truth, we are here for our students.

As Scotland's leading university for its impact on reducing inequalities, THE Impact Rankings delivering against the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, we are providing targeted, practical, pragmatic interventions to our diverse student population.

## **Oral Presentations, 13:20 - 14:20**

### **Session 2A**

#### **Sheffield Hallam University: Food banks and the role of academic staff**

Kendal Stoneystreet, Sheffield Hallam University

*Case Study (15mins + 5mins Q&A)*

Recent research suggests that one in ten university students in the UK are using food banks during the cost-of-living crisis. Higher education institutions are playing a critical role in this response to poverty and food insecurity, but not always at a formal level. Rather, increasing responsibility is placed on academic staff to ensure students are not hungry – for pastoral and pedagogical reasons. Sheffield Hallam University is in the process of establishing a university-wide food bank, developed by one postgraduate doctoral student. However, should we consider food banks as a long-term solution, and as an emergency response, is it our role as educators to respond to the gaps left by austerity policies and measures?

### **Session 2B**

#### **The cost of being a student nurse**

Dr Wendy Mayne, Dr Mark Molesworth, Glasgow Caledonian University

*Oral presentation (15mins + 5mins Q&A)*

This session is based upon our qualitative study exploring the impact of financial stress upon the wellbeing of student nurses at a modern Scottish university. Data gathered from questionnaires and focus groups will inform delegate discussion around institutional responsibility and consideration of collaborative actions that could be taken in response to student financial stress. By facilitating debate of institutional, political, professional and societal issues, together with strategies, interventions and partnership working, we will consider the responses required by HEIs and their partners to promote student learning and wellbeing in the face of these issues.

### **Session 2C**

#### **Embedding student voice in response to the cost-of-living**

Victoria Blacklock, Shola Hughes, Roseann Black and Ailsa Riddell, Northumbria University

*Case Study (15mins + 5mins Q&A)*

Who better than the experts of their own lived experience to advise Northumbria University on the most impactful and inclusive response to the cost-of-living crisis?

This case study explores how student engagement schemes, heavily influenced by Student as Producer, can empower underrepresented students to shape policy and practices at a University-wide level.

A team of current students, employed as Student Inclusion Consultants, has been working closely with key senior stakeholders to advise on the ways that the University can address the impact that the cost-of-living has on underrepresented students.

**Panel 15:15 - 16:15**

**Diverse Perspectives, Shared Priorities**

Chair: Kay Hack, Advance HE

Rebecca Price, Director of Student and Graduate Success, University of East Anglia

Susan Preston, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project Officer, University of Leeds

Catherine O'connor, Professor for Higher Education, Learning and Teaching at Leeds Trinity