

**Exploration/Launch/Transition Summer 2023  
Proposal Elements and Criteria for Funding  
Vicki Stocking 11/27/2022 Draft**

**We'll say it again—Robertson Summers can be transformative.**

We know that Summers are an important context for transformation. As we noted in the invitation to participate in Summer 2023, Robertson Summers involve:

- Deepening connections with others.
- Exploring new places, ideas, and activities, including those that are creative, deeply personal, and/or outside the obvious bounds of academic and professional aspirations.
- Practicing powerful leadership skills involving integrity, voice, and power.
- Evolving from conditioned reactions to chosen responses.
- Taking on personal responsibility and making decisions.
- Curiosity and commitment.
- Grappling with strengths, weaknesses, purpose, and motivations.
- Learning when and how to ask for help.

If Robertson Summers are so great, can't we just expect "transformation"? No. Actually. . .

- You must be open to it. It begins from within.
- You must think about it. It doesn't happen to you—you make it happen.
- You can't do it alone.
- It's more than "change" or "growth." You're not getting taller. You're "getting" different.
- An experience that results in transformation for one person might not have the same result for someone else.
- There's an elusive, hard-to-describe affective element. Maybe it feels like a turning point, or a moment of inspiration where you know things will never be the same.
- For all of the reasons above, and more—what makes an experience transformative is different for everybody.

**What goes into a Proposal?**

In addition to a short introduction, your final proposal will include these three basic components. We are looking for clear and complete information in each "box" and an understanding of the connections among the boxes. The order of the boxes is up to you. We'll develop a mechanism for you to submit your materials.

***What do you want to do, and why?***

***Who are you?***

***How will this happen?***

### What and Why: Describe your Summer plan.

- Tell us about all the major activities you're planning for the summer, not just the ones you're asking the RSLP to fund. If you have an internship, a job, a big family trip—tell us about it. If you're planning to spend a significant amount of time on something, or you had to apply for it, then this activity is important to you, and we want to know about it.
- Delineate which specific activity or project you're proposing for RSLP financial support.
  - Fully describe your intended activity, in terms of specific locations, activities, and timelines.
  - How does this connect to and/or complement your other plans?
  - How does this proposed project reflect Exploration, Launch, or Transition?

### Who

Consider the familiar questions—who are you? What are you committed to? What are you curious about? How do you want to grow? These questions are central to the RSLP model of leadership and are therefore at the heart of the proposal process.

### How

- What preparation do you need to complete to be ready for this project?
- Name the deliverable you'll turn in to show us something about your experience. This should be something that arises from your actual activities, not something you create just to be a Robertson deliverable. Here are a few examples: a research report, a collection of poetry or photographs, personal statements for grad school applications, an annotated bibliography. A reflective essay does not count as a deliverable.

### **What are the criteria for funding?**

Although the process of transformation is idiosyncratic and unpredictable, when it comes to Summers, we know a lot about setting the conditions. We're looking for proposals that reflect these:

- Your open-mindedness, passion, and desire for Transformation
  - "I would really love to. . ." is a powerful way to frame your ideas. We are looking for passion, creativity, and curiosity. If you're not excited about what you're proposing, or if you're proposing an activity solely because it meets professional goals, we are going to wonder why in the world you'd want to spend a Robertson Summer doing this, and we're unlikely to fund.
  - Robertson Summers aren't about the status quo. Robertsons design and experience Summers because they want *different*. This is not "business as usual." Whatever activities you propose, we will be looking for your own personal reasons for doing this and your own investment in your transformation.
  - You don't have to *drastically* veer from your usual path, but we want to see that you're willing to open yourself to new experiences. This is hard to put in words and is highly individualized.
- Evidence of a thoughtful, iterative process and meaningful Coach involvement
  - We want to see that you've been thinking about this and working on it with others. Proposing a Summer takes time and attention—it can't be done at the last minute.
  - Take advantage of every opportunity for conversation, reflection, and feedback.
  - You will drive your interactions with your Coach. We will not fund a proposal that doesn't show significant engagement. Coaches will be aware of this.
- Congruence and rationale—integrity! The components should make sense together and within your own big picture.

- Share enough of your leadership story that we have context for this plan. We will not fund random activities that are unconnected to the rest of your journey. Show us how your plan makes sense for you.
- We will want to know that you're prepared to dedicate adequate time to your proposed activities. We want to see that your activities are important to you. You're not trying to squeeze them in.
- We want to see that you've thought through how this will work-- how you'll get to the learning and experience you're looking for. For example, if you are proposing to hike the El Camino to clarify your spiritual identity (several Scholars have done this, including the iconic trio of Clare Boyd, Liv Linn, and Sydney McAuliffe!). . . how? How will hiking bring spiritual clarity? Describe the process by which this will occur. Some Scholars have reflected on a religious text each day, or conducted group meditation, or posed a question to consider with other hikers. Consider this: What is it about the El Camino? Will you go alone or with others? Why hiking instead of riding a bike, like Mark Kabai did in Summer 2022?
- Don't worry about "over-explaining." Give as many details as you can think of.
- Clear communication, good writing, and attention to detail
  - Take yourself and your ideas seriously enough to do excellent work—organized, logical, and well-thought-out. This is not simply an exercise—you're writing a grant proposal.
  - If you're proposing international travel, show us that the places you want to go are safe and available to you.
  - Write a compelling proposal—think about the reader. Believe in your ideas! Convince the reader that this is the Summer of transformation you've been waiting for.

### **Finally, Summer is what you make of it**

In the end, *it be up to you to create and "make the most of" your summer experience*. Although we will support your project as much as is appropriate, the Summer 2023 will require initiative and commitment from you long before you actually set foot wherever you plan to go. Like all Robertson summers, *no one has the exact summer that he or she planned*. Your summer experience will evolve and unfold--which is precisely why it is such a special growth opportunity. In fact, many Scholars tell us that managing on-the-ground ambiguities and adapting to unplanned changes is an important aspect of their leadership development--even though it can also be confusing and stressful.