THE SIMMONS WORLD CHALLENGE

Simmons launched the innovative two-credit World Challenge course for sophomores in 2011 as part of the Strategy 2015 commitment to enhancing the undergraduate experience. It was an instant hit. The first World Challenge was designed for 15-20 students. The program was so popular that enrollment increased to 30 the second year.

Students spend two weeks of their winter break addressing a particular world problem such as poverty, hunger, or health. They study the issue and then work in teams to develop local solutions to the global problem.

The World Challenge provides a model for interdisciplinary, interactive teaching and learning. Students from all majors come together and contribute knowledge from their studies. Professors in fields ranging from management to social work act as faculty advisors for each team of students as they develop solutions.

The World Challenge program directly supports the strategic vision for Simmons “as a university with a global perspective built on research, scholarship, and teaching excellence.” It successfully addresses two specific objectives related to that goal:

• Re-imagine our curricula and the role of co-curricular life, and
• Encourage research, scholarship, and cross-discipline collaborations.

The program is currently designed for sophomores, but has faculty and teaching assistants from every Simmons school.

The cross-discipline collaboration adds tremendous depth and strength to students' research and scholarship. They gain a broader understanding and perspective on the issues at hand. They also learn the importance of both independent and team learning, making it a valuable building block for independent student projects in their senior year. In these ways, the World Challenge powerfully supports our immediate Strategy 2015 focus on enhancing the undergraduate experience.

2012 WORLD CHALLENGE

At the Edge of Poverty: Empowering Women to Change Their Lives and the World

THE CHALLENGE:
Create a high-impact, hands-on learning experience that is innovative, impactful, intense, and student driven.

THE COURSE:
Two weeks during January intersession – applied research for addressing real-world issues, concluding with a local solution to a global problem.

THE PARTICIPANTS:
Thirty sophomores from a wide range of majors working in nine teams.

THE FACULTY:
Collaborative, from across Simmons
• SOM: Team building, business plans
• CAS: Media, sustainability, public health
• SNHS: Nutrition, food security, disease
• GSLIS: Information access
• SSW: Contacting outside agencies, social justice

“This course was a true liberal arts experiment that I will remember forever. Although it was stressful and often difficult work, I am extremely proud of the finished product—not only the physical work, but also the intangible learning.”

– World Challenge 2011 participant
GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

- Endow and name the World Challenge in perpetuity
  $1.5 million

- Name the World Challenge for five years
  $250,000

- Fund stipends for participating students
  $60,000 per year

- Fund stipends for participating graduate assistants
  $30,000 per year

- Fund study-abroad scholarships that allow participants to take the World Challenge theme and study it in a selected city abroad
  $10,000

“A im now more confident in my ability to function as a member of a community and use my skills in a way that is effective.”
– World Challenge 2012 participant

A SAMPLE OF WORLD CHALLENGE 2012 SOLUTIONS:

Students 4 Success
Our students developed a full-day college workshop for high school girls in their junior year. The team created a full day’s curriculum in which students are encouraged to apply to college. They receive help with the common application and practice college interviewing and essay writing.

Corporate Social Responsibility Advertising Campaign
The team designed an advertising campaign that could be used by a major business to encourage employees to volunteer with non-profit organizations around Boston. The students produced an inspirational video and information packet to send to a human resources department.

Cookbook for women receiving aid from WIC (Women Infants and Children) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program)
The team created a cookbook with recipes using foods that women receiving aid from WIC and SNAP could purchase with their aid. They also wrote a health-information newsletter to be distributed at local Stop & Shop grocery stores.

Help for homeless LGBTQ Youth
The team built a website to spread awareness about the specific needs of homeless LGBTQ youth, and created a pamphlet with a list of resources—something local shelters could distribute.

Women’s Health Awareness
The team produced a video to raise awareness about the resources that currently exist for women who are pregnant or have experienced sexual violence. They created large posters that would be hung up at bus stops around the city directing women to these resources.

Transformative learning that links passion with lifelong purpose