Famous Birmingham graduates give students sound support through one-to-one mentoring

Posted on Thursday 5th May 2011

Twelve lucky final year undergraduate students from the University of Birmingham will get a once in a lifetime opportunity to gain first hand career insight and guidance from famous Birmingham graduates at the top of their field, in a new initiative being launched today [Thursday 05 May].

The **Alumni Leadership Mentoring Programme** will see a number of high profile Birmingham alumni - reading like a who's who spanning business, health, consumer, charity, arts and media sectors – providing one-to-one mentoring to selected students throughout their final year.

Top leadership mentors signed up so far include former Chief Medical Officer **Sir Liam Donaldson**, *Green Wing* and *Black Books* actress **Tamsin Greig**, Group Commercial Director of J Sainsbury's **Mike Coupe**, former Editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe **Baroness Patience Wheatcroft** and Director of Mamma Mia! **Phyllida Lloyd CBE** (full list in Notes to Editors). All mentors will offer their time for free to provide the students with invaluable advice and support.

The programme has been conceived by **Cilla Snowball CBE**, Group Chairman and Group Chief Executive Officer of advertising and communications company AMV BBDO. French graduate Ms Snowball, who was first to sign up as a leadership mentor, and also a member of University Council, said: "At a time when employability is so high on the student agenda, it is great that the University's alumni can apply their mentoring skills to help Birmingham undergraduates."

Leadership mentors will offer practical advice on employability and support as they prepare to enter the workplace. Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Nick Blinco commented: "Our alumni have always offered help, support, and guidance to our current students; but the enthusiastic response from such a stellar group of committed alumni is extremely gratifying. This scheme is in the vanguard of an extensive set of provisions that will continue to support employability amongst our graduates."

This initiative is part of a wider programme of activities at the University of Birmingham concentrating on improving the employability of graduates. The University is investing £3.5million into institutional employability provision over the next five years from 2011/12 onwards.

Notes to Editors

Alumni Leadership Mentors – the roll call:

Health and social care

• Sir Liam Donaldson - Former Chief Medical Officer (MSc, Anatomy 1976; DSc, Honorary Degree, 2005)
• Baroness Doreen Massey – Chair, The National Treatment Agency For Substance Misuse (PGCE, Education, 1962; BA, French Language & Literature, 1961)
• Sir Charles George – Chairman, The Stroke Association (Interc BSc, Anatomy, 1962; MBChB 1965; MD, Medicine, 1974; DSc Honorary Degree, 2003)
• Andrew Vallance-Owen – Bupa Group Medical Director and Bupa Foundation Deputy Chair (MBChB, Medicine, 1976)

Business, financial and consumer

• Martin Devenish – Managing Director, Goldman Sachs International (BCom, Industrial Economics & Business Studies)
• Mike Welton - Chairman, Premier Oil Plc (BSc, Civil Engineering, 1968; Deng, Honorary Degree, 2008)
• Mike Coupe - Director, J Sainsbury's (BSc, Physics, 1982)

Media and the arts

• Cilla Snowball CBE – Group Chairman and Group CEO, AMV BBDO (BA, French, 1981)
• Phyllida Lloyd CBE - Director of plays, opera and film including Mamma Mia! on stage and screen (BA, English, 1979; DLitt, Honorary Degree, 2009)
• Tamsin Greig - Actress (BA, Drama & Theatre Arts, 1988)
• Simon Halsey - Chorus Director, City of Birmingham Symphony Choruses (DMus, Honorary Degree, 2008)
• Alan Davey - Chief Executive, Arts Council England (BA, English, 1982)
• Baroness Patience Wheatcroft – Former Editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe (LLB, Law, 1972)

Full biographies (/news/latest/2011/05/05May-Famous-Birmingham-graduates-give-students-sound-support-through-one-to-one-mentoring-bios.aspx) of the mentors are also available.

Further media information:

Rachel Burrows – Head of Communications, University of Birmingham
tel: 0121 414 6681 / mob: 07789 921165 / email: r.burrows@bham.ac.uk

Amy Cory – Press & PR Assistant
tel: 0121 414 6029 / email: a.cory@bham.ac.uk

© University of Birmingham 2014