CONFERENCE FOR PROSPECTIVE HISTORY UNDERGRADUATES 25 JUNE 2010

The HEA History Subject Centre provided £300 in support for the Conference for Prospective History Undergraduates held at Canterbury Christ Church University on 25th June 2010. The conference is for anyone thinking of studying History at University and is aimed at persuading prospective History undergraduates that History is a good choice to make. We also aim to prepare students for the transition from school or college to university in terms of both the intellectual challenge and the pressures of moving away from home. One of the talks is specifically about medieval History, with the intention of encouraging more students to study this field at university.

This is the 3rd year that the conference has been held and it is run in collaboration with Kent University and the Canterbury Branch of the Historical Association. The funding provided by the Subject Centre allowed us to attract a larger audience than in previous years. In 2008 and 2009 we had an audience of about 30 students from two or three local schools. This year the funding allowed us to advertise the event more widely and more frequently and, as a result, we attracted over double the normal number of attendees from 7 local schools and on the day 65 students attended with their history teachers. Three other schools expressed an interest, but had a timetable clash. More advance advertising for next year should overcome this problem.

The afternoon conference consisted of four talks given by lecturers from Canterbury Christ Church University and from Kent University. The talks covered the topics of why study history at university, (Dr Will Pettigrew) how to fill in your UCAS form (Prof Jackie Eales), the transition from school/college to university in year 1 (Dr Louise Wilkinson) and ‘the Joys of Medieval History’ (Dr Charlie Insley). Students were encouraged to ask questions after each session and at the end and we had some very lively discussions from the floor. We have also received highly positive feedback from the teachers who attended, including the following comments:

“My students found it very helpful, especially the session on Personal Statements - one or two of them had no idea beforehand! Also advice on what to look for in university prospectuses is very helpful to them.”

“Many thanks for the conference. My students found all of it really useful. However, they particularly found the advice on Personal Statements useful.”

We have also been promised some feedback from the students via the schools as well.

Having expanded the number of schools who are aware of the conference and who have expressed an interest in attending, we hope to attract a larger audience next year as well. We are grateful to the HEA History Subject Centre for their support for this year’s conference.

Professor Jackie Eales,

Canterbury Christ Church University,

16 August 2010.