



The Passionate Leaders Project

OVERVIEW

The **Passionate Leaders Project (PLP)** is a \$3,000 award given to **up to six undergraduate students** to pursue an independent research project, creative endeavor, community enterprise, or internship project of their own design and development.

The PLP represents the summit of student-driven, independent learning at Simmons. As a PLP Scholar, you are passionate about confronting an issue, exploring an area of research, meeting a creative challenge, or finding a solution to a problem. You have developed a project with a clearly defined focus and objective, a thoughtful methodology, and a meaningful personal or professional impact. In addition, you have established conversation with a faculty mentor, professional supervisor, or external organization to help guide you through your process.

A strong proposal is likely to build upon the foundation of a previously-established relationship with a mentor or organization, previous engagement with the topic in question, and/or a demonstrated familiarity with the issue(s), research, or methodology in the field.

ELIGIBILITY

Sophomores, juniors, and seniors are eligible to apply. Although there is no GPA requirement to access PLP funding, students must be in good academic standing. Undergraduate students may receive PLP funding only once during their time at Simmons.

Students cannot simultaneously receive PLP funding and additional support from another URF program during the same term. Students must close out their PLP grant prior to receiving support from other URF initiatives.

TYPES OF PROJECTS

The PLP typically provides funding for three types of projects:

Independent Research Projects

- Independent projects include data science projects, research projects, service learning projects, collaborations with community organizations, and other student-driven

initiatives.

- May also involve the continuation of existing research led by a faculty member, researcher, or affiliated organization
- The PLP award may support materials, supplies, conferences, transcription services, subscriptions, or travel and lodging expenses related to the project.
- Up to \$1,000 may be used to partially compensate the scholar's time working on behalf of an outside organization while developing the project.

Creative Endeavors

- Creative endeavors include graphic design projects, studio art projects, documentaries and films, digital art, concrete installations, literary works, and other forms of creative scholarship and investigation.
- The PLP award may support materials, supplies, conferences, transcription services, subscriptions, or travel and lodging expenses related to the project.
- Up to \$1,000 may be used to partially compensate the scholar's time working on behalf of an outside organization while developing the project.

Unpaid Internships

- Students may build projects around unpaid internships with nonprofit organizations, research labs, or service organizations.
- The PLP award may support a stipend to partially compensate the scholar's time working on behalf of an outside organization while developing the project.
- **Please note: We do not accept stipend requests for field-based placements or credit-based internships required for the completion of a degree.**

Application Instructions

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Proposal Narrative
- Project Supervisor
- [Budget](#)
- Resume
- Additional Materials (i.e. Internship Letter, IRB Approval)

Submit your completed application materials through the [PLP Application Portal](#). Please combine the proposal narrative, budget, resume, and additional materials into a single PDF, and

label the file using the following naming convention: **PLP_YourName**. Email files over 10MB to fellowships@simmons.edu.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

Proposal Narrative

- **Project Narrative (3 pages max):** This narrative should include the following components:
 - Issue and Background (What is the central question? Provide a paragraph that describes the context and background of your proposed project.)
 - Goals
 - Methodology, approaches, creative techniques
 - Deliverables
 - What are the expected outcomes?
 - What will be created/produced as a result of this project? This may be a publication, presentation, exhibit, digital or physical artifact.
 - How do your education/training/qualifications prepare you to successfully carry out this project?
- **Project Timeline**
 - Develop a realistic, concrete timeline of your plan to carry out your project
 - Can be week-by-week or monthly
 - Be sure to factor in the time it may take to acquire supplies or learn new skills and technology
 - It's ok if the timeline changes! Nothing is set in stone.
- **Personal Essay (1 page max)**
 - How does this project relate to my personal and/or professional interests?
- **Budget**
 - Make a copy of the [PLP Budget Template](#)
 - Use the PLP budget template to create your project budget

Examples of Deliverables:

Your deliverable is a product, presentation, or service that represents what you learned during your PLP experience. Examples include:

Not a deliverable	Deliverable
Internship at a neuropsychology children's clinic	Brochure specifically designed for children, to help them understand the procedures they will be experiencing at the clinic
Research about Simmons's involvement in the suffrage movement	Series of pop-up exhibits about Simmons's involvement in the suffrage movement

Collaboration with nonprofit organization to create and deliver a free childbirth class to Boston community members	Leading a free childbirth class to low-income individuals and young mothers
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Formatting

Each essay should utilize a 12pt Arial font, 1-inch margins. You may include citations and appendices in addition to the page count in each essay.

Project Advisor and Letter of Support

Students will be required to identify a Simmons staff or faculty member, or an external internship supervisor who will be able to advise them on their PLP project: they will be expected to share their project proposal with their advisor at the beginning of their grant period and their deliverables and outcomes at the end. Advisors should be available for light coaching throughout.

The **letter of support** should come from the project supervisor or a faculty advisor who will support the student throughout the project. It should validate the feasibility of the project, the student's ability to successfully complete and carry out the project, and any contextual background that may be helpful for reviewers to know.

Resume

Students must provide an updated resume listing all professional, academic, and co-curricular experiences.

Additional Materials

Additional items will be required depending on the project:

- **Internships:** Students participating in internships or volunteering at an organization must submit an offer letter or letter of invitation/affiliation from the organization. This letter should discuss the student's role at the organization. Organizations must submit an evaluation of the intern's work at the end of the internship or service opportunity. Students should consult with Undergraduate Research and Fellowship staff prior to signing contracts with any organization.
- **Research Projects:** Projects involving human subjects, such as interviews, are required to [seek IRB approval](#). You are encouraged to begin this process as soon as possible, as it may take several months for the committee to review your request. IRB proposals are handled separately by the Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE). If you are unsure of whether your project requires IRB review, please email irbprotocols@simmons.edu.

Although IRB approval is not required at the time of application, we strongly encourage prospective applicants to initiate the process as soon as possible.

- **Travel:** PLP projects involving international travel are required to receive prior approval from the Center for Global Education (CGE). Travel to [Level 3 or 4 Advisory States](#) is not funded under any circumstances. **Students should reach out to cge@simmons.edu as soon as possible to initiate the approval process, submitting the following details:**
 - **Program:** A description of and link to the proposed travel experience.
 - **Purpose of Travel:** Explain why travel to a particular location is essential to academic studies, research or work.
 - **Proposed Travel Itinerary:** Must include lodging arrangements, transportation to and from the location within the region, and day-to-day transportation.
 - **Communication:** Comprehensive list of emergency contacts, both US-based and in-country, local contacts.
 - **Additional materials:** Any additional materials that would be useful for the CGE in making a decision, such as any prior relationships that have been established with a site or host institution or maps of the region.

After the submission of materials, Undergraduate Research and Fellowships may require students to take additional steps, or modify their projects in order to obtain approval. Students may receive a conditional approval for PLP funding, pending the submission of required materials. All of the required documentation for the project must be submitted and approved prior to the disbursement of any funding.

Student Agreement

Prior to receiving PLP funding, each student must sign a Student Agreement form which outlines PLP expectations, the student's role and responsibilities within the project, and safety and wellbeing in the field. Each student must also attend a meeting with URF staff to review responsibilities and expectations.

Award Disbursement

Awards will be disbursed as a check payment deliverable via USPS. Budgets for independent research projects and creative projects will be disbursed in a single check payment upon successful completion of the pre-disbursement requirements. Stipends for unpaid internships will be disbursed in two installments: half upon completion of the pre-disbursement requirements, and the remaining half upon satisfactory completion of the internship and supervisor assessment form.

Closing Your Grant

PLP grants received during the academic year must be closed out by the end of June.

Graduating seniors must close out their grant prior to graduating from Simmons. This includes the following:

- Students must submit all receipts to Simmons University. Failure to submit receipts may result in a charge to the student.
- Students will be required to submit at least one deliverable that represents skills and knowledge obtained or outcomes achieved during the project.
- Students will complete an evaluation for the PLP, which will assess overall learning and satisfaction with the experience.
- If you are a senior graduating, you must close out your project prior to graduation.