

School's in for Summer at the University of Birmingham

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One hundred students from the West Midlands will this week visit the University of Birmingham as part of a new three-year programme funded by the Sutton Trust and the Goldman Sachs Foundation.

The new Academic Enrichment Programme targets gifted and able students who have little or no experience of higher education and who would not necessarily have the confidence to apply to a research-intensive institution. The programme takes a holistic approach to supporting students with their applications to the Russell Group universities, the top 20 research-led institutions.

The students, who are about to start their final year of A-Level study, will spend a week at Birmingham, experiencing life as a typical student – which includes living in halls of residence. They will attend one of five academic streams which are all related to the degree programme or career they want to pursue. In the second phase, the students will receive e-mentoring during their final year of A-Levels from university undergraduates. In December and March 2008, students on the programme will attend study skills sessions that will support their current studies and prepare them for the rigours of university academic study.

Mohammed Ansar, co-ordinator of the programme at Birmingham, said: “The university is working hard to raise the aspirations of gifted and able students. We hope that by supporting them at this important phase in their educational cycle, we can break down some of the perceived barriers that they may have about applying to institutions such as Birmingham.

“The Outreach Office is committed to providing the best possible experience for local students to enable them to make informed choices about their futures and achieve their full potential. This innovative programme is an important part of that mission.”

Academic departments from across the university are involved in delivering sessions to support the five academic streams. Students on the Business stream will visit the Birmingham Hippodrome to learn how theory in the classroom translates into the real world, while students on the Health and Biological Sciences stream, will visit the Birmingham Dental Hospital to learn more about Dentistry. Students will also attend sessions dedicated to leadership skills and motivational sessions.

The highlight of the week will be a formal dinner, hosted by Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Adrian Randall. Staff from the Sutton Trust and Goldman Sachs, the parent company of the Goldman Sachs Foundation will also attend.

Ends

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Notes to Editor:

The University of Birmingham has around 27,000 students and 6,000 members of staff and a turnover of £360 million.

The Goldman Sachs Foundation is a global philanthropic organisation funded by The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. The Foundation's mission is to promote excellence and innovation in education and to improve the academic performance and lifelong productivity of young people worldwide. It achieves this mission through a combination of strategic partnerships, grants, loans, private sector investments, and the deployment of professional talent from Goldman Sachs.

Founded in 1999, the Foundation has awarded grants of \$94 million since its inception, providing opportunities for young people in more than 20 countries.

The Sutton Trust is a charity founded in 1997 by Sir Peter Lampl with the aim of providing educational opportunities for able young people from non-privileged backgrounds, and of improving social mobility. The activities of the Trust are aimed at helping able children who are educationally disadvantaged, by raising aspirations as well as academic achievement and it focuses on the following areas:

access to university for under-represented groups, including summer schools, teacher weeks, and outreach

primary and secondary school curriculum enrichment projects

Independent/State school Partnerships

enriching early learning for the under-three age group, including the involvement of parents in stimulating their children's early development

research and analysis surrounding these issues

For further information www.suttontrust.com or ring Tim Devlin, Press Officer on 01205 290817 or 07939 544 487.

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