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PITTSBURGH STUDENTS LAUNCH THINK TANK Innovative Project Seeks Solutions to City, Student Problems

Pittsburgh, PA – A group of students from the University of Pittsburgh today launched the Publius Foundation – a nonpartisan student think tank dedicated to teaching young people in Pittsburgh about the value of personal and economic liberty in their daily lives.

Founder and president of the Publius Foundation Giles Howard said that this mission and the fact that is student-driven makes the Foundation unique on campus, in Pittsburgh and in the nation. “College students aren’t exposed to much ideological diversity during their education, with campus politics usually being dominated by extremes on both sides. We’re trying to teach students about free market solutions to local problems -- problems that transcend the narrow Left and Right of campus politics,” Howard said.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Foundation functions as a traditional think tank except that it is managed, staffed and directed entirely by students. “All of our team members -- from the members of the Board of Directors to the student fellows who research and write blog posts -- are students. This lends our efforts a special relevance to young people that other organizations lack,” Howard said.

Howard said that the impetus for the Foundation’s creation was partially the debate over the tuition tax and what that debate revealed about the role of young people in the city. “Before the tax proposal, young people didn’t perceive themselves as a part of this city and now, after the tax debate, young people perceive themselves as a group at odds with the city. We need to change this outlook and show young people that they have a stake in this city and a constructive role to play in creating solutions to its problems.”

Although the project is staffed, managed and directed by students, it benefits from the guidance of an experienced Board of Advisors that includes Kevin Acklin, Mark DeSantis and James Roddey.

Moving forward, Howard said that the Foundation hopes to expand, reach students on every college campus in the city and incorporate students from outside of Pitt into the organization’s staff and leadership. “The Publius Foundation isn’t a University of Pittsburgh student organization, it’s a Pittsburgh organization,” Howard said.

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The Publius Foundation is a nonpartisan student think tank operating in the Pittsburgh area. More information can be found at our website www.publiusfoundation.com.