



King's students begin municipal politics mentorship with London City Councillors

September 16, 2016

London, ON- King's University College students in Social Justice & Peace Studies and Political Science will begin a mentorship at London City Hall on Friday September 16. The program includes six students and six mentors. It begins with a first official meeting where students will meet with their mentors and begin to map out the year. It is expected that the students will work closely with their mentors, which includes London City Councillors along with municipal and non-profit leaders, on researching policy, gaining a deeper understanding of issues pertaining to women in politics and engaging youth in civic issues.

“We are looking forward to an amazing year, engaging students with councillors and other municipal leaders, to work on key issues related to justice and city leadership,” says Dr. Allyson Larkin, professor in the Social Justice & Peace Studies program at King's.

This year's program is building on the previous community-based learning programs that King's Social Justice and Peace Studies has run with the city. When the former Mayor of London, Joni Baechler, became involved as a mentor for students interested in the relationship between City Hall and community organizations, she led a grant proposal from the Canadian Federation of Municipalities to build a mentorship program between councillors and students. In 2012, workshops and forums were held across campus that brought together women in politics and students from universities, colleges and high schools to explore the barriers to political participation for women. These meetings were recorded and ultimately formed the basis for the video documentary “25%” a reference to the average proportion of councils and legislatures of women to men. The goal of the program is parity of gender in politics and, to that end, the number of student participants in the mentorship has been expanded and the length of the program has been extended to a full academic year.

“We are incredibly excited about the group of student participants for this year and we are looking beyond to 2017 when we hope to launch a London “City Studio” to more deeply engage King's students with local leaders to tackle issues of equity, poverty and justice at the local level,” says Dr. Larkin

Media are invited to meet the students and mentors on Friday September 16, 3:30 p.m. in Committee Room #3, London City Hall, 300 Dufferin Ave, London.

The mentors are Anna Hopkins, Tanya Park, Virginia Ridley and Maureen Cassidy (all City of London Councillors), Kate Graham, Director Community Involvement and Innovation, City of London and Shawna Lewkowitz, Executive Director, Women and Politics, London.

King's is a publicly-funded Catholic post-secondary institution founded in 1954. King's provides general and honors degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, business, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally-autonomous, King's is academically-affiliated with Western University. King's is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centered on the principles of social justice and the education of the whole person.

For more information please contact:

Jane Antoniak

Manager, Communications & Media Relations

King's University College

communications@kings.uwo.ca

519-433-3491 x 4384

519-719-9366

@kingsatwestern

www.kings.uwo.ca