



BLACKBURN INSTITUTE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

2017 Summer Mentorship Experience *Student Overview*

- The Blackburn Institute's Summer Mentorship Experience is an opportunity for students to work directly with a mentor from the Blackburn community to address the needs of Alabama communities through research, direct service, and/or public policy.
- Students graduating in December 2017 or later all eligible to participate in the program and will receive direct guidance from a mentor (Blackburn Fellow, Blackburn Advisory Board member, or Blackburn Society member) while implementing 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 Students:

- Develop a meaningful mentoring relationship with a member of Blackburn community;
- Engage with a Blackburn mentor 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;
- Gain practical, issue-based work and/or academic experience;
- Receive support from a Blackburn staff advisor before, during, and after the placement;
- Earn a financial award to cover reasonable living / project expenses, up to a maximum of \$5,000; and
- Interact and share experiences with other Blackburn students.

Two Paths to Participation:

1. Students may submit a project proposal that *leverages their prior civic involvement, academic interests, or personal passions* and *provides an opportunity to learn about and take action on an issue of importance to Alabama*. Mentors will then be able to review student proposals and request a match.
 - a. Available January 27, 2017 and due February 20, 2017
https://universityofalabama.edu/qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0JjrKn2ybVgUM7j
2. Students may review mentor project proposals and request a match that aligns with their interests.
 - 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.



Student Eligibility and Commitments

Student Eligibility:

- Has an anticipated graduation date of December 2017 or later;
- Will be on campus during the fall semester following the summer project; and
- Has completed all components of the first year curriculum.

Student Commitments:

- Will participate in a one-hour pre-project meeting (in-person or by phone) in the spring with Blackburn staff advisor and mentor to clarify scope of project, timeframe, and work product;
- Will communicate with Blackburn staff advisor on a bi-weekly basis;
- Will meet consistently (suggested at least once a week) in-person with mentor for duration of summer project to receive guidance and support;
- Will participate in at least two of three, one-hour, web-based video conferences with other student participants over the summer;
- Will participate in a one-hour post-project meeting (in-person or by phone) in early August with Blackburn staff advisor and mentor to debrief on experience;
- Will formally present work product to a community partner (e.g. government official or agency, non-profit organization, or social enterprise) by August 11; and
- Will present in poster session at Annual Symposium opening reception on Friday, 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. An itemized budget if requesting funding for project expenses; and
5. The anticipated work product that will be generated through the experience.



Student 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 initial 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. When the match is offered to a student, it will include the mentor's contact and biographical information. The student and mentor will have the opportunity to discuss the project and relationship before final acceptance by the student. Upon acceptance, a pre-project meeting will be scheduled with the mentor, student, and Blackburn staff advisor.

What happens if I am not matched with a mentor?

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 are 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).
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What is included in the placement offers to students?

Placement offers will include details of the proposed project, timeframe, financial award (living expenses and/or project costs), and contact information. Mentors and students may negotiate these details (except the financial award) during the pre-project meeting with the Blackburn staff advisor. It is important that students disclose any conflicts, particularly related to the starting and ending dates, as well as any need for time off (e.g. planned vacations) during the project period.

What is the amount of the financial award?

The financial award is has two components and students may apply for funding to cover either or both sets of expenses. The combined maximum funding for the summer 2017 program is \$5,000.

1. *Reasonable living expenses associated with living and working in a community during the Summer Mentorship Experience.*
This is a county-by-county amount that, using an 8-week experience as an example, would fall in the range of \$2,944 to \$3,523 for Alabama or \$4,749 for Washington, DC.
 2. *Reasonable expenses associated with implementation of the project.*
If the project has anticipated costs associated with its implementation, students may submit a detailed budget request as part of their project proposal.
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How are "reasonable living expenses" calculated for the financial award?

The amounts are calculated utilizing The Living Wage Calculator developed by MIT. Following the project proposal deadline, these expenses will be calculated and included with the projects posted during the review period.
