

Community Summer 2020

ROBERTSON SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Community Summer: Just the beginning (of Summers!)

One of the special benefits of the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program is its summer programs. As a Robertson Scholar, you will have access to up to three summers of funded activities:

- I. The *Community Summer*, which follows the freshman year, focuses on leadership through community service and cultural immersion in the United States. Community Summer 2020 will take place in four regional locations—the Mississippi Delta, New Orleans, Edgecombe County, NC, and Whitesburg, KY.
- II. The *Exploration Summer* encourages scholars to move outside their comfort zones—to pursue new educational experiences and/or deepen their understanding of current subject matter. In 2019, Scholars participated in individually-designed projects in Asia, Europe, and Washington, D.C., to name a few.
- III. Finally, the *Launch Summer* focuses on a self-designed experience that “launches” the Scholar into senior year and beyond. In 2019, Scholars were involved in a wide range of Launch Summer activities and internships, including those focused on research, finance, policy, entrepreneurship, and other projects at home and abroad.

Community, Leadership, and Learning

The Robertson Community Summer is designed to foster *community and leadership*. Specifically, we aspire...

- To build strong connections among Scholars;
- To support Scholars’ commitments to the issues that our community partners serve as well as to the partner organizations themselves;
- To challenge Scholars to develop and exercise new leadership skills within the contexts of the Scholar and local summer community;
- To promote connections among the community partners, to enrich the resources available to addressing complex issues.

The class of 2022 described strengthening the following *leadership skills* during Community Summer 2019:

- Interpersonal: patience; perceiving feelings; empathy; praising others
- Time management: being on time; organizing time; deadlines; working under pressure
- Teaching: instructing; explaining; teaching
- Communication: listening; public speaking
- Collecting information: adaptive interviewing; surveys; strategic conversations
- Group process: motivating and leading others; facilitating discussions; persuading; collaboration
- Affect: managing stress; mental toughness; resilience; confidence; positive attitude; patience
- Problem and goal focus: identifying problems and solutions; planning; setting goals; brainstorming; initiative
- Accepting responsibility: stepping up; taking on more responsibilities
- Creativity

This is first step in the series of Robertson summer experiences. Scholars negotiate work relationships; manage money, group living, and transportation; collaborate on projects and activities; and, essentially, learn to live together while learning about a new place. These are not simple activities, and any older Scholar can describe the complicated dynamics that take place among Scholars, mentors, and others during Community Summer.

You’ll also learn about the complex social and economic challenges that face these communities, as well as how community members and organizations address these. You will put your new understanding to use in the

development of a Robertson group documentary, which is a platform for group conversation and analysis about the relevant issues. Furthermore, although this first summer is not solely directed toward specific job skills, you *will* acquire important tools to help you with your school, leadership activities, and other interests. Older Scholars and alumni confirm that the Community Summer provides professional skills and has the added benefit of setting Scholars apart from others when applying for jobs or further education.

Some of the Details

- **Timeline:** The Community Summer begins approximately on **June 1** and lasts for **eight (8) weeks**. Dates vary slightly for some internships. *Whitesburg Scholars begin mid- to late-May.*
- **Housing:** Our program arranges and pays for group housing. Scholars sign housing agreements indicating their understanding of the expectations for taking care of the house.
- **Work:** Critical leadership skills can be gained by participating in community development activities and service. Therefore, with partner organizations, we develop summer internships that include strong mentoring, intellectual content, and a service orientation. The positions reflect a variety of activities and interest areas, such as teaching, grant writing, non-profit management, and the arts.
- **Money and travel:** Scholars receive a stipend to be used for transportation to and from the summer site and during the summer, food and other necessary expenses, and recreational/cultural enrichment activities.
- **Health and wellness:** Our program provides some medical insurance for the summer, although many scholars have their own insurance. Scholars learn to manage their well-being and seek assistance when necessary. Some information is available on the [resource page](#).

Working on Community Summer 2020

Your best strategies to learn about Community Summer are:

- Attend the Summer Showcase November 24 and learn from sophomores about Community Summer 2019.
- Use the Community Summer [resource page](#) to find out who has done which positions. Learn about their experiences.
 - Start with Scholars or alumni you know, and talk to them or reach on Robertson Connect. Read their reports on Connect.
 - Or start with a position you're interested in and see who's done it. Talk to older Scholars (not just sophomores) and alumni who will give you a broader and extremely valuable perspective.
- Think carefully about the specific experiences and skills you want to gain from your own Community Summer and how you want to contribute.
- We will not match you to a position or a place that we expect will be easy for you. Think about how you want to be challenged and be ready to articulate that.

Summer Is What You Make Of It

While each of your summer experiences will differ in the amount of structure that we'll provide you with (and in the level of leadership that we'll expect of you), they all share some important elements. For example, in the end, *it will always be up to you to create and "make the most of" your summer experience* -- we cannot stress this point enough. For Community Summer, although we arrange housing for you and match you to a mentor, *you* will live in that house and manage the dynamics of group living, and *you* must work with your mentor to design and/or revise your work responsibilities. On a related note, *there's a great deal of unpredictability* about these summers. *No one ever has the exact summer that he or she planned.* Scholars consistently tell us that managing ambiguities and adjusting to unplanned changes is an important aspect of their leadership development, although these situations can be confusing and stressful at times.

Several members of a previous class wished we had more strongly emphasized the role of *their initiative* in this first summer. In case that message did not come across in the preceding paragraphs, please know that your

initiative is expected *from the very outset* of this process. The more proactive *you are* (e.g., reaching out to older Scholars for advice, articulating and discussing goals with Vicki, reading all available materials carefully), the more satisfying and productive your Community Summer will be.

Community Summer Advice from Scholars

- *Take the initiative. Your summer will be as challenging, stimulating, and rewarding as you make it. Set goals for yourself with your work, and also realize the importance of your Robertson Scholar community. Make the commitment to have regular family dinners, organize group activities or road trips, and visit other scholars at their places of work to learn more about their experiences. Take full advantage of this opportunity to spend time exploring a new place with an incredible group of people!*
- *Get ready for the hardest and most meaningful summer of your life. What do I mean by get ready? Keep an open mind, prepare to compromise, and always remember why you are a Robertson Scholar.*
- *The summer is not only about the community in which you work, but the community in which you live. Take the time to appreciate your fellow scholars while living together, appreciate their views, strengths, and weaknesses; use your summer as a complete learning opportunity.*
- *Don't cling to whatever mindset you were in before the Community Summer -- you will learn more about yourself, other scholars, and about what it means to be a leader...more than you've learnt in your whole life ...if you just let yourself absorb new experiences in a new place with an accepting mindset.*
- *Do not go into community summer with any preconceived notions about anyone or your job. I kind of did that, and it honestly wasted my first week or two, which I regret. Also, make an effort to get to know other students within the community, because I met some amazing people my age who I will definitely continue to foster friendships with.*

Selected Community Summer Opportunities 2010-19

The following includes many of the opportunities Scholars have pursued over the past few years. Summer 2019 Scholars are named in **bold**. Alumni are in parentheses.

Organization	Brief description	Scholars
Appalachian Citizens' Law Center (Whitesburg, KY)	Research and advocacy/black lung disease; educational outreach <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Amanda Padden
Appalshop: Seedtime Festival/WMMT (Whitesburg, KY)	Events planning and implementation; radio programming; documentary work. <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Theo Holt Michael Muller Stephen Buys (Kat Tan, Kya Sorli; Arjun Raghavan & Nate Wagner; Joe Calder; Spencer Dahl; Ben Barge)
Appal-TREE, Grow Appalachia (Formerly Cowan Community Center/ Letcher County Cooperative Extension) (Whitesburg, KY)	Program development; Gardening/agriculture project; farmers market <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Josie Fulcher & Amanda Padden Sierra Winters Kameron Sedigh (Lucy Best & George Elliott; Henrik Cox & McNair Mitchener; Graham Adeson; Jamal Edwards; Lydia Thurman; Eli Hornstein)
Ashe' Cultural Arts Center (New Orleans, LA)	Arts and culture preservation and programming	Fridah Mbwaye (Anthony Olawo; Fabio Berger; Taylor Clark)
Audubon Institute Nature Camp (New Orleans)	Working with children and animals	Jacob Key Matt Smith & Brandon Wacaser (Harry Elworthy & Noah Mancuso; Philip Howard & Sam Kelly; Nick Johnston; Michael Yang; Krissi Fajgenbaum)
Belle Reve (New Orleans)	HIV/AIDs, residential treatment, recreation, volunteer support	Annie Evans Annie Gonzales (Forest Cummings-Taylor; Miriam Singer; Maimuna Yussuf; Annie Helbling; Soroush Pour)
Breakthrough Collaborative (New Orleans)	Teaching, working with youth	D'Ivyion Drew & Montana Lee Patrick Clinch, Ben Keegan Sydney Adams, Brooke Porter, Brock Schoenwald, Becca Sullenger (Henry Feng, Gentry Fitch, Matthew Kaplan, Mia King; Persis Bhadha, Eric Qian, Cait Rosica; Mark Dawson & Sofia Stafford; Pranav Haravu & Sowmya Mangipudi; James Collier & Katie Jordan; Ned Hardison, Aaron Lutkowitz & Thomas Pendlebury)
Café Reconcile (New Orleans)	Non-profit development, youth leadership	(Ian Muriuki; Chi-Chi Amanze; Evan Lumbrá; Woojin Kim)
Center for Rural Strategies (Whitesburg, KY)	Rural policy, communications, research <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Charlie Zong Merrit Jones Rose Farah & Beza Gebremariam (Vishnu Ramanchandran; Claire Boyd & Emily Goldstein; Abby Gay & Savannah Wooten; Nadine Goldberg; Jeff Sinclair; Alex Bloedel; Stefanie Feldman)
Conetoe Family Life Center (Edgecombe County NC)	Summer camp teaching, non-profit development, gardening/sustainability	Emily Kian & Matt Schaefer
Cowan Community Center (formerly included Letcher County Cooperative Extension) (Whitesburg, KY)	Program development; Gardening/agriculture project; farmers market <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Josie Fulton & Amanda Padden Sierra Winters Kameron Sedigh (Lucy Best & George Elliott; Henrik Cox & McNair Mitchener; Graham Adeson; Jamal Edwards; Lydia Thurman; Eli Hornstein)
Crescent City Farmer's Market (New Orleans)	Farmers market, sustainable agriculture, economic development, outreach, public education	(Chaya Bhat; Maire Amlicke; Elle Wilson; Tom Cole; Caroline Leland; Alik Belokopytov; Caitlin Nettleton)
Delta Arts Alliance (MS Delta)	Database, summer camp organization, outreach, programming	Lilly Clark Kyle Ryan & Allayne Thomas Nonnie Egbuna (Brennan Lewis; Sydney McAuliffe; Christina Schmidt)
Delta Center for Culture and Learning (MS Delta)	Documenting workshops, events planning, publishing, social networking	Carsten Pran & Kamryn Washington Lawton Ives & Jake Sheridan Peter Andringa & Cara Price (Kyra Exterovich-Rubin & Trey Walk; Brady Gilliam & Amy Kramer; Anna Mukamal & Andy Tan-Delli Cicchi; Rachel Anderson; Minhazul Islam; John Guzek; Jessica Broadus & Tori Wilmarth)
Delta Music Institute (MS Delta)	Support DMI Mobile Lab, summer camp, Fighting Okra studios	Warner Lamar Michael Zhang
Dress for Success (New Orleans)	Outfitting, events, design, communications	Clara Love & Niharika Vattikonda Mary Ashley Murrah

		Annie Dempsey (Myla Swallow; Alexandra Hehlen) ¹
Edgecombe County Health Department (Edgecombe County, NC)	Research, presentations, marketing / opioid abuse/misuse	Sophia Ramirez Katherine Gan Ralph Lawton
Edgecombe County Planning Department & Tourism Authority (Edgecombe County, NC)	Research, policy/housing and jobs; design of walking tour	Joseph Touma
Edgecombe County Schools/Innovation (Edgecombe County, NC)	Developmentally-appropriate curriculum development	Serena Lim Strutt
Freedom Schools (Edgecombe County, NC)	Teaching, youth leadership	Anjali Gupta & Naira Ikram Hanna Watson
Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine (New Orleans)	Teaching culinary medicine to medical students and professionals and others	Brady Hanshaw & Anshu Mohan Meghana Iragavarapu Samia Daghestani
Good Work Network (New Orleans)	Small business development, microfinance, community development	Nate Miller Christina Boghosian (Sreya Atluri; Andrew Brennan & Ogechi Onyeka; Kasper Kubica & Monique LaBorde; Devin Solanki; John Bowman; Wilson Orr; Caroline Fairchild; Joyce Yu)
GRAMMY Museum Mississippi (Mississippi Delta)	Marketing; research; education; music history	Jemma Frost & Bennett Stillerman Antonia Young
Habitat for Humanity (New Orleans)	Non-profit development, home building	Kalley Huang & Joel Kim Zoe King & Mary Laci Motley Cameron Beach & Tom Wanty (Erica Johnson & Duncan Parsons)
Hazard Trial Office Department of Public Advocacy (Whitesburg, KY)	Client support; research; documentation <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	Weston Lindner & Elise van den Hoek Leland Ben Georgia Lala (Jermaine Bryant; Joshua Neuhaus; Frank Jiang)
Headwaters & Kentuckians for the Commonwealth (Whitesburg, KY)	Water quality, environmental policy research <i>Position begins mid-May.</i>	(Ian Jaffe; Michelle Moffa; Ajeet Hansra; Elizabeth Lynch)
Letcher County Culture Hub (Whitesburg, KY)	relationship-based community organizing and asset development.	Rachel Maunus Clare Bradshaw
Michael's Angels (Edgecombe County, NC)	Girls empowerment; directing camp	Michelle Nandi
Mississippi Summer Arts Institute (MS Delta)	Summer camp coordination; documentation; research	(Rachel Freedman)
Mountain Comprehensive Health Corporation (Whitesburg, KY)	Intake to medical center; research on FARMacy program	(Wilson Guo)
Orleans Public Defenders (New Orleans)	Legal services, advocacy, research	Sam Zahn A.G. Chancellor & Gramal Ralph Evan Rodgers & Priya Sridhar (Kalif Jeremiah, Ellie Rodriguez, Daya Uppal, Elle Winfield; Andre Domingues & Jackson Skeen; Hunter Baehren & David Spratte; Daniel Lim; Emelyn Erickson & Joyce Lau)
Rural Opportunities Institute (Edgecombe County, NC)	Outreach; education; community engagement; design thinking	Jess Edelson
St. Gabriel's Mercy Center (MS Delta)	Teaching, working with children	Jia Dua & Aaron Williams Rahi Patel & Antonia Young Esoa Asemota & Dikenna Ogbo (Rachael Murtagh & Visrut Sudhakar; Ben Ayto, Liv Linn, Lizzy Zhao; Virginia Hamilton & Jacob Olliffe; Jacqui Slorach & James Smith; Julian Borrey, Minali Nigam, Loren Shealy; Deo Fagnisse, Dan Strunk, Kat Zhang; Tom Atwood, Antonio Jackson, Yesi Pedro Vicente)
Sunflower County Freedom Project (MS Delta)	Teaching, working with youth, Civil Rights, youth leadership	Tamira Daniely, Bennet David, & Ruth Fetaw Liza Becker; Adam Enggasser; Naraya Price Trenton Bricken, Rasheca Logendran, Aakash Thumaty (Scott Emmons, Ray Pryor, Rohan Sheth; Maya Durvasala, Matthew King, Chinmay Pandit, Chandler Phillips; Sebastian Baquerizo, Brooke Davies, Griffin Unger; Joanna Kuang, Mehul Mehta, Jacob Rosenberg; Dolly Adelekun & Oren Bukspan; Margaret Brown, Blake O'Connor, Jacob Robinson; Jake Lerner, Jagir Patel, Lexi Wallace)
Vidant Health Center/Advance Care Planning(Edgecombe County NC)	Public outreach and education	Olivia Olsner Adam Ushpol Divya Mahesh