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24-year-old to head Obama campaign's faith outreach

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WASHINGTON -- President Barack Obama?s re-election campaign has tapped a 24-year-old executive assistant in the White House faith-based office to head up its outreach to religious communities.

Michael R. Wear, who has worked in the White House for the past three and half years, will move to Chicago to become the campaign?s Faith Vote director in the coming weeks, White House officials confirmed May 14.

?It has been an honor working with Michael Wear to create positive faith-based and nonprofit partnerships to serve people in need,? said Joshua DuBois, executive director of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, where Wear was DuBois? executive assistant.

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Wear was an intern during Obama?s 2008 campaign, specializing in outreach to religious groups. He helped arrange candidate Obama?s appearance at a presidential forum at Rick Warren?s Saddleback Church in California as well as a meeting between Obama and prominent Christian leaders in Chicago.

After organizing the prayer service at the Washington National Cathedral following the president?s inauguration, he went to work for DuBois, who himself headed religious outreach for the campaign before assuming the directorship of the faith-based office.

The Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships seeks to form partnerships between the federal government and both faith-based and secular nonprofit organizations. It also oversees the president?s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge, an initiative inviting higher education institutes to bring religious groups together through community service projects.

At the White House, Wear has been involved in a wide range of religious issues, with particular responsibility for adoption and foster care. He also sought to build connections with young evangelicals, including those involved in the campaign to capture Ugandan guerilla leader Joseph Kony.

?Michael has spent a number of years in the faith-based office so he knows the territory,? said Amy Sullivan, author of the 2008 book *The Party Faithful: How and Why Democrats Are Closing the God Gap*. ?But the Republicans would put somebody senior with years and years of experience and a big Rolodex in that position. And I guess that tells you something about how Democrats still view faith outreach and its importance.?

Wear graduated from George Washington University in Washington with a bachelor?s degree in political science in 2011.

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