

THREE FAITHS FORUM



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1 February 2008

Press Release

MPs become ParliaMentors for students of faith backgrounds

Parliamentarians are to share their expertise with Muslim, Jewish and Christian students of politics in a programme launched yesterday at a meeting of experts inaugurated by David Lammy MP (Minister for Skills at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills).

Panellists, including Daniel Finkelstein (Comment Editor at The Times), Olly Grender (Former Advisor to Paddy Ashdown) and William Higham (Head of Communications at Demos), challenged the first ever participants of the Three Faiths Forum Undergraduate ParliaMentors Programme to think about their role in the future political landscape.

The Undergraduate ParliaMentors Programme (or UP) is an initiative by the Three Faiths Forum to nurture future politicians and community leaders from the three Abrahamic Faiths. Nine MPs from all three major parties will each mentor a group of three students - one Christian, one Jewish and one Muslim, meeting with them on a monthly basis. With advice from their mentors, students will develop projects focussing on themes such as political engagement and identity, whilst supported by key political NGOs and think tanks.

David Lammy, Minister for Skills at the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and MP for Tottenham, said of the project:

"I'm delighted to have been able to open the launch of this fantastic initiative, and I'd like to congratulate the Three Faiths Forum on their work. Having a sponsor or a mentor is one of the best ways to get a real insight into public life, and I know that I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to those who were able to help guide me on my path to Parliament. Programmes like this can and do help to change the face of organisations, and by targetting the largest faith communities in our country, I

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Alderman John Stuttard
Dr Otto Von Habsburg

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believe that the Undergraduate ParliAMentors will establish a network to do just that."

With funding from the City Bridge Trust and the Pears Foundation, The Three Faiths Forum will be offering students this innovative programme on an ongoing basis, with the hope of extending its range of mentoring opportunities in future years. Daniella Gabay, Undergraduate ParliAMentors Project Manager said,

"This project offers an invaluable opportunity to focus on the common aspirations of young Christians, Jews and Muslims. The students taking part in this pilot year show exceptional promise and we are excited to be working with them to take forward their careers, whilst building lasting friendships. We were delighted with the huge number of applications we received which shows how vital a programme of this kind is."

Aiming to improve relations between Britain's young people from the three communities, UP will set up an alumni network to ensure the benefits of the programme are ongoing.

- END -

Notes:

The following MP/MEPs will be participating in the UP 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)

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