

September 2019

TO: Prospective Launch Summer Coaches

I have prepared this document for Robertson Scholars to share with potential summer project mentors. Our scholars 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.

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



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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 United States. After sophomore year, the *Exploration Summer* encourages Scholars to expand the boundaries of their interests and skills through challenging exploration toward an intellectual end. Finally, the *Launch Summer* is a self-designed experience aimed at providing 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 scholars progress.

What is a Launch Summer Project?

Launch Summer projects can take a number of forms and can be completed alone or in groups, in the US or abroad. Projects can include professional commitments through structured internships or personal and academic exploration through travel, service, and/or reflection. Launch activities are designed with depth and connection in mind, instead of the exploration of new experiences or the discovery of new ideas. At the end of this document, I have listed some sample projects completed recently.

Roles of the Launch Summer Coach

Because the third Robertson summer involves taking scholars' work and interests to a greater depth, we ask them to be guided by a *Launch Coach* from one of our universities or a relevant local or international organization. Advisors in this role are critical in guiding a scholar's intellectual and professional development. By requiring summer projects to be overseen by a Coach, we hope that scholars will capitalize on these enriching relationships, and we know that the Coach's input will raise the quality of a scholar's pursuits.

Ideally, the Launch Summer Coach 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

- 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 Coach will depend on the scholar's individual circumstances and on the nature of the scholar's project. Scholars have solicited help from their Coaches for the following:

- Brainstorming possible organizations, locations, projects
- Conceptualizing and implementing research, particularly research with human subjects
- Choosing among various internships or other activities
- 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 Launch Summer Coach by January 18. The first proposal is due February 26, and complete materials are due April 10. We will not allow a scholar to proceed with the Launch Summer process until we are sure a willing Coach is in place.

After all this--Why be a Launch Summer Coach?

In my role as Summer Programs director, I work with every scholar over the four years of college and often stay connected beyond that. Junior year is a challenging time for scholars and, simultaneously, an exciting time to support them. They are reflecting on goals and life choices and are asking many questions about the past and upcoming summers as well as much larger issues. Talking with a scholar about Launch Summer ideas is an opportunity to contribute to this personal, academic, and professional exploration and decision-making. 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 Launch Summer projects

- Cameron Beach served as a general beat reporter at the Asheville Citizen Times.
- Divya Mahesh prepared for the MCAT and interned with the Institute for Research, Quality, and Policy at the Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program, assessing the quality of care provided to patients at BHCHP clinics.
- Ralph Lawton conducted research on population health biomarkers, biological stress, and smoking cessation in Indonesia.
- Georgia Lala helped start the Helen Clark Foundation in New Zealand and conducted research on social security reform.
- Beza Gebramariam pursued an internship with the State Department's Office of West African Affairs and worked primarily on issues related to Guinea, Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau.
- Ellie Rodriguez worked for the Bronx Defenders as a community organizing intern and an intern in the reentry project.
- Matthew Kaplan studied Education for Transformation at Queen's University in Belfast.
- Fedor Kossakovski interned with the PBS science documentary series, NOVA, in Boston.
- James Smith worked with Iwana Energy in London.
- Tafadzwa Matika worked on a research project in Zimbabwe on the characteristics of diabetes and HIV/AIDS co-infection.
- Devin Solanki followed a consulting internship with an analysis of marketing practices of an elephant conservatory in Thailand.
- Sowmya Mangipudi conducted health policy research at The Oxford Institute of Population Ageing.
- Mark Dawson built software as a technical intern at African Leadership University in Mauritius.
- Anna Mukamal studied French in Aix-en-Provence, attended the T. S. Eliot International Summer School in London, and prepared for post-grad opportunities.
- Nick Johnston worked in the transnational threats department of the Institute for Security and Development Studies in Stockholm.
- Kasper Kubica and David Spratte spent the summer in Chapel Hill and Durham focused on entrepreneurial activities to build their company, carpe.
- Chinyere Amanze worked with Foundation Strategy Group in San Francisco on social impact consulting.
- Sam Kelly explored the intersection of marine sciences and engineering through an internship with an open-ocean aquaculture company in Hawaii.