

September 2020

TO: Prospective Launch Summer Coaches

There are so many unknowns about Summer 2021, but Robertson Scholars are thinking about the possibilities! Although the pandemic may impact their eventual activities, we are committed to helping them create Summers that will complement their academic work and further their leadership development.

I have prepared this document for Robertson juniors to share with potential summer Coaches. Regardless of what they will eventually be able to *do* during the summer, the process of working through their ideas is beneficial to Robertsons and often the Coaches, as well.

Please contact me if you have questions or concerns about our process or about specific Robertsons 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.

Because of COVID-19, Robertson juniors were not able to participate in an Exploration Summer involving travel. However, this class did important, personally meaningful work they identified or created on their own, despite tremendous barriers. Although their second year of college ended so abruptly, they were able to move forward productively during the summer and displayed fantastic intrinsic motivation. This perseverance will certainly be helpful as they begin to plan Launch Summer. I am confident this group will be able to develop fascinating avenues for Launch of many kinds.

What is a Launch Summer Project?

Scholars work with us (and you!) on early ideas and submit proposals for review. Launch Summer projects can take a number of forms and can be completed alone or in groups, in the US or abroad, depending on the coronavirus situation. 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. For 2021, the Program is emphasizing the role of Program values in Summer projects: Purposeful Leadership, Collaborative Spirit, Intellectual Curiosity, and Strength of Character. At the end of this document, I have listed some sample projects completed over the past few years (pre-pandemic) for illustration.

Roles of the Launch Summer Coach

Because the third Robertson summer involves taking their work and interests to a greater depth, we ask Scholars 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 the involvement of 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 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 activities. 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 before the spring semester begins. The first proposal will be due in late February and final materials in April. *Because of the uncertainty of the academic calendar during the preparation of this document, we cannot yet determine exact dates and procedures.* 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 questions about not only the past and upcoming summer, but much larger issues. COVID-19 has certainly illuminated this characteristic! This role is a chance to interact with a talented, enthusiastic Robertson who is interested in learning along with you. Please contact me (stocking@robertsonscholars.org) if you'd like to talk about this.

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 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 reserve 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.
- Nick Johnston worked in the transnational threats department of the Institute for Security and Development Studies in Stockholm.
- Kasper Kubica and David Spratte were in the Triangle, focusing 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.