

Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship, 2017-18 cycle *Guidelines for nominating schools and nominees*

The Whiting Foundation invites selected schools to nominate up to two humanities professors for the [Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship](#). This pilot program, now in its second year, is designed to celebrate and support faculty who embrace public engagement as part of the scholarly vocation.

We believe that those who devote their professional lives to the study and teaching of the humanities are in a unique position to contribute to public understanding. **This fellowship aims to identify professors with a demonstrated commitment to using their intellectual expertise to reach wider audiences and to fund ambitious projects designed to have direct and significant impact on a specific public outside the academy.**

Over time, we hope the program will amplify the voices of scholars who take up the challenge of engaging the public, build a community of faculty dedicated to this form of service, and ultimately help to restore broader faith in the value and contribution of advanced work in the humanities.

Information about the fellows selected in the first cycle is available [online](#).

What does the fellowship consist of?

A fellowship of \$40,000 will be provided to fund six consecutive months of leave; an additional stipend of up to \$10,000 will be made available to cover project costs such as travel, collaboration, technology, and training – any cost reasonably necessary for the success of the project is eligible.

(This is the default model. Note that nominees may propose in the application an alternative use for the \$50,000 fellowship – e.g., course release over more than one term, or more of the funds directed toward project costs – if the default model is not the most effective way to further the candidate’s public-facing project. Our goal is to provide the support that will best advance the work.)

Fellows may choose to take the leave in the fall of 2017 or the spring of 2018 (or both, if the fellow and home institution agree). All fellows will participate in two convenings, one each in the summers of 2017 and 2018, and provide a brief final report at the end of the fellowship.

In cases where the \$40,000 grant does not fully cover half of the nominee’s annual salary and benefits, the Foundation expects that the home institution will ensure that the fellow continues to receive full benefits without interruption. The Public Engagement Fellowship can be taken consecutively with institutional or other grant-supported leave if the nominating institution approves.

Who is eligible to be nominated?

Institutions may nominate either or both of the following:

- One humanities professor who took up tenure between fall 2011 and fall 2016; and
- One full-time, untenured humanities professor with at least two full years of service.

Nominees advancing to the second, final round will be asked to submit a letter from the institution describing the school’s nomination process and indicating the institution’s and department’s support.

The fellowship is designed for professors whose expertise and proposed project are both squarely in the humanities. The Humanities Indicators Project has compiled a [useful list](#) of humanities disciplines. For the purpose of this fellowship, we distinguish between the interpretive humanities and the creative arts. For example, a professor proposing to choreograph a new dance piece would not be eligible, though one proposing a film on the history and meaning of the work of a choreographer would be.

What kinds of public-facing work will be supported?

A nominee can propose to work on any ambitious project, new or ongoing, that is designed to address a specific audience beyond the academy in an intellectually rigorous way. We are focused not on work that is simply *relevant* and/or technically *accessible* to a public but on projects conceived and executed to *reach* and *engage* them.

The strongest candidates will bring to bear the richness, profundity, and nuance that give the humanities their lasting value. They will have designed their projects thoughtfully with a public in mind and have a sensible plan to capture that public's attention – without assuming that an audience will automatically materialize. They will demonstrate mastery of any relevant skills beyond intellectual acumen and subject-area knowledge required for the project's success (e.g., technological, curatorial, or pedagogical expertise) – or articulate clearly how they will either acquire those skills or collaborate with others who have them. Ideally, candidates will have shown an orientation toward public engagement in previous work, although we anticipate that some fellows will not yet have deep experience in this area.

Opportunities to contribute to public life and understanding vary considerably based on a scholar's expertise, interests, and talents, and they are not restricted to those who study the topics most obviously connected to contemporary political, cultural, or social debates. We hope to support Fellows working from many different *disciplines, periods, and perspectives*.

We also hope to support Fellows who, taken as a group, use a variety of *methods* to engage the public; however, more important than the medium chosen is the ability to connect in an intellectually rich and compelling way. Illustrative examples include, but by no means are limited to:

- Working with a local station to launch a *live radio show and/or podcast* bringing the English Romantic poets or the Harlem Renaissance to a wide listenership
- Developing *curriculum modules for grades 6-12* on the history and culture of East Asia, along with a plan to disseminate them effectively
- Contributing to the research for and creation of a *documentary film* on Elizabethan theater
- Creating a *series of public programs* exploring existential philosophy, the history of sculpture in Latin American painting, or an aspect of ancient Egyptian society
- Writing and placing *articles in mainstream online or print publications* on the history of science
- Curating an *exhibit at an off-campus museum or gallery* on an aspect of race in American history
- Designing and implementing a *series of professional development workshops for high school teachers* of Latin to discuss recent scholarship on the ancient world and consider how they might incorporate it in their pedagogy

The plan to complete the project should be thoroughly fleshed out, though work need not yet be underway. We recognize that the amount of time required to bring a project to completion will vary considerably. Nominees may certainly propose work that will not be finished within the fellowship

period, though they should be in a position to make significant progress on it through the concentrated attention allowed by the fellowship. If a project requires more time to complete, the application should make clear how the fellowship term will fit into the overall timeline.

What are the selection process, timeline, and criteria?

Institutions should submit the names of their nominees to fellowships@whiting.org no later than August 15, 2016. Nominees will be asked to complete a short-form application by September 1, 2016, providing a project precis and concise answers to several targeted questions. The application portal is online [here](#); a cheat sheet to the questions is included as an appendix. No letters of support are required at this stage. Applicants will be notified of the results of this first round in mid-September.

Nominees invited to the second, final round will be asked for a modestly expanded version of the application incorporating feedback provided by reviewers in the first stage, as well as letters of recommendation and institutional support, by October 24, 2016. Applicants will be notified of the results of this final round of review in February 2017.

Applications will be peer-reviewed by a committee of distinguished humanities scholars and public humanists from across the disciplines. The committee will consider the following three criteria:

- A. *Intellectual value.*** Will the project make a meaningful intellectual contribution with its audience, engaging them in the complexity and nuance of humanistic learning?

This metric is about clarity, thoughtfulness, and profundity. Note that this standard is different from that used by peer-reviewed academic journals: although the project should be intellectually robust and contain the richness that characterizes excellent scholarship, it need not – and in many cases will not – make an original contribution to disciplinary conversations.

- B. *Potential to engage the intended public.*** Is the project conceived with an audience outside the academy in mind and designed carefully to reach them? How significantly will the project affect them, in terms of breadth (e.g., size of the public) and depth (e.g., level of engagement)?

This metric is about the form of the project, its fitness to engage the intended public, and the effectiveness of the outreach plan – ultimately, it is about how *compelling* the project will be. The language of the proposal can also provide useful evidence that the candidate understands how to interact effectively with a non-scholarly audience.

- C. *Ability to complete the project successfully.*** Does the candidate have the skills, support, and collaboration needed to execute the project effectively in the timeframe proposed?

This metric is about the full range of expertise required for a public-facing project, including not only intellectual acumen and subject-matter expertise but also various technical skills, collaborations, and support that are crucial for success. These vary from project to project; see the notes to question three in the short-form application below for more detailed examples.

Where should questions be directed?

Because this second pilot year is an opportunity for us to understand how to improve the program in future rounds, we encourage nominating schools and nominees to reach out to us at any point in the process with questions or comments. These should be directed to fellowships@whiting.org.

APPENDIX – Guide to the short-form application

The online portal for the short-form application is linked through <http://www.whiting.org/WPEF17>. The major components are outlined below. In addition, candidates will be asked to upload a current CV and may choose to upload a short sample of public-facing work, if applicable.

1. *Project precis* (up to 250 words): Provide a summary of your proposed project, indicating the subject matter, the form it will take, and your desired outcomes. In addition, indicate the project's current status and, if applicable, describe any work already completed. Note that "project" here refers not to your broader intellectual project but the public-facing project you would advance during the fellowship period.
2. *Intended public and plan for outreach* (up to 200 words): Identify the segment of the public you intend to engage through your fellowship project and describe your plan to ensure that you reach them. Be sure to make clear, in language compelling to a non-specialist, why the project will be engaging to the public you have chosen. Bear in mind the difficulty of capturing attention in our media-saturated world; we are looking for evidence not just that your project will be available to a public but that they will be moved to participate in and be affected by it. We are also looking for evidence that you have thought through the ways you will adapt your approach for your intended public – and that you have selected that public carefully.
3. *Technical skills* (up to 200 words): Any public-facing project draws not only on the intellectual acumen and subject-matter expertise that will be clear from your CV but also on skills less obviously associated with traditional academic work. We are calling these latter skills "technical." For example,
 - For digital projects, technical skills may include expertise such as coding or web design;
 - For podcasts or films, they may include mastery of recording technology or distribution;
 - For public programming, they may include exhibition design or event marketing;
 - For educational projects aimed at primary or secondary school students, they may include pedagogical knowledge tailored to the appropriate grade level;
 - For the writing of a book or articles for the general public, they may include accessible style and understanding of how to structure work for non-academic readership; and
 - For all projects, they will likely include adapting communication to bring to bear intellectual depth in a non-scholarly form for an audience outside the academy.

Indicate the technical skills required for the success of your project and describe how you have demonstrated, will acquire, or will collaborate with someone who has expertise in each of them.

4. *Collaborators* (optional; up to 200 words): Identify any partners who will be critical to the success of the project, if applicable. Describe their qualifications, your plan to work with them, and the current status of your relationship (e.g., not yet contacted, in conversation, firmly committed). If you plan to seek out collaborators you have not yet identified, please indicate what kind of people or organizations they might be.

5. *Timeline* (up to 200 words): Indicate the broad timeframe for your project, including the timing of any major milestones. If the project will not be completed in the term of the fellowship, be sure to indicate how that term fits into the larger timeline. Note that projects may already be in progress when the fellowship begins and need not be finished during the fellowship period, but we expect that substantial progress will be made through the concentrated attention it allows.
6. *Use of funds* (up to 200 words): By default, the fellowship takes the form of \$40,000 to your institution to secure a semester (or six months) of leave, plus a stipend of up to \$10,000 to cover project-related costs (e.g., travel, collaboration, tech, program costs). If you are following this model, please summarize the main costs aside from your time and indicate which, up to \$10,000, you wish to cover with the stipend during the fellowship. If you wish to propose an alternative model for the fellowship funding (e.g., course release over more than one semester, or directing more of the funds to project costs), please describe how you would like to use the funds. Either way, please also list any other sources of funding you have secured or intend to pursue for the work, if applicable.
7. *Biographical highlights* (optional; up to 200 words): If you have experience relevant to your fellowship project that is not included or fully described on your CV, or if you would like to highlight any relevant experience, please do so here.