



THE ROBERTSON

SCHOLARS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program:

Practicing Transformational Leadership

Welcome to the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program, a bold and unique community designed with your growth and leadership centered at the heart of all we do. We believe that the world is calling for a new type of leader - one who goes beyond transactional to transformational, one who knows the path to profound impact starts by exploring deeply within, one who approaches the complexity of the world with unbounded curiosity, one who creates space for creativity and connection, and one who is committed to being in community. We believe that you hold the key to that type of leadership. We believe in you.

Our community exists because of the vision and generosity of Julian & Josie Robertson, our late benefactors and founders, who were committed to investing in young leaders capable of making transformational contributions to society. This is our mission - to invest in each of you as you explore and deepen your relationship with yourself, your community, and the world around you.

Being a Robertson has been described as “having the audacity to believe that change is possible.” We believe that true transformation occurs at the self, group, and system level, and is an ongoing practice. This practice is rooted in being conscious of what is happening within us and around us, consistently examining the relationship between who we are, what we are committed to, and the choices—large and small— we make in any given moment. This practice can at times be deeply introspective and personal, and is fueled exponentially by being an active member of a community of belonging – a community that supports us, encourages us, and invites us into the accountability needed to take risks and show up as our full, powerful selves.

We will make bold requests of you. We ask you to be fully present and open to exploring all that our community has to offer. We believe that our community and shared experiences work best when all members feel welcomed, celebrated, and heard. Within your cohort, you'll have a variety of formal programming and experiences available to you: each one carefully curated with you and your continued development in mind.

We provide the opportunity for you to be part of building and experiencing a true community of belonging - showing up as your authentic self and learning from the emerging collective wisdom of the group. Each one of you has something incredible to offer our community. We want you here, and we need you here.

We will ask you to honor your word. “An individual is whole and complete when their word is whole and complete, and their word is whole and complete when they honor their word,” according to Harvard Business School professor Michael C. Jensen. When we honor our word, we benefit as individuals and as a community. We can find workability in any circumstance when we are in communication and honest with ourselves and those around us. What this means is keeping our promises and commitments, and when we cannot do so, clearly communicating to those impacted in advance and restoring workability when inevitable breakdowns occur. As a community, we commit to honor our word with you, and we boldly request that you commit to honor your word as well.

We will ask you to remain curious. What we do matters, and how we do it matters. As a community of Scholars, we are committed to examining four key questions: Who am I? What am I committed to? What choices am I making, and are they aligned with who I am and what I'm committed to? What are the results and impact of my choices on me and others?

Transformational leaders constantly and consistently examine and question the world around them. You are curious about yourself and your motivations. You are curious about complex systems and you are excited by new concepts and ways of being - seeking a deep understanding from those with proximity to and knowledge of those systems. There will be times when we are challenged to think differently, to feel deeply, and to critically examine the world and systems around us and our agency within them. We encourage you to lean into these moments, notice the questions raised by them, and distill their meaning for yourselves. You won't be alone. We'll do this work together.

This handbook is a reference for you. It's a guide for the year to come, and it's a living agreement amongst our community members to do what we are called to do by our founders: make a transformational contribution to the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Mission, Values, and the Belief that What we Do Matters

Program Mission and Values p.5

Robertson Program Staff p.5

Robertson Office Information p.8

II. Program Expectations: What It Takes to be a Scholar

Terms of the Scholarship: Signature Experiences p.10

Terms of the Scholarship: Academic Expectations p.11

Terms of the Scholarship: Behavioral Expectations p.13

III. Helpful Information about the RSLP

Financial Benefits and Disbursement p.15

Leadership Development Opportunities p.18

Cross-Campus Academic Opportunities and Policies p.20

General Program Policies p.23

International Scholars p.24

Technology p.25

Program and University Support p.26

I.ROBERTSON PROGRAM MISSION AND VALUES

Mission: The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program invests in young leaders who strive to make transformational contributions to society.

Values: Purposeful Leadership | Intellectual Curiosity | Strength of Character | Collaborative Spirit

As a staff we are committed to upholding the mission and values of the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program. **We firmly believe in what we do, and more importantly recognize that how we do it matters.** We work directly with each other and each of you to ensure that the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program is first and foremost a community grounded in support and dedicated to investing in your growth and leadership.

ROBERTSON PROGRAM STAFF

Andrew Lakis, Executive Director

lakis@robertsonscholars.org

Andrew Lakis joined the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program in March 2021, bringing 17 years of experience in education, leadership development, fundraising and organizational management. In 2004, Andrew joined Teach For America as a teacher at Friendship Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. A native of North Carolina, he worked as an instructional coach in Durham Public Schools and served in multiple leadership roles within Teach For America. From 2015 to 2021, Andrew led Teach For America's largest rural region, working with his team to recruit, train and support over 400 new teachers and partner with almost 1,000 alumni leaders working toward educational equity across eastern North Carolina. During his tenure as executive director, he also oversaw the launch of Teach For America's first rural regional summer teaching institute, Eastern NC Residency, and the redesign of Teach For America-Eastern North Carolina's leadership development program. Andrew received his BA in History from Duke University, where he was a Trinity Scholar, and his Masters in Elementary Education from American University. Andrew is committed to strengthening community, expanding access for youth and addressing inequity. He currently serves on the RISE Southeast Raleigh Charter School board. Formerly, he served as the chair of the Educator Preparation Program Accountability subcommittee as a member of North Carolina's Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission. Andrew and his wife, Kristen, live in Durham with their two sons, Abe and Sam.

Kay-Frances Brody, Recruitment and Selection

brody@robertsonscholars.org

Kay-Frances Brody joined RSLP in March 2016. Prior to Robertson, Kay spent six years as an Admissions Team Lead at the Fuqua School of Business at Duke University where she led regional and international admissions teams. Her previous professional experiences included serving as Director of Development for the UNC Women's Hospital and as Associate Director of Development at Durham Academy. Kay received her BA from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and her JD from The Beasley School of Law at Temple University. Kay has extensive experience as a community volunteer including serving as Chair of the Wake County Luncheon for the UNC Children's Hospital, Philanthropy Liaison for National Charity League Cardinal Chapter, and member of the Triangle United Way Children's Committee. She currently lives in Cary with her husband, Mike, and their children.

Jon Cochran, Operations

cochran@robertsonscholars.org

Jon joined the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program staff in October 2023. He attended UNC-Chapel Hill as an undergraduate and received his MA in sociology at Vanderbilt University. He led sales, marketing, and product development teams for consumer goods companies in art, fashion, and video games. Jon's career has been led by his passion for developing young leaders and helping them identify their strengths to kick-start their professional lives.

Sydney Echols, Learning & Development

echols@robertsonscholars.org

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Sydney Echols earned her Master's degree in Higher Education & Student Affairs from Indiana University, and is highly skilled in college student development theory and leadership studies. Sydney attributes much of her successes and most transformative experiences to her time as an undergraduate student leader at Bowling Green State University where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Human Development & Family Studies. It was there that Sydney's passion for leadership began. Sydney's student affairs practice is rooted in her passion for helping and serving others. Sydney entered higher education as a result of wanting to create a positive impact in the lives of the next generation of leaders. Sydney's program responsibilities include leadership development programming and the overall Scholar experience.

Vicki Stocking, Experiential Learning

stocking@robertsonscholars.org

As the veteran staff member, Vicki serves as the Director of Experiential Learning, which includes RSLPs summer programs. Vicki attended Duke University as an undergraduate and earned her Ph.D. at Stanford University. She has pursued her interests in research, teaching, and civic engagement by leading the research division of the Talent Identification Program (TIP) and then working with Duke's Program in Education and the Kenan Institute for Ethics. As much as she enjoys teaching (she taught courses in Education and Psychology for many years), she enjoys her role with Robertson Scholars even more.

Audrey Walker Womble, Communications & Alumni Community

walker@robertsonscholars.org

Audrey is a graduate of Washington & Lee University with a BA in Journalism & Mass Communications, and earned her M.Ed in Higher Education Administration at North Carolina State University. After working for several years in television production in NYC, Audrey discovered her true passion for working with college students through her employer's internship program. Audrey is responsible for creating and maintaining a thriving alumni community and amplifying the stories of the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program. She also serves as a conduit between current scholars and alumni helping to foster deep connections, mentorship, and friendship across cohorts.

ROBERTSON PROGRAM OFFICES

The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program maintains two offices, one located near East Campus at Duke University and the other located off Franklin St. at UNC. You are welcome to visit our offices any time during office hours. We will use the Scholar Bulletin to share any updates on office hours. Staff typically split their time between both locations and relish connecting with Scholars in person on an informal basis. Staff are also available by appointment to connect directly with Scholars in person or virtually.

<p>Duke Office</p> <p>Smith Warehouse, Bay 7 North 2nd Floor</p> <p>114 S. Buchanan Blvd</p> <p>Durham, NC 27701</p> <p>The Duke Office is open and available any time for Scholar use. You have Duke Card Access to Smith Warehouse from 7:30am-11:00pm daily.</p> <p>Please note that RSLP staff is available at Smith on Tuesdays between 10:00 am - 2:00 pm or by appointment on other days of the week.</p>	<p>UNC Office</p> <p>100 E. Franklin St., Suite 110</p> <p>Chapel Hill, NC 27514</p> <p>The UNC office is open and available for Scholar use during the following hours:</p> <p>With Staff present: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 9:00 am - 5:00 pm- Staff is available on these days and also by appointment on other days of the week <p>UNC OneCard Access: OneCard access to the UNC office is not yet active. We are working to install the necessary hardware and will share access instructions and updates later in the fall.</p>
---	---

II. PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS: WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A SCHOLAR

Over the course of your time as an undergraduate Scholar, we will focus on creating and curating signature Robertson experiences that support you as you explore big questions around leadership and being in a community with others who are similarly on the journey of becoming transformational leaders.

We hope to kick-start (or advance!) your journey by focusing specifically on:

Creating the conditions for you to shift your being, or how you show up in the world from...

- conditioned fear to chosen courage & authenticity by being open-willed
- conditioned cynicism to chosen generosity by being open hearted
- conditioned judgement to chosen curiosity and compassion by being openminded

Focusing on growing a small number of habits that transformational leaders have in common...

- **Integrity:** your relationship with your word and commitments
- **Agency:** seeing it, creating it, and being it
- **Responsibility:** for your choices and your impact
- **Self-Reflection:** noticing and listening to your inner and external landscapes and the impact you're having

Centering your experience in the formation and continued effort of being in a community who practices this kind of leadership together

- Creating and holding space that is truly about connecting
- Belonging as a member of the community
- Restoring breakdowns in your commitments and agreements
- Celebrating breakthroughs and successes
- Manifesting joy and deep care for one another
- Listening openly and sharing authentically

Just as important as it is to name what we *do* develop and why, we think it's also worth noting a few specific elements of leadership that we *don't* focus on, but will likely still develop.

We *don't* focus on developing your:

- Achievement: you are already incredibly well skilled in high achievement; you wouldn't be here if you weren't
- Impact: we care a lot about impact and our responsibility and agency for it; where we care a lot less and don't focus our attention is on ensuring your impact is at a particular scale or in a particular role or in a particular field
- Pre-Professional Tracks: we won't spend time focusing on "how am I going to get ahead in _____ goal with this program;" instead, we choose to focus on developing who you are and how you show up in the world

TERMS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP: SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES

The experiences listed below are expectations of the scholarship, and must be completed by all Scholars.

First-Year Orientation Retreat & NOLS

Before the start of the first-year fall semester, all incoming Scholars take part in orientation, including a leadership retreat facilitated by instructors from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) at the Nantahala Outdoor Center in Bryson City, NC. During the week-long orientation, you develop leadership and communication skills while participating in guided hikes, a ropes course, and river rafting expeditions in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Campus Switch

Campus Switch is designed to offer you the opportunity to adjust to new situations, to thrive in challenging environments and to build stronger educational and community ties between UNC and Duke. It takes place during the spring semester of sophomore year. RSLP is committed to building a community of Scholars who are meaningfully connected to both campuses, who regularly navigate between them, and who have a sense of allegiance to both universities. During and after Campus Switch, Robertson Scholars serve as ambassadors of cross-campus student collaboration and leadership, encouraging your peers to spend time and develop relationships at the sister campus.

During Campus Switch, you maintain as your only residence a room in an assigned residence hall on the sister campus. There are no exceptions to this policy. Students may not study abroad during the semester in which they participate in Campus Switch. While on Campus Switch, you are encouraged to enroll solely in courses on the sister campus, though they are not required to do so. You can choose to return to your home campus to pursue specific coursework in your major. The Robertson Express Bus provides accessible transportation between the two universities. More detailed information and a timeline of Campus Switch events will be distributed the semester prior to Switch.

Senior Capstone

During the spring semester of your senior year, you will participate in the Robertson Senior Capstone experience. The Capstone is designed to help senior Scholars prepare for the transition from undergraduate scholar to a life-long engaged Robertson alumni. The Capstone includes a weekend retreat in January (**January 30-February 2, 2026**) and a series of engagements throughout the Fall and Spring semester. We design these experiences with the aims of providing senior Robertson Scholars the opportunity to reflect on your four-year experience, explore what it means to lead with a commitment to transformation, and prepare to be life-long leaders in our Robertson community and beyond. Details are announced each fall.

Robertson Connection Weekend

We ask that all of you commit to participating in Connection Weekend (**March 25-29, 2026**). Please hold the dates open on your calendar and plan to be in attendance for the entirety of the weekend. The aim of Connection Weekend is to create a vibrant and connective experience for our applicants who have been offered the scholarship, our Scholars and our Alumni. In addition to Connection Weekend events, you may be asked to contact applicants who are considering our offer to welcome them to our community, share experiences and answer questions.

Summer Programs

Robertson summer programs provide opportunities for you to expand your academic passions and professional interests while experiencing new places and cultures. RSLP staff work closely with you to plan summers that uniquely reflect your personal goals and interests, and complement on-campus activities. All Scholars participate in the first Robertson summer, Community Summer, and all are strongly encouraged to participate in both the Exploration Summer, and Launch Summer. Robertson Scholars may not use Summer funding to pay for credit-bearing academic activities.

- *Community Summer*: You spend the summer after your first year living together and participating in community-based projects in established locations throughout the southeastern United States including: the Mississippi Delta, MS; New Orleans, LA; Tarboro, NC; and Whitesburg, KY. This summer is designed to further strengthen our community and create the opportunity for our community partners to contribute to you and for you to make meaningful contributions to our partner communities. Additionally, you are challenged to increase your awareness of systemic challenges and opportunities for change in the United States. **Community Summer begins with a retreat in Nashville, TN May 18-22, 2026 and ends on July 24, 2026.**

TERMS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP: ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Grade Point Average

The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program expects you to uphold high academic standards. Continuation in the RSLP depends on maintaining good academic performance, defined as a minimum 3.00 GPA at the end of the first year and a 3.30 GPA for each subsequent year.

GPA's are calculated using the weighted average of the fall and spring semester GPA's on your home campus transcript at the end of the academic year (or the average of two consecutive semesters if you take a leave). GPA's are not rounded in this calculation. Please note that study away semesters are typically recorded as transfer pass/fail credits on the home campus transcript and are not factored into the GPA.

We review your GPA and academic progress during the summer between academic years. If you do not meet the GPA minimum you will be placed on academic probation. If you are on probation, failure to meet the required GPA at the end of any subsequent year will result in loss of the scholarship.

Course Load

You must enroll in a full-time course load each semester, as defined by each University's Registrar. Any less-than-full-time enrollment must be pre-approved by the Robertson Program staff. A written request must be submitted the semester prior to the one in which the underload is intended. Please be aware that Program approval of an underload is separate from university approval; you must follow appropriate channels at the relevant university.

Occasionally, there are circumstances that warrant an underload during a semester that is already in progress. Should this be the case, you must contact Andrew Lakis after consulting with your academic advisor or dean, but before a final decision is made.

If you decide to underload after a term has begun, the change in enrollment from full-time to an underload may impact your account balance. The Robertson Program funds tuition charges at the beginning of each semester. Underloading leads to a decrease in university tuition charges. When the university charge for tuition is changed from full-time to an underload, a temporary credit may appear on your account; however, the Robertson scholarship amount will eventually be removed to reflect the actual tuition charged. **You must monitor your student accounts, as you are ultimately responsible for any funds due back to the RSLP.** Additionally, underloading may result in you not being on track to meet your minimum requirements for graduation, which may require an additional semester of study.

You should be aware that the Robertson Program only provides funding for eight semesters (six semesters for First Year Matriculate Scholars) and you should always consult with your advisor/Dean and Andrew Lakis about your academic progress.

- *UNC Scholars*: University policy allows seniors in their final semester of coursework to apply for an approved underload, provided they need fewer than 12 academic hours to complete all graduation requirements. The Robertson Program accepts the approved underload for graduating UNC Scholars who meet the university's criteria.

Course Withdrawal: If you are considering withdrawing from a course, notify Andrew Lakis and set up a meeting to discuss your academic standing and performance.

Courses on the Sister Campus

In addition to the First-Year Colloquium, you must successfully complete at least **four courses** on the sister campus. *We strongly recommend* this requirement be completed by the end of your seventh semester (typically, halfway through senior year).

- In order to count towards the cross campus four course minimum, a course taken at Duke must be a full-credit course, and a course at UNC, must carry a weight of three credit hours or more.

Pass/Fail: You are **not** permitted to elect pass/fail for graded cross-campus courses; however, cross-campus courses that are **only** offered pass/fail are exceptions to this policy.

Additionally, on your home campus, you are permitted to elect pass/fail (UNC) or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (Duke) for a **maximum of four full-credit graded courses** over your eight semesters of enrollment at your home institution. **Courses that are only offered as pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory do not count towards this total.**

For more information on cross-campus coursework, please see the *Cross-Campus Academic Opportunities & Policies* section of this handbook.

First-Year Colloquium*

The Robertson First-Year Colloquium is a one-semester, full-credit course at Duke and a three credit-hour honors course at UNC taken during the spring semester of first-year. This class is designed for Scholars to:

1. understand ethical frameworks for leadership
2. reflect on the meaning of “being a Robertson”
3. prepare for Community Summer.

Colloquium takes place during the spring semester of your first-year. Specific details for registration will be sent to first-year Scholars in early fall. You must earn a passing grade in order to meet the Colloquium requirement of the RSLP. You are not allowed to take the course pass/fail (UNC) or satisfactory/unsatisfactory (Duke).

Colloquium typically meets on one campus for the first half of the semester, and moves to the sister campus for the second half of the semester. The Robertson Express Bus provides convenient transportation between campuses for you in this course.

** First-Year Matriculate Scholars are not required to participate in Colloquium*

TERMS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP: BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

As a community, we believe that each of us is responsible for contributing to and gaining from our collective experiences as Robertsons. For you to grow in your leadership journey, establishing a set of norms and values around the ways in which we learn and grow together is paramount to our flourishing as individuals and as a collective. This means that we believe the following to be true:

- You are capable of and have the autonomy to create your own experiences.
- You enter RSLP with beliefs, experiences, and motivations reflecting individual and collective contexts.
- You are committed to growth and exploration as members of the RSLP community and as recipients of a generous scholarship and unique learning and development opportunities.
- You are responsible for the impacts of your decisions and actions, and are held accountable for them.

The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program (RSLP) is committed to creating a community where you seek to deepen your connections to each other, the broader Duke & UNC communities, and any other communities of which we are a part. What this means is that we expect you to habitually endeavor to embody the following through your actions and ways of being:

- Act with Honesty and Integrity: you understand the relationship between your word, your commitments, and your actions.
- Take Responsibility: you examine your choices and own the impact of those choices on yourself and others.
- Uphold Community: you seek to understand the intricacies of the RSLP community and are committed to ensuring that all Robertsons have the right to learn and grow in ways that do not disrupt the growth, development, or safety (emotional or physical) of others.

We believe that committing to these ways of being and practicing them is what it means to be a Robertson.

In addition to the above ways of being, you are committed to understanding and following the student codes of conduct and various policies at both [Duke](#) & [UNC](#). We expect you to know and abide by both codes of conduct given your unique standing as members of both communities. Additionally, we expect you to follow the law.

There may be times when we fall short. When those instances occur, RSLP has a responsibility to assess and implement certain measures to ensure the safety of the community and provide a pathway toward resolution for Scholars.

While education and growth are the core aims of our community, there are some actions that may put your status as a member of our community at risk – including, but not limited to, loss of program privileges and probation. The RSLP reserves the right to take action on disciplinary matters in any way that it deems appropriate, in its sole discretion. It is important to note that there may be instances of behavior that are fundamentally antithetical to our values and ways of being, in which case the only appropriate outcome may be dismissal from RSLP. Dismissal from the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program is not taken lightly – it requires not only Program approval, but also approval by the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program Board of Directors.

When concerns about a Scholar's conduct arise, RSLP has a responsibility to assess and implement certain measures to ensure the safety of the community and provide a pathway toward resolution for Scholars. Our commitment as a program is to have a clear process for examining and addressing allegations of misconduct, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Notifying the relevant Scholar and other Scholars, in RSLP's sole discretion, when RSLP becomes aware of allegations of misconduct;
- Assessing RSLP's ability to investigate and respond directly to those allegations of misconduct;
- Investigating allegations of misconduct by reviewing relevant information at the University level, and interviewing individuals who may have relevant knowledge, including the Scholar in question;

- Making appropriate referrals to and aiding University entities in the course of their own investigations of misconduct; and
- Providing the Scholar in question with the opportunity to review the allegation of misconduct, reflect and respond to it.

Examples of actions that may result in a change in Scholar status are outlined below. Please note that these examples do not constitute an exhaustive list:

- Any instances regarding fraud, theft, misrepresentation, dishonesty or deceit;
- Any instances of violence towards others or destruction of property;
- Any instances of sexual misconduct including but not limited to sexual assault, rape, or gender-based violence;
- Any violation of the Duke or UNC-Chapel Hill Honor Codes, regardless of judicial outcome or imposition of sanctions by the University;
- Failure to maintain good standing at Duke or UNC;
- Failure to treat others within and outside of the Robertson community with respect and dignity; and
- Failure to fully engage as an active and contributing member of our Robertson community.

As a program, our standards are high - and may be higher than those set by other programs and those of Duke and UNC. This is tied to our belief that transformational leaders commit themselves not only to ethical values-driven ways of being, but also understand your commitment to the communities you are a part of, and take full responsibility for the impact of your choices. We place a great deal of faith in each of you and expect you to uphold and represent our core values at all times. Each year, we ask you to recommit to these standards by signing the Scholar Statement of Intent.

III. HELPFUL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

FINANCIAL BENEFITS AND DISBURSEMENT

Tuition & Fees

The Robertson Scholars Leadership Program provides eight semesters of tuition, room, board, and mandatory fees for Scholars attending Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill who are admitted during the high school selection process. Six semesters are covered for First Year Matriculate Scholars. Tuition support is not available for summer school courses or graduate programs.

UNC Scholars: At the beginning of each semester, the Scholarships and Student Aid Office transfers funds to individual student accounts at the Cashier's Office. These funds directly pay for tuition, fees, housing and meal plan charges that may appear on your account and any overages will be refunded directly to you. We recommend you set up direct deposit for receipt of refunds. Scholars who do not establish direct deposit may access their refund at the Cashier's Office. Questions about scholarship disbursement should be directed to the UNC Office of Scholarships and Student Aid.

Duke Scholars: At the beginning of each semester, automatic charges will be applied to your account for tuition, required fees, room and board. The Duke Undergraduate Financial Aid Office will disburse scholarships to individual student accounts no earlier than ten days before the first day of classes. We recommend you set up direct deposit, which allows the Bursar's Office to transfer any refunds directly into your bank account. Questions about scholarship disbursement should be directed to the Duke Undergraduate Financial Aid Office.

- At Duke, the scholarship covers the cost of a standard dining plan, which is plan I for first-year students. For upperclass Scholars, plan D is the standard. You will be responsible for paying the difference if you select a more expensive dining plan.
- Your scholarship award covers exact on-campus housing charges. If you as an upperclass Scholar choose to live off campus, the scholarship will cover the cost equivalent of a standard on-campus room. Exact coverage of housing is subject to change depending on stipulations of merit aid at Duke.

Non-covered fees: The Robertson Program does not cover the cost of the student health plan or non-mandatory fees. Scholars whose questions regarding scholarship disbursement are not resolved by the appropriate university office may contact Jon Cochran.

Summer Financial Support

The RSLP provides funding to all Scholars for up to three summers. Funding for summers depends on your proposed summer activities and is contingent on Program approval.

- We currently provide a \$3,000 payment to cover travel, living expenses, and cultural/educational activities for those participating in Community Summer. We directly pay for your housing during Community Summer.
- You may apply for up to \$6300 each year for costs associated with Exploration and Launch Summer.

International Scholars without a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) must complete additional paperwork to receive the summer stipend. Please find more information in the *International Students* section below. This process can take several weeks and should be completed well in advance of the summer.

Most Scholars will receive Summer funding through Duke's non-compensatory payroll process. Regardless of home campus, we strongly recommend that you set up direct deposit at Duke to ensure timely receipt of funds.

- If you do not have direct deposit set up, your check will be mailed to the address listed in your DukeHub account. You are responsible for ensuring that all information is accurate and up to date to avoid delays in disbursement.

Other Scholarships and Funding

At UNC, students are generally allowed to keep outside scholarships that have been awarded to them in addition to their Robertson Scholarship award (excluding university grants or need-based aid).

At Duke, outside scholarships may only be used to meet the unmet need up to Duke's published cost of attendance (for books, travel, and other personal expenses). If the outside scholarship exceeds those costs, the Robertson award will be reduced. You are responsible for contacting your respective financial aid/bursar offices for more information.

Reimbursements

All reimbursements are processed through Duke's Employee Travel & Reimbursement process. Regardless of home campus, you must follow this process and must set up direct deposit at Duke to ensure timely receipt of funds.

All reimbursement requests must be submitted and processed within the academic year in which the purchases were made. **The deadline for submission is June 19, 2026.**

Eligible Reimbursement Requests

- Self-Designed Learning Opportunities (SDLOs):
 - Includes approved LEAD Grants, Dinner for 6, and Coffee for 10 experiences.
- Pre-Approved Expenses: reimbursements may be requested for expenses that may be incurred due to community related events or experiences distinct from the SDLO process. Scholars must reach out to Jon Cochran, prior to purchasing for approval.
 - Examples include:
 - Purchases made for a community dinner
 - Tickets purchased for a community event
 - Ride share to attend a community event

Tax Liability

Under U.S. and North Carolina tax law, funds awarded as scholarships, fellowships, benefits, and grants are excluded from the recipient's gross income to the extent that they are used for *required* tuition, books, fees, supplies, and equipment.

Tax liability depends on individual circumstances, you should consult a personal tax advisor with any questions or concerns. **The Robertson Program is not able to offer tax advice.**

Special note for International Scholars: The U.S. government requires most international students in nonimmigrant visa status to file Federal income tax forms with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), regardless of whether or not you have earned income from U.S. sources. For more information, please visit the following:

- [United States IRS website](#)
- [UNC International Student & Scholar Services](#)
- [Duke International Students Financial Aid](#)

International Scholars

To ensure compliance with U.S. immigration laws, all international Scholars are required to follow the policies of your home campus for international student check-in. Additionally, you are responsible for maintaining your immigration and visa status. As scholarship recipients, international Scholars may be liable for taxes on the funds that they receive from our Program. For more information, please refer to the *Tax Liability* section above.

To receive a summer stipend and/or file a U.S. Federal tax return, international Scholars must have either an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or a U.S. Social Security Number (special conditions apply). To obtain an ITIN, you must complete and submit the U.S. Internal Revenue Service W-7 Form.

If you are studying at Duke with a F1 or J1 Visa, enrollment in the Duke student medical insurance plan is mandatory. Neither traveling insurance nor medical insurance policies issued outside the U.S. or Canada will be accepted as a means to waive the Duke student health plan. The Robertson Scholarship does not cover this expense.

We strongly recommend all international students to connect directly with visa services at your home institutions for further clarification and guidance.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

You are highly encouraged to take advantage of as many opportunities as you can during your time as undergraduates. Throughout the year, the Robertson Scholars Leadership Program offers cross-cohort experiences, dinner conversations, and a variety of other opportunities aimed at sparking your curiosity, enhancing your learning and facilitating connections with other members of the Robertson community. This section will highlight some of the personal and professional development opportunities that are currently offered through the Robertson Program.

Self-Designed Learning Opportunities: LEAD Grants, Dinners, Coffees

Robertson Scholars are invited to design and request funding for activities that promote learning and leadership. These are highly individualized and can take many forms—many involving other Robertsons, including alumni.

Take a risk! Try something new! Collaborate! Take this opportunity to do something out of the ordinary—stretch yourself, including:

- LEAD Grant. Collaborate with other Scholars to do something uniquely suited to your leadership interests. Make an intentional visit to a particular place, attend a meaningful event, or do a project based on a community need you've observed. Design an experience to broaden your perspectives and deepen your leadership.
- Coffee for 10. Create a discussion opportunity for Robertsons on a topic of interest.
- Dinner for Six. Invite a community leader to dinner and bring four other Robertsons along for connection and conversation.

Although the process for applying for and funding these different types of experiences varies, they all reflect elements of the RSLP model of leadership. These activities are designed to strengthen capacity to do one or more of the following:

- Experience belonging to a community of commitment.
- Deepen understanding of who you are and what you are committed to.
- Understand your relationship to your word and be in the consistent practice of honoring it.
- Experience the power available to you when you take responsibility.
- Be curious about the earned lessons available through discomfort, breakdowns and incongruence.
- See the impact on yourself and others that is created by getting into action and making choices that are aligned to your values.

SDLOs are coordinated through [Submittable](#). Complete your [Submittable](#) profile using your home campus email address prior to submitting your first SDLO application.

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Expedition

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) Expedition Scholars may have the opportunity to apply for a Robertson-only, week-long backpacking trip through the western United States led by NOLS. This expedition is a powerful way for you to challenge yourself and learn essential outdoor survival skills while bonding with your fellow Scholars. Previous outdoor experience is not required. Additional information about the springtime expedition and how to apply will be provided during the academic year.

Advising and Staff Check-ins

Academic Advising: Robertson Scholars have a variety of opportunities to explore academic interests at both UNC and Duke. We strongly suggest that you establish relationships with the academic advising offices on both campuses.

Additionally, you have the opportunity to form mentoring relationships with faculty and administrators at both universities and are encouraged to do so early in your academic career.

- For exploring cross-campus academic opportunities, please set up an appointment with Andrew Lakis. For guidance on processes and policies, please contact Jon Cochran. You should also review [Cross Campus Resources](#) on Robertson Connect.

Scholar Advising: Robertson staff members support you in exploring your values, navigating your commitments, planning your summer experiences and examining your overall leadership and personal development. You can also use check-ins to talk with staff about any questions you have, how to make alumni connections and find mentors, as well as share your overall experience in the community. At any point in the year, you should feel welcomed to reach out to any staff member directly to request a check-in.

Alumni Connections

Robertson Alumni serve as a wonderful resource for summer planning, job searches, and general guidance and networking. You are encouraged to use [Robertson Connect](#) to search for Alumni based on your professional or extracurricular interests. Additionally, you have various opportunities to connect with Alumni on campus and are encouraged to take full advantage of these events. Alumni events will be communicated to current Scholars via the Scholar Bulletin and social media. You are welcome to email or connect with Alumni at any time throughout the year. For additional assistance connecting with the Alumni community you should email or schedule a meeting with Audrey Walker Womble.

CROSS-CAMPUS ACADEMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND POLICIES

Courses on the Sister Campus

You are encouraged to take advantage of the course offerings at both schools as much as possible. Robertson Scholars have the unique opportunity to take one or more classes per semester on the sister campus, including courses that are also available at your home institution (except for fall semester of first year). **You must remember that major, minor, and certificate programs require a percentage of courses to be completed on the home campus and you must obtain the appropriate approvals from your Registrar's office for every course taken at the sister campus.**

Cross-Campus Course Registration

Before registering for cross-campus classes, you should consult with your academic advisor about your intended course of study. You have access to the online registration systems on both campuses. You may log in during your registration window and add courses to your schedule.

UNC Scholars: The Duke Registrar will grant registration permission. An email with registration information will be sent to your Duke email address in advance of the registration window. Be sure to check your Duke email account or ensure that mail is forwarded to your UNC or personal account.

Duke Scholars: The UNC Registrar will grant registration permission. Notification will be sent to your UNC email address in advance of the registration window. Be sure to check your UNC email account or ensure that mail is forwarded to the Duke or personal account. When sent a notice about an expiring ONYEN password please be sure to change it as soon as possible. Failure to do so can cause complications or delay registration access.

Cross-Campus Registration Forms

You must complete a Cross-Campus Registration form for each course you take on the sister campus. For most Scholars, this form must be completed regardless of how the course will be used in your academic plan (elective, general education, major, minor, certificate, etc.). Duke Scholars do not need to complete a form for elective credit.

This process is different from the Inter-Institutional Form used by other students. Links to these forms can be found by accessing the Robertson Scholars home page, navigating to Current Scholar Resources and then Cross Campus Resources.

You must first register for the course via the sister campus registration system, and then complete the Cross-Campus Registration form and submit it to the home campus Registrar's office.

The form is used to obtain approval from the home institution and determines how the course will impact completion of degree requirements. Advisors or Deans must sign the form to approve the course. *Without this form on file, your home registrar will have no record of your cross-campus course and the credit will not be counted on your transcript.*

You must complete and submit the Cross-Campus Registration form by the course add deadline at your home institution. Failure to do so may result in your being dropped from the course.

Cross-Campus Majors, Minors, and Certificates

Robertson Scholars can major, double major, minor, or obtain a certificate in any subject offered at your home institution. You may also complete a second major, a minor, or a certificate at the sister institution as long as that program is not offered at your home institution.

You must complete an application form to seek approval from the proper university officials (form available on [Cross Campus Resources site](#)). A list of previously-approved cross-campus plans can also be found on this site for reference. This list is subject to change as the universities add and drop programs.

You are not considered “degree-seeking” at your sister institution. The secondary degree will show up as a note on your home transcript but will not be awarded in the form of a diploma. The following stipulations apply:

1. “Program II” at Duke University is excluded from this option.
2. The full requirements of the major/minor/certificate must be completed, as determined by the institution offering the program.
3. The home institution's stipulations regarding the total number of permissible major/minors/certificates will apply.
4. The major/minor/certificate cannot be awarded after graduation.
5. A student may not receive a degree from the home institution based on a program completed at the sister institution.
6. The Registrar at the home institution will not be expected to certify completion of the course of study at the sister institution. That certification will be made by the appropriate Dean at the sister institution and communicated to the Registrar at the home institution.

Your transcript, issued by the home institution, will contain the following information: **“This student has completed the requirements for the [major/minor/certificate] at [the sister institution] as part of the Robertson Scholars Program.”** No wording will be added to the diploma. You receive your degree and diploma from your home institution only.

Course Limits: As a unique privilege, you may take any number of courses on the sister campus during a semester and throughout the four years. That said, *at least half of your major, minor or certificate courses must be completed on your home campus.*

Adding/Dropping/Withdrawing

You must adhere to the deadlines, policies, and procedures of the home campus for adding, dropping, or withdrawing from courses on the sister campus.

GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES

University Dismissal or Withdrawal

If you are dismissed, withdraw, or are withdrawn from Duke or UNC you will lose eligibility for the scholarship. See the [University Bulletin of Undergraduate Instruction \(Duke\)](#) and [Undergraduate Catalog \(UNC\)](#) for information on definitions and policies for dismissals and withdrawals.

Leave of Absence from the RSLP

You are permitted to take two semesters of leave of absence as part of the Robertson Program. Leave of Absence (LOA) is defined as an interruption of studies temporarily for health, personal, or professional/leadership development opportunities. If you must interrupt your studies temporarily, it is your responsibility to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations associated with leave from and readmission to your home campus.

In order to ensure continuation of the scholarship upon return, you must complete the Leave of Absence Form found on [Robertson Connect](#) (under “Opportunities”) as soon as you make the decision to take a Leave of Absence. You will be required to meet with Andrew Lakis prior to final approval. When applicable, supporting documentation from your health care provider(s), or other outside agencies, should be included with the request. Additionally, you should meet with your home campus academic advisor/Dean prior to completing the form (and before meeting with RSLP Staff) about the implications of a Leave of Absence on your academic progress.

RSLP will consider each case individually and reserves the right to request additional information prior to making a final decision. If the request is approved and you take a Leave of Absence from the RSLP, you are required to fulfill all Program obligations upon return.

The Robertson Program provides a maximum of eight semesters of academic-year funding (six semesters for First-Year Matriculate Scholars). If you are on leave and wish to apply for Summer funding immediately following leave must discuss this possibility with the staff and follow all timelines for Summer proposals, etc., while on leave.

Study Abroad/Away

You may participate in study abroad programs approved by Duke or UNC–Chapel Hill during any term of enrollment **except**:

- *the first year,*
- *Campus Switch, or*
- *the second semester of senior year.*

To begin the process, you must first work with your home campus Study Abroad office. Applications for study abroad/away funding must be submitted through [Robertson Connect](#), and should include:

- a description of the program,
- proof of approval from your home institution, and
- a breakdown of the associated costs.

You are responsible for coordinating with your Study Abroad Office and Registrar to ensure that credit is awarded for courses taken while abroad.

The RSLP will cover tuition, room, and board for study abroad programs up to the cost of a semester at your home institution. Any costs exceeding that amount are your responsibility.

UNC Scholars: The RSLP will fund up to UNC's out-of-state tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and personal expenses for a maximum of two semesters of study abroad. You must cover additional costs that exceed your award.

Duke Scholars: The RSLP will cover all costs up to the amount of Duke tuition, required fees, and room and board for any approved study abroad program.

Duke Scholars may participate in:

- Duke-In programs (administered directly by Duke), or
- Duke-approved non-Duke programs (sponsored by other universities).

You must review [Duke's financial aid website](#) for merit scholars studying abroad. Questions not addressed there should be directed to the Office of Undergraduate Financial Aid.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS

In addition to the information for international Scholars regarding the financial benefits of your scholarship award and disbursement of funds in this handbook, you are encouraged to connect directly with resources at your home university for additional support and guidance.

Duke Scholars: [The Duke International Student Center](#) provides many services and opportunities for both international and domestic students at Duke.

For visa questions, contact [Duke Visa Services](#):

- Phone: (919) 681-8472
- Email: visahelp@duke.edu

UNC Scholars: For visa questions, contact [International Student and Scholars Services](#) (ISSS):

- Phone: (919) 962-5661
- Email: iyss@unc.edu

ISSS promotes international educational exchange through its services and programs. It serves as the principal administrative, programming, and advising office for approximately 2000 international students, faculty, and academic staff at UNC.

TECHNOLOGY

RSLP Communications

During the academic year, you will receive regular newsletters in the form of the Scholar Bulletin and invitations from the RSLP to your home university email address. Robertson staff members use newsletters to communicate significant event dates and deadlines, so it is extremely important that you read and act upon information in these communications in a timely manner. When invitations to Program events are sent, we ask that you respond promptly and proactively communicate any conflicts.

Robertson Connect Online Portal

All Scholars have access to our online information portal, [Robertson Connect](#). You are expected to edit and update your Robertson Connect profile. This site should be used to find contact information for Scholars and Alumni, search for information on previous summer programs, and connect with alumni based on careers, geographic region, and outside interests. All incoming Scholars will receive an invitation to Robertson Connect prior to the start of their first semester. If you experience issues with Robertson Connect, please contact Audrey.

Resources for Current Scholars

The Robertson staff uses [this page](#) to share programming updates, summer planning documents, academic forms, and applications for Scholar opportunities. Access the Resources page by going to robertsonscholars.org, selecting “resources for current scholars” and putting in the password “robbieinfo.”

Email Addresses

All Robertson Scholars are assigned both UNC & Duke email accounts. You should use the email account associated with your home university as your primary email and plan to forward email from the sister campus account to the home university email address. Contact Duke OIT or UNC ONYEN Services for information on how to set up email forwarding.

- **All RSLP communications will be sent to your home university email address.**

University Web Login Information

All Robertson Scholars have access to both a UNC Onyen (Only Name You'll Ever Need) and a Duke NetID. These are the electronic identifiers (i.e., login names) for all campus network services, including email, computer cluster login, library services and course registration.

You are expected to keep both student accounts active at all times. You must obtain the identifier for the sister campus from the school's information technology office and should do so as soon as possible during the first semester.

Duke Scholars: to set up your UNC account, visit the [UNC ITS website](#). You will need your Personal Identification Number (PID) to set up your account. ONYEN passwords expire often! When notified about an expiring password, change it as soon as possible. Failure to do so can cause complications and/or delay access to the UNC system.

UNC Scholars: to set up your Duke account, visit the [Duke OIT](#) website.

PROGRAM AND UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

You are asked to be contributing members of both the Robertson and University communities. To do so, you need to take care of your physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. When academic, personal, or medical issues arise, you should know there are Robertson staff members available to listen and provide support. Additionally, both Duke & UNC provide counseling and psychological services and additional resources for students:

Duke:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <https://students.duke.edu/wellness/caps/> or 919.660.1000
- Student Disability Access Office: access.duke.edu/students or 919.668.1267
- Duke REACH: <https://students.duke.edu/wellness/dukereach/> or 919.681.2455
- Center for Sexual & Gender Diversity: students.duke.edu/belonging/icr/csgd/ or 919.684.6607
- Women's Center: students.duke.edu/belonging/icr/wc/ or 919.684.3897

Visit studentaffairs.duke.edu for a complete list of resources

UNC:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): caps.unc.edu or (919) 966-2281
- Accessibility Resources & Service: ars.unc.edu or (919) 962-8300
- Office of the Dean of Students: dos.unc.edu or (919) 966-4042
- LGBTQ Center: lgbtq.unc.edu or (919) 843-5376
- Carolina Women's Center: womenscenter.unc.edu or (919) 962-8305

Visit studentsuccess.unc.edu/campus-resources for a complete list of resources.