

Title: Research Manager, Polaris Research Initiative Planning Grant

Position: Research Manager, Polaris Research Initiative Planning Grant
Department: Continuing Education (Polaris)
Full-time or Part-time: FT Exempt, One-Year Term Position
Hours per week: 35
Months per year: 12
Salary Range: \$79,000-85,000 (commensurate with education, experience, and professional credentials)
Work Schedule: Remote / Hybrid; PTS Office Hours
Reports to: Executive Director, Polaris Young Adult Christian Leadership Initiative
Submit application to: recruit.polaris@ptsem.edu

Job Purpose

The Polaris Young Adult Christian Leadership Initiative at Princeton Theological Seminary cultivates the faith, flourishing, and leadership formation of young adult Christian leaders across the United States while shaping the intellectual, institutional, and organizational landscape around young adult Christian faith formation and leadership development. The Research Manager is a one-year, grant-funded position that operationalizes the Polaris Research Initiative Planning Grant, working closely with the Polaris Senior Research team (Research Scholar, Polaris Executive Director, and Associate Dean of Continuing Education) to plan and execute the planning year and research proposal. This position manages invitations and logistics for a national network of scholars, researchers, and practitioners; coordinates a January 2027 convening and design sprint; organizes subsequent online sub-groups; and coordinates the writing and editorial teams that will shape Polaris's next major research initiative proposal. The Manager serves as an integral member of the research design and writing team. Reporting to the Executive Director, this role is essential to maintaining momentum and coherence across an interdisciplinary group of scholars, practitioners, and institutional stakeholders throughout the one-year planning grant period.

Essential Functions

Research Convening and Design Sprint Management – 30% of time

- Manage invitations and attendance for the January 2027 research convening and design sprint, coordinating with the Research Scholar and Polaris senior leadership to reach interdisciplinary scholars, researchers, and practitioners across sociology of religion, theology and practical theology, anthropology, psychology, ethics, and complementary fields.
- Network and build rapport with researchers across disciplines on behalf of Polaris at Princeton Seminary.
- Collaborate with the Events & Hospitality team to organize logistics for the four-day, in-person convening and design sprint in Princeton, including travel, lodging, meeting space, materials, and on-site hospitality for a large and diverse group of invitees.
- Prepare background materials, documents, and pre-convening resources that equip participants to engage the convening's core questions.
- Plan and host all research gatherings across the planning grant year, both online and in-person, extending invitations and managing logistics from the January design sprint through the submission of the research grant proposal.

- Coordinate the writing retreat and participate fully as a member of the writing team. Collaborate with internal and external editorial review teams to solicit and integrate feedback.
- Manage deadlines and deliverables.

Sub-Group and Research Partner Coordination – 25% of time

- Organize and support the online sub-groups that begin during the January convening and continue after, ensuring selected Research Partners are equipped to facilitate their groups.
- Ensure preliminary researchers and sub-groups have the resources, scheduling support, and follow-up needed to complete their individual and shared tasks.
- Support the planning year's qualitative studies, coordinating with the contracted research vendor on data capture and synthesis from the research convening and design sprint.
- Serve as a primary point of contact for Research Partners, the External Review Team, and Design Sprint Convening participants throughout the planning grant.
- Strengthen relationships for future collaboration in the Polaris Research Initiative.

Writing and Editorial Team Coordination – 20% of time

- Coordinate the Writing Team (Research Scholar, Associate Dean of Continuing Education, Executive Director, and Research Manager, plus any additional honorarium-supported writer) as it drafts the full Polaris Research Initiative proposal, tracking timelines and deliverables.
- Serve as an active member of the Writing Team, contributing to the drafting and shaping of the full research initiative proposal. Manage contributors and their deadlines.
- Coordinate the Internal Editorial Team and liaise with the External Review Team to gather, track, and integrate feedback on proposal drafts to ensure timely grant submission in fall 2027.
- Support the research vendor's synthesis of design sprint learnings into materials usable by the writing and editorial teams.

Administrative and Grant Support – 15% of time

- Track planning grant deliverables, timelines, and budget in coordination with the Executive Director and Continuing Education Business Manager.
- Maintain accurate and organized records of participant communications, convening materials, and planning grant documentation.
- Draft planning grant progress updates, narrative content, and reports for the Executive Director and funder reporting as requested.

Institutional Collaboration – 5% of time

- Connect with Princeton Seminary faculty and staff to cultivate buy-in and participation in the research design process.
- Collaborate with Polaris core leadership to ensure the research initiative planning grant remains integrated with and informed by the broader Polaris Young Adult Christian Leadership Initiative.

Qualifications and Skills

- Master's degree in theology, religious studies, sociology of religion, higher education administration, or a related field required; Doctorate in practical theology or similar preferred.
- Minimum 5 years of experience in research administration, program coordination, project management, or grant administration, ideally in the context of theological education.
- Demonstrated ability to coordinate complex, multi-stakeholder projects involving numerous scholars, practitioners, and institutional partners on tight timelines.
- Familiarity with the landscape of young adult Christian faith, leadership formation, and theological education strongly preferred.

- Experience supporting qualitative or mixed-methods research processes, including work with external vendors or consultants.
- Excellent organizational skills with superb attention to detail; demonstrated ability to manage detailed logistics for numerous concurrent convenings and deadlines.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including experience preparing background materials, briefing documents, and reports for varied audiences.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office 365 and project management tools (Monday, Asana, or similar); experience with CRM systems (Salesforce) a plus.
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, with experience working effectively across diverse racial, ethnic, denominational, and disciplinary communities.
- This position is remote but requires regular travel to for gatherings and writing projects as needed.

Other duties as assigned.

Physical / Environmental Demands

Ability to be mobile with any needed accommodation. Works primarily in a remote office environment; lifts up to 20 lbs. Remains in a stationary position approximately 50% of the time; wrist and hand movement related to computer work. Position requires occasional evening availability for online gatherings and travel to Princeton, NJ for in-person convenings during the planning grant year.

Prepared by Shari Oosting, September 2026