

Student Summer Scholar Program Application Examples

A2. Student Preparation and Motivation

Example 3

I began working on this project with Dr. [REDACTED] in January of 2022 in [REDACTED] class about [REDACTED]. Dr. [REDACTED] was very supportive of this research. [REDACTED] encouraged me to engage deeper with sources and was very helpful in the process of my research. When I began my initial research Dr. [REDACTED] mentioned the S3 program, but the deadline had already passed. I built many of the skills I will use in the S3 program through my previous research when I presented at the 2022 Student Scholars Day event.

Throughout the initial research process, I was given many opportunities. In April of 2022, I was able to work with [REDACTED] Museum, where I did archival research for the first time. While doing this research, I engaged with sources from the Grand Rapids press in the form of newspaper articles and film negatives. Working with other history professionals, outside the world of academia, was an extremely valuable experience. This experience gave me more experience with public history, rather than what is studied in my classes. Another form of research I engaged in was oral interviews with a woman who gave up her child during this time period. The culmination of research was the Student Scholars Day in April of 2022. This presentation helped improve my research skills and my presentation skills. Student Scholars Day also helped ignite a love for research. This presentation and project inspired me to pursue an education in history beyond the undergraduate level.

In my current education I have received a lot of support from many great educators at Grand Valley. In the Fall of 2022 I took HST 331, Modern Latin American History, with Professor [REDACTED]. Dr. [REDACTED] structured [REDACTED] class around book reviews and responses to assigned primary sources. We ended our class with an argument paper that drew from each of our previous papers, books, and assigned primary and secondary sources. This was the first time I had ever done anything like this style of writing; however it made me a much better history writer. Dr. [REDACTED] challenged me to engage deeper with sources and pull from those sources in more abstract ways. Currently, I am in a class with Dr. [REDACTED] where I am expanding on how to do historical research. I am using this as an opportunity to learn new tools in research. Dr. [REDACTED] has been very helpful in building my research regarding the women's movement during 1945-1980.

One reason I am motivated to do this project is that I want to help to keep uncomfortable histories illuminated. It is important to me that uncomfortable histories can remain in the public's memory; because, once they are forgotten, similar problems occur again. This exact issue is playing out currently in the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. In addition, I have a familial connection to the topic of unwed mothers in the 1970s. The oral interview that I conducted was with my family member, she was sent away from her family for the duration of her pregnancy and then forced to give her child up for adoption by her parents. After the presentation, I learned that her siblings did not know where she had gone until they saw the presentation, nearly 50 years after the event. When stories like these are not included in our histories it gives an incomplete picture of women's experience. Furthermore, policies based on such an incomplete vision of the past can only inadequately account

for the human experience. I hope my project can shed needed light on this subject and advance women's history.