

Call for Applications: Ruth Culbertson Samuelson Legacy Fund Summer Listening Tour/Policy Project

The Fund aims to empower Carolina undergraduate and dual bachelor-graduate public policy students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to become empathetic and trust-building public servants. The fund provides support for undergraduates or graduate students to participate in a “listening tour” policy research project over the summer. In Spring 2024, two awards will be granted in the amount of \$2,500 each.

The students selected will complete the following:

- Read “The Speed of Trust” [[link](#)]
- Interview 20 people with divergent perspectives who are affected by a specific issue or problem you are researching. Focus on people with a vision for how to tackle the problem.
- Follow three ground rules: Listen, record, and do not debate.
- Consider using the following strategic questions in your interviews:
 - Progress: If we were having this discussion three years from today, and you were to look back over those three years to today, what must happen for you to feel happy about the progress on the issue?
 - Dangers: What are the dangers in those three years that you are afraid will make things worse or move things backwards?
- Write a 5-10-page research brief. The brief should be submitted to the Student Services Specialist no later than the first day of classes of the following Fall term. The brief should include:
 - a short summary of the issue or topic you focused on;
 - a summary of your findings from your listening tour;
 - your reflections on your experience with the project;
 - a de-identified list of interviewees or categories of interviewees.

Interested students should send information as a zip file to the Committee (c/o UNC Public Policy Student Services Specialist, mercalb@unc.edu). Applications should include the following and be submitted by **April 15, 2024**.

- A letter of interest from the applicant with a brief (no more than 500-word) description of the nominee’s achievements and plan
- Resume/ CV
- Unofficial transcript
- A letter of support from a faculty member, internship supervisor, or other mentor

Ruth Culbertson Samuelson Legacy Fund – Summer Listening Tour/Policy Project

This fund was established to honor Ruth Samuelson's legacy and continue her life-long example of service and giving.

Ruth Samuelson (1959-2017) represented the 104th District of Mecklenburg County in the North Carolina House of Representatives for eight years. She began on the back row of the Chamber and through hard work rose the ranks to Majority Whip in 2010 and subsequently served as the first Republican Conference Leader, the fourth highest ranked position in the House. Her colleagues unanimously selected her in 2013 to serve another term as chairman for the Republican Caucus Campaign Committee after she guided the committee to its first supermajority status in NC's history. Ruth also presided as chairman of the House Banking Committee and the Environmental Rules Commission. She was vice-chairman of Environment and Public Utilities committees, and served on numerous others.

Prior to her House election, Rep. Samuelson was a Mecklenburg county commissioner. She was instrumental in the development of the Little Sugar Creek Greenway and its inclusion in the 113-mile Carolina Thread Trail. She received a bachelor's degree at UNC-Chapel Hill and earned her masters in negotiation by raising her children at home. Negotiation was her most practical skill: Ruth was often called upon to mediate differences on complex policy issues in the House, and she credited it for her abilities to often keep unity among the 77-member caucus during election season.

In January 2015, Ruth embarked on her passion of helping high-capacity donors clarify their philanthropic vision. She served as regional philanthropy advisor for Excellence in Giving, LLC helping people simplify options, leverage opportunities and maximize impact.