

THREE FAITHS FORUM



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- Press Release -

Future leaders act to unite communities

Students from Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities today became the first graduates of the Three Faiths Forum Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme.

A Graduation Reception at the House of Commons marked the culmination of the pilot year of the programme, in which trios of Muslim, Christian and Jewish politics students were assigned a Member of Parliament to mentor them as they constructed a project together to promote political engagement and social responsibility.

More than one hundred politicians, representatives of NGOs, faith and community leaders were introduced to the diversity of projects developed by nine trios of Muslim, Christian and Jewish participants in the programme. A pioneering initiative of the Three Faiths Forum, Undergraduate ParliaMentors nurtures the next generation of politicians and community leaders, while creating a positive social impact. This programme creates a new model for interfaith interaction - working at the grass roots and political levels simultaneously.

The Rt Hon Hazel Blears MP, Communities and Local Government Secretary, praised the initiative, saying, "I am delighted to welcome the work of the Three Faiths Forum. For more than ten years they have been building links between Jews, Christians and Muslims, and helping them explore the far-reaching roots that unite their faiths. This programme provides an exciting opportunity for young people to meet those of other faiths, to get a taste for public debate, and to learn skills and confidence that will help them fight prejudice and build bridges in their daily lives. I am certain that the young people involved have been inspired by the programme and I hope they'll help us to keep building a mature approach to faith and social change for the future"

Communities Minister, Parmjit Dhanda MP, congratulating the Three Faiths Forum on the success of its endeavour, noted that "Through this programme, everybody wins. The students have gained a valuable insight into the politics in action from their MP mentors. The mentors have benefited from direct access to future leaders from the three communities."

Stephen Shashoua, Director of the Three Faiths Forum said of the programme, "In a short period of time we have achieved a great deal, and established a programme that has been deemed valuable by all the stakeholders involved, including universities, parliamentarians, faith communities, NGOs and of course the young people who took part."

The success of the Undergraduate ParliaMentors Programme has paved the way for future mentoring opportunities, including DocuMentors, where students of the three faiths are mentored by leading filmmakers, and Business ManageMentors, for business students to develop enterprises under the guidance of senior executives.

As the pilot year comes to a close, the second year of the Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme has been heavily oversubscribed.

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Notes:

1. The following took part as mentors in the pilot year of the Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme:
John Battle MP (Labour), Peter Bottomley MP (Conservative), Louise Ellman MP (Labour), Lynne Featherstone MP (Liberal Democrat), Dominic Grieve MP (Conservative), Simon Hughes MP (Liberal Democrat), Syed Kamall MEP (Conservative), Sadiq Khan MP (Labour), Susan Kramer MP (Liberal Democrat)
2. Students on the Undergraduate ParliaMentors Programme are from the following universities:
City, Royal Holloway, Queen Mary, LSE, London Met, Brunel, UCL, Goldsmiths, SOAS, Kings College, Cambridge, Leeds, Durham

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