



September 2018

TO: Prospective Exploration Summer Project Mentors

Thank you for your interest in and support of our scholars.

I have prepared this document for Robertson Scholars to share with potential summer project mentors. Robertsons are often reluctant to ask for help with their project ideas--they would rather figure everything out themselves. However, we require that they find someone (besides Program staff) to help inform and advise these projects.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or concerns about our process or about specific scholars who may contact you.

Sincerely,

Vicki B. Stocking, Ph.D.
Summer Programs Director
stocking@robertsonscholars.org
(919) 668-3371

Overview of Robertson Summer Programs

The Robertson Scholarship includes funding for up to three summers of programming. The first--the *Community Summer*--focuses on community-building, cultural immersion, and service-learning in the Southeastern United States. After sophomore year, the *Exploration Summer* encourages Scholars to get "out of their comfort zones" through challenging exploration to achieve intellectual pursuits. Finally, the *Launch Summer* provides Scholars with the missing piece(s) of their academic and/or pre-professional puzzle to "launch" them into senior year and beyond. Our summers are designed to foster increasing responsibility and leadership outcomes as the Scholars progress.

The Exploration Summer is often the most challenging for Robertson Scholars. Sophomore year is difficult. Sophomores settle into hard work and make serious commitments to majors and long-term plans. Robertson sophomores have the additional challenge of the Campus Switch, where they actually move to the sister campus and take up residence for spring semester. On top of this, we have given them the task of creating, for the first time, an individualized summer experience.

What is an Exploration Summer Project?

Scholars work with me (and you!) on early ideas and submit a series of proposals to our program for review. Projects can be completed alone or in groups, in the US or abroad. For 2018, the intellectual focus of the Exploration Summer has been emphasized. Scholars are expected to achieve intellectual pursuits that can be pursued through physical, mental, and/or intellectual challenges. At the end of this document, I have listed some sample projects completed over the past few years.

Roles of the Exploration Project Mentor



Because the second Robertson summer involves a type of independent work we have not emphasized to this point, we ask our Exploration Summer scholars to be guided by an *Exploration Project Mentor* from Duke, UNC-Chapel Hill, or a relevant local or international organization. Advisors such as this play a key role in guiding a student's intellectual and personal development; their connection and relationship with students can significantly influence student productivity and success.

Ideally, the Exploration Project Mentor will be able to assist in the following ways:

- Advise the scholar on his or her proposal development
- Be available for scholar consultation during the summer if needed—either in person or via email or telephone
- Debrief with the scholar post-summer
- Inform the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program of any issues that may impact the integrity or feasibility of the project

The specific involvement of the Mentor will depend on the scholar's individual circumstances and on the nature of the scholar's project. Scholars have asked Mentors for help with the following:

- Choosing among various internships or other activities
- Conceptualizing and implementing research, particularly research with human subjects
- General affirmation and advice about academic connections, taking risks, trying something new, etc.

Program Procedures

Each scholar is expected to provide the name and contact information of his or her Exploration Project Mentor by October 30. The first proposal is due November 13. We will not allow a scholar to proceed with the Exploration Summer process until we are sure a willing Mentor is in place.

After all this--Why be an Exploration Project Mentor?

In my role as Summer Programs director, I work with every scholar over the four years of college. Sophomore year is a challenging time for scholars and, simultaneously, an exciting time to support them. They return to campus from their first Robertson summer with a confusing mix of emotions. They are, alternately, excited, confused, open-minded, and frustrated. They are reflecting on goals and life choices and are asking questions about not only the past and upcoming summer, but much larger issues. This role is a chance to interact with a talented, enthusiastic scholar who is interested in learning along with you. Please contact me (stocking@robertsonscholars.org) if you'd like to talk.

Selected Exploration Summer projects (2011 - 2018)

- Mental health fellowship with Emerge Global (Sri Lanka)
- Internship with political party in Vienna (Austria)
- Project about education with the NC Department of Juvenile Justice (Raleigh, NC)
- Research project on doctor-patient relationships (Bolivia)
- Climate change internship with the Rockefeller Institute (Thailand)
- Digital literacy/mentoring for girls (Madison, NC)
- Research on gentrification and anti-gentrification policy (Germany)
- Teaching and youth development at orphanage (India)
- Supporting local entrepreneurs through Social Entrepreneur Corps (Ecuador)
- Linguistics research at the *Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle* at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* (France)
- Consulting internship with Oliver Wyman Financial Consulting (London)
- Conservation research/engineering, public health, public policy (Duke Marine Lab, Faroe Islands, other locations)
- Research on school resegregation in Atlanta, Georgia (Atlanta, GA)
- Cross-country research on voting motivations (in most US states)
- NBC News internship (NYC)
- Biotech startup internship (New Orleans, LA)