



2017 Summer Mentorship Experience

Mentor Overview

- The Blackburn Institute's Summer Mentorship Experience is an opportunity for mentors from the Blackburn community to work directly with students to address the needs of Alabama communities through research, direct service, and/or public policy.
- Blackburn Fellows, Blackburn Advisory Board members, and Blackburn Society members are all eligible to serve as mentors in the program and will provide direct guidance to a student as she/he implements a summer project.
- Project ranges in duration from 4 to 12 weeks, are completed between May and July, and take place in Alabama or Washington, DC.

Benefits for Mentors:

- Develop a meaningful mentoring relationship with a Blackburn student;
- Engage with a Blackburn student on work related to an issue of importance to Alabama;
- Take action to improve the state through a work product developed for a community partner;
- Receive support from a Blackburn staff advisor before, during, and after the placement; and
- Interact and share experiences with other Blackburn mentors.

Two Paths to Participation:

1. Mentors may submit a project proposal that *leverages their professional expertise and provides a student with an opportunity to learn about and take action on an issue of importance to Alabama*. Students will then be able to review mentor proposals and request a match.
 - a. Available January 27, 2017 and due February 20, 2017
https://universityofalabama.edu/qualtrics.com/SEI?SID=SV_eLjgXRjzVAhRtP
2. Mentors may review student project proposals and request a match to one that aligns with their professional expertise.
 - a. Available March 1, 2017 and due March 19, 2017
<https://blackburninstitute.sa.ua.edu/student-curriculum-programs/summer-mentorship-experience/sme-proposals/>

Proposals will be compared to requested matches to find the most beneficial pairings and, after consultation with mentors, placements will be finalized and offered to students.



Mentor Eligibility and Commitments

Mentor Eligibility:

- Is a *current member* of the Blackburn Institute's Advisory Board, a member of the Blackburn Society, or a Blackburn Fellow that was *pinned in spring 2013 or earlier*; and
- Will be present in the community where the student will be working in Alabama or Washington, DC.

Mentor Commitments:

- Will participate in a pre-project meeting (in-person or by phone) in the spring with Blackburn staff advisor and student to clarify scope of project, timeframe, and work product;
- Will meet consistently (suggested at least once a week) in-person with student for duration of summer project to provide guidance and support;
- Will participate in at least one of three, one-hour, web-based video conferences with other mentors over the summer;
- Will provide an appropriate work space for student to complete the project;
- Will participate in a post-project meeting (in-person or by phone) in early August with Blackburn staff advisor and student to debrief on experience; and
- Will attend Annual Symposium opening reception on August 25.

Project Eligibility:

- Will fall within the scope of research, direct service, and/or public policy;
- Will provide substantive work for a minimum of 4 weeks and maximum of 12 weeks;
- Will be implemented in Alabama or Washington, DC.;
- Will generate a work product that addresses the needs of Alabama communities by August 1; and
- Will include formal presentation of a work product to a community partner (e.g. government official or agency, non-profit organization, or social enterprise) by August 11.

If electing to submit one, a well-written project proposal will address each of the following components:

1. The issue or community need you intend the student to address, along with data supporting the need for action;
2. A plan of action detailing the activities in which the student will be engaged;
3. A timeline for implementation of the project (including any conflicting summer commitments); and
4. The anticipated work product that will be generated through the experience.



Mentor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the approximate timeline for the Summer Mentorship Experience?

February 20	Deadline for mentors/students to submit project proposals and profiles
March 1	Project proposals posted for review
March 19	Deadline for mentors/students to request a matches
March 20-23	Mentors consulted on potential matches
March 27	Mentors/students notified of matches
March 27-30	Students contact potential mentors
March 30	Deadline for students to accept/decline placements
April 3-14	Pre-project meetings conducted
April 28	Learning Objectives Agreement due from students and mentors
August 1-11	Post-project meetings conducted

How much time will a student dedicate to the project?

Project minimum and maximum durations are 4 and 12 weeks, respectively, with May 1 as the earliest start date and July 31 as the latest end date. In order to provide a deep and meaningful experience, it is required that students commit to a minimum of 20 hours/week to the project. The exact time commitment, flexibility of days/hours, and evening/weekend commitments will be discussed in the pre-project meeting with the mentor, student, and Blackburn staff advisor to ensure that there are mutually agreeable expectations.

Can students work other jobs during the Summer Mentorship Experience?

As a condition of acceptance to the program, students agree to limit outside employment to a maximum of 20 hours/week between the official start and end of their experience.

When reviewing project proposals, how do I know who has proposed the project?

The matching of students to mentors is conducted on a blind basis for both parties, in order to reinforce the goal of providing practical, issue-based experiences in our community, not simply networking. Mentors will be consulted on potential matches prior to final placements being offered to students. After the acceptance of a placement by a student, the matches will be revealed and a pre-project meeting will be scheduled with the mentor, student, and Blackburn staff advisor.

What happens if I am not matched with a student?

An important aspect of the Summer Mentorship Experience is the nature of the relationship between the mentor and student. Whereas an internship experience is largely a pre-professional work experience, which relies heavily on a task-oriented approach, this mentorship experience will focus on establishing relationships between mentors and students that are cultivated through mutually-shared interests in issues of importance to Alabama. *Given this model, there will not always be a match between the mentors and students and it is possible that some proposals and matches may be declined.*

What is meant by a "work product" for the experience?

This term is deliberately broad, in order for mentors/students to determine the best mechanism for reporting back findings from the experience to the community partner. Regardless of the chosen work product, it must, first, demonstrate how students were able to take action on an issue of importance to Alabama and, second, serve as a call to action for others. Examples of work products could include, but are not limited to:

- White papers or policy proposals;
 - Research findings and potential applications;
 - A toolkit for others to replicate an event implemented as part of the project; or
 - Production of a work of art (visual, musical, theatrical, or any other).
-