

Hall Center for the Humanities

WHITING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM – KU INTERNAL COMPETITION

The Whiting Foundation has invited the University of Kansas to nominate two humanities scholars, one for a Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship (\$50,000) and one for a Seed Grant (\$10,000). The Hall Center for the Humanities has been tasked with the internal competition to select the nominees.

INTERNAL COMPETITION DEADLINE: No later than April 30th at 5:00 p.m. Submit applications via email to Kathy Porsch at kporsch@ku.edu.

Applications must include:

- 1. The completed Application Form**
- 2. Applicant's current CV**

Timeline: KU nominees are expected to work with the Humanities Grant Development Office to meet the **June 15th application deadline** for the pre-proposal stage of the national competition. Nominees will be notified of their results in mid-August. By November 2, those invited to proceed to the final stage must submit full applications in which they expand on the answers they gave in the short-form applications. Finalists will be notified of the results in February 2019. Please see attached appendix for details.

Eligibility: Must have been a full-time KU humanities faculty member for at least two academic years as of September 2018 and be untenured, pre-tenure, or have started their first tenured semester no earlier than September 2013.

Projects will be selected based on the following criteria:

- *Potential to engage the intended public:* Is the project conceived with an audience outside the academy in mind and carefully designed to reach them? Is the plan to reach that public explicit and robust? How significant will the engagement be in terms of breadth and depth?
- *Ability to complete the project successfully:* Is the project management plan sound, detailed, and tailored to achieve the intended outcomes? Does the candidate have the necessary skills and resources, and collaborators with the expertise needed to execute the project effectively in the timeframe?
- *Intellectual value:* Will the project make a meaningful intellectual contribution with its audience, engaging them in the complexity and nuance of the humanities? Does the project bring to bear the clarity, thoughtfulness, and profundity that characterize the best scholarship? Does the nominee have an outstanding history of research and teaching that lends itself to the proposed project?

The Public Engagement Fellowship of \$50,000 is for projects far enough into development or execution to present specific, compelling evidence that they will successfully engage the intended public. For the strongest Fellowship proposals, both the overall strategy and the practical plan to implement the project will be deeply developed, relationships with key collaborators will be in place, and connections with the intended public will have been cultivated. In some cases, the nominee and collaborators may have tested the idea in a pilot, or the project itself may already be underway (see attachment for details).

The Public Engagement Seed Grant of up to \$10,000 supports projects at an earlier stage of development, before the nominee has been able to establish a specific track record of success for the proposed public-facing work. It is not, however, designed for projects starting entirely from scratch: nominees should have fleshed out a compelling vision, including a clear sense of whose collaboration will be required and the ultimate scope and outcomes. They should have articulated specific short-term next steps required to advance the project and show they understand the resources required to complete them. A recipient might use the grant, for example, to test the project on a smaller scale or to engage deeply with collaborators or the intended public (see attachment for details).

If you have questions, please contact Kathy Porsch at kporsch@ku.edu.

WHITING INTERNAL APPLICATION FORM

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____

Email: _____

Department: _____

Phone: _____

Eligibility: I am a (choose one)

- a full-time untenured or pre-tenure humanities faculty member with at least two full years of employment
- a full-time tenured faculty member in the humanities who began the first semester of tenure between Fall 2013 and Fall 2018

Competition: I am submitting a proposal for a (choose one)

- Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship
- Whiting Public Engagement Seed Grant

Name of Department Chair: _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Title of Proposed Project: _____

Project Overview (text limited to 300 words) Provide a compelling summary of your public-facing project, making clear the humanities content, intended public audience, form of engagement, and key partners, activities, and desired outcomes. Indicate the project’s status and any work already completed.

Collaborators (text limited to 200 words) Identify any critical partners and describe their qualifications, specific role(s), 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, indicate what kinds of people or organizations they might be. If collaboration is not relevant to the project, enter N/A.

Existing work on similar subjects or in similar media (text limited to 200 words) Describe the competitive field for your proposed project. What gaps exist in the field, and how does your project work to fill them? How does your project fill a need? Demonstrate your understanding of other work that is available on similar topics or in similar media. Show that you understand the options facing your intended public and have a sensible approach to distinguish your project as a compelling alternative.

Intended public audience and engagement plan (text limited to 200 words) Specify the segment of the public you intend to engage through your fellowship project and describe your plan to reach them, including the channels you will use. Show 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. Make clear, in language compelling to a non-specialist, why the project will be engaging to the chosen public. Show that you have thought through how you will adapt your approach for your intended public – and that you have selected that public carefully.

Technical skills (text limited 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. Indicate the skills required for the project to succeed and describe how you have demonstrated expertise in each or will collaborate with someone who has.

Timeline (text limited to 200 words) Indicate the timeline for your project, including the timing of any major milestones. If the project will not be completed in the term of the fellowship, indicate how the fellowship term fits into the larger timeline. Projects may already be in progress when the fellowship begins and need not be finished during the fellowship period, but awardees should make substantial progress during the tenure of the Whiting award.

Budget (text limited to 200 words) Any reasonably necessary cost is eligible. For example, Fellowship nominees may propose funds be allocated for course releases, for a semester or more of leave, for travel, for targeted training crucial to the project for themselves or others, for required equipment or supplies, and for collaborators' time or work on the project.

Whiting Public Engagement Programs, 2019-20 cycle *Guidelines for nominators and nominees*

The Whiting Foundation invites selected schools and scholarly societies to nominate for the **Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship** and **Seed Grant**. These programs are intended to celebrate and empower faculty who embrace public engagement as part of the scholarly vocation. At their best, the humanities bring to the public the kind of careful inquiry and deep context that enriches our understanding, helps us interpret the world around us, and makes our lives more meaningful. Over time, we hope the programs will help build a diverse community of faculty dedicated to this form of service and underscore just how essential advanced work in the humanities is to the health of our society.

Partner schools are invited to nominate one humanities professor for each of these two programs - a school may choose to participate in both programs or in only one. To be eligible for either program, nominees must have been full-time humanities faculty for at least two academic years as of September 2018; they must be pre-tenure, untenured, or have received tenure in the last five years.¹ Descriptions of the humanities fields and kinds of “public-facing” projects we support are included below in the eligibility section. Invited schools and societies should inform the Foundation of the names of their nominee(s) by June 8 via email to publicengagement@whiting.org; complete applications including budgets are due through the [online portal](#) by June 15. Finalists will be asked for a letter from the school describing the nomination process and indicating the institution’s and department’s support.

About the Fellowship and the Seed Grant

These two programs are entirely separate: aspiring fellows need not have received a Seed Grant, and receiving a Seed Grant does not automatically qualify a grantee for a future Fellowship. Both programs support ambitious projects infusing into public life the richness, profundity, and nuance that give the humanities their lasting value. The *stage* of a project will determine the relevant program. We anticipate awarding up to seven Fellowships and up to ten Seed Grants in this cycle.

The **Public Engagement Fellowship** of \$50,000, now in its fourth cycle, is for projects far enough into development or execution to present specific, compelling evidence that they will successfully engage the intended public. For the strongest Fellowship proposals, both the overall strategy and the practical plan to implement the project will be deeply developed, relationships with key collaborators will be in place, and connections with the intended public will have been cultivated. In some cases, the nominee and collaborators may have tested the idea in a pilot, or the project itself may already be underway.

The **Public Engagement Seed Grant** of up to \$10,000, incorporated formally for the first time in this cycle, supports projects at a somewhat earlier stage of development than the Fellowship, before the nominee has been able to establish a specific track record of success for the proposed public-facing work. It is not, however, designed for projects starting entirely from scratch: nominees should have fleshed out a compelling vision, including a clear sense of whose collaboration will be required and the ultimate scope and outcomes. They should also have articulated specific short-term next steps required to advance the project and understand the resources required to complete them. We anticipate that a recipient might use the grant, for example, to test the project on a smaller scale or to engage deeply with collaborators or the intended public.

¹ That is, at or after the end of academic year 2012-13. This timing refers to the professor’s first receipt of tenure, even if it occurred at a different institution.

The programs are designed to be flexible. Nominees may propose to direct funds however will best meet the needs of the project.² In the past, recipients have allocated funds for purposes including:

- To support collaborators (individuals or organizations) for their time or work on the project;
- To purchase required equipment and supplies;
- To cover necessary travel for the fellow or collaborators;
- To obtain targeted training crucial to the project for themselves or others; and
- To secure time, in the form of course release or longer leaves, if the project's needs warrant.³

Eligible fields and public-facing approaches

These programs deliberately cast a wide net, reflecting the breadth of the humanities and their potential for public engagement. We hope to support humanists who are expert in many different fields and a set of public-facing projects that use a variety of approaches, media, and methods. We encourage applicants to review the projects of [previous fellows](#) and [2018-19 seed grantees](#) as illustrative examples.

Humanities fields: disciplines, periods, and perspectives

Our peer reviewers are looking for nominees whose proposed projects and professional expertise are both squarely in the humanities. The [Humanities Indicators Project](#)'s list of disciplines is a useful starting point, though note that for these programs a) projects designed to develop literacy or creative writing skills *are not* eligible; b) projects stemming from cultural anthropology *are* eligible; and c) we distinguish interpretive humanities from creative arts, so a proposal to choreograph a new dance piece would not be eligible but one to create a film on the history and meaning of a choreographer's work would be.

The programs encompass the full range of the humanities. We have found that scholars whose work has direct connections to topics that appear frequently in today's headlines are well represented in our applicant pool, which reflects the importance of bringing humanistic content and methodologies to bear on the most urgent public questions. Because we see fewer applications from scholars whose subjects are not so clearly topical, we especially welcome nominations of such faculty.

Approaches to public engagement: methods and media

A nominee can propose to use the funds from these programs for nearly any ambitious public-facing project, new or ongoing, drawing on the humanities. Projects should be designed primarily to engage one or more specific publics beyond the academy. Although we recognize that professors' first and most important public is their students, these programs are aimed at initiatives reaching beyond faculty members' daily working environment – that is, beyond their fellow scholars and students. The nominee should play a significant leadership role in the project, but intensive collaboration is encouraged where that is useful; most forms of public engagement rely on such partnership. Note that the programs *do not* currently cover public-facing writing, which the Foundation supports in other ways.

² Universities sometimes deduct "institutional indirect costs" from grants awarded to their faculty before passing on the remainder to the grantee. For these programs, such institutional indirect costs are not allowed.

³ Please note that fellows are not required to use any of the funds to secure leave. For applicants who choose to do so, the rate paid by the fellowship to an institution for a semester of leave is up to \$40,000 (of the total \$50,000); in cases where that does not fully cover half of the nominee's salary and benefits, the Foundation expects that the institution will ensure the fellow continues to receive both without interruption. (This amount will be pro-rated for schools on a quarter system.) Any leave of a semester or more must be taken by the end of summer 2020.

We have found that most proposals fit into one or more of the following categories in terms of how they approach the public, each of which demands somewhat different skills from recipients and/or collaborators. A project in any category could be primarily analog or digital or combine both.

- *Public programming projects*, including exhibits, public conversations, or walking tours. The ability to translate expertise into the relevant format in a way that will truly engage the intended public is crucial, as are skills and connections that will bring the public to the programs.
- *Community-engagement projects* involving members of a defined public as co-creators, for example through oral history or community curation. Deep relationships within and commitments from the community are crucial, as is an understanding of the relevant culture.
- *K-12-focused projects*, including the development of classroom resources and participatory projects with students and teachers. Expertise in the relevant pedagogy is crucial; typically, the strongest projects involve teachers as close collaborators in both design and execution.
- *Audiovisual projects*, including podcasts, apps, and films. The ability to frame a narrative and articulate complex ideas in a compelling way is crucial, as is expertise in the relevant technology and in distribution; typically, collaborator(s) are needed to contribute some of these skills.

In addition to previous recipients' projects, a few illustrations include: the design and presentation of a compelling physical or online exhibit on an important but less-well-known aspect of the history of science or the Harlem Renaissance, along with an engagement plan; an intensive partnership with a local community to unearth and disseminate digitally a significant aspect of its own history; the creation of a series of podcasts or in-person public programs exploring existential philosophy or the history of sculpture in Latin America; and a set of professional development workshops for high school teachers to bring recent scholarship on the ancient world or Elizabethan theater to bear on pedagogy and curricula.

Selection process, timeline, and criteria

The timing of the two-stage peer-review process is as follows:

- *Jun 8*: Deadline for institutions to submit nominee name(s) by e-mail.
- *Jun 15*: Deadline for nominees to complete the first-round application online [here](#).
- *Mid-Aug*: Applicants will be notified of the results of the first round. Finalists will be asked to revise and expand their applications, incorporating feedback from the reviewers, and provide letters of recommendation and institutional support.
- *Nov 2*: Deadline for final-round applications from finalists.
- *Mid-Feb 2019*: Finalists will be notified of the results.

Applications will be peer-reviewed by a committee of distinguished humanists from across the disciplines serving anonymously. They will consider the following criteria, which apply to both programs:

- Potential to engage the intended public.*** Is the project conceived with a public outside the academy in mind and designed carefully to engage them? Is the plan to reach that public explicit and robust? How significant will the engagement be, in terms of breadth and depth?
- Ability to complete the project successfully.*** Is the project management plan sound, detailed, and tailored to achieve the intended outcomes? Does the candidate have the skills, resources, and collaborators with the expertise needed to execute the project effectively in the timeframe?
- Intellectual value.*** Will the project make a meaningful intellectual contribution with its audience, engaging them in the complexity and nuance of the humanities? Does it bring to bear the clarity, thoughtfulness, and profundity that characterize the best scholarship?

Appendix - Advice for preparing proposals

We believe that those who devote their professional lives to the study and teaching of the humanities have unique and valuable expertise to contribute to public-facing projects. We also understand that such projects unfold quite differently from other aspects of the life of a scholar, requiring different partnerships and skills that must be honed through experience. Because nominees may not have written proposals for this sort of work before, we offer a few suggestions from reviewers in previous cycles.

Talk about logistics: One thing that sets this application apart from those of many other humanities grants is the importance of logistics. Applicants should show that they and their collaborators have designed the project in a way that responds to the complexities of public-facing work and incorporates realistic assessments of time and effort required of different participants. Clear descriptions of project activities, outcomes, and plans to address anticipated challenges will help give the judges confidence that the applicant has the project management skills necessary for the specific work being proposed.

Don't assume your public will engage: We are focused not on work that is simply *relevant* and/or *accessible* to a public but conceived and executed with the explicit purpose of *reaching* and *engaging* that public. The strongest candidates will have designed their projects with deep knowledge of their intended public (or even in partnership with them) and have a cogent plan to reach and persuade them to participate fully. Some applicants fall short by not demonstrating that they have thought carefully about how to convince busy people to spend time engaging with a project; or because they simply assume that an audience for, say, a website or public program will automatically materialize; or because they haven't demonstrated that they can speak compellingly with non-scholars about the content.

Know the collaborators you'll need: Collaboration is the lifeblood of public-facing projects. The variety of work involved generally means they cannot be completed effectively alone. Of course, the kind of partners who should be involved varies. Previous recipients have worked closely with teachers, community leaders, designers, museums and historical sites, technologists, filmmakers, community nonprofits, and others. Seed Grant applicants should have identified suitable partners and begun conversations; for especially crucial partners, they may have secured agreements to participate. Fellowship applicants should have key partnerships in place. Funds can and often should be used to support collaborators' time and expenses. Applicants should have a significant leadership role in the project but need not have originated the idea. If you are not familiar with the work of your [state humanities council](#), investigate it; the councils have deep experience with public humanities.

Show you understand the landscape: Understanding the context in which a project will be implemented is as important to the success of public-facing work as it is to scholarship. In terms of *form*, no approach to public engagement will be entirely new, and in many cases there are entire professions or sub-disciplines dedicated to a given kind of work (e.g., oral history, podcast production). Applicants should show that they have informed themselves about best practices and, where appropriate, that they will partner with others who have deep expertise in a relevant area. In terms of *content*, applicants should show a firm grasp of how much the public is likely to know about a topic and where within that topic its interests likely lie, and it should meet them where they are as a starting point.

Specify the skills the project requires: Any public-facing project draws not only on the intellectual acumen and subject-matter expertise that will be clear from an applicant's CV but also on skills less central to traditional academic work. Applicants should state the non-academic skills required for success and show they either have mastered them or will collaborate with someone who has. Here are a few examples of what we mean: exhibition design, event marketing, coding, web design, use of recording technology, understanding of film distribution networks, pedagogy tailored to a specific K-12 age group, and ability to structure narrative and communicate effectively with a non-academic public.