Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship
Guidelines for nominating schools and nominees

The Whiting Foundation invites selected colleges and universities to nominate a recently-tenured professor in the humanities for the Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship, a pilot program 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 scholarly expertise to reach wider audiences. It funds at least six consecutive months of leave for work on an ambitious project designed to have direct and significant impact on a specific public outside the academy.

If successful over time, 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 of advanced work in the humanities.

Who is eligible?

Professors in the humanities who received tenure between fall 2010 and fall 2015 are eligible to be nominated. Ideal candidates will have demonstrated an orientation toward public engagement through previous work, although we anticipate that most fellows will not have deep experience in this area.

The Humanities Indicators Project has compiled a useful list of disciplines that are included in the category of the humanities, although individual scholars doing clearly humanistic work in social-science fields such as cultural anthropology are also eligible. 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 by drawing on the nominee’s broad scholarly expertise in a 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.

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; more important than the medium chosen is the ability to connect in an intellectually rich and compelling way. Illustrative examples include, but are by no means limited to:

- Writing a deeply researched book for a general audience on a topic in contemporary philosophy
- Writing and placing articles in a mainstream online or print magazine on the history of science
- Contributing to the research for and creation of a documentary film on Elizabethan theater
The plan to complete a 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.

Although this program is structured as an individual fellowship, we recognize that potential projects may require significant collaboration with individual or organizational partners. Such projects are certainly eligible, as long as they can benefit substantially from the concentrated work of the fellow, and the stipend may be used for costs associated with collaboration. For projects in this vein, any critical relationships should be in place by the time the application is submitted, even if a formal commitment has not yet been made. For example, if a nominee proposes to develop a radio show, she should have an understanding with a partner station, although it might be contingent on receipt of the fellowship.

**What does the fellowship consist of?**

A fellowship of $40,000 will be provided to fund six consecutive months of leave, and 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. Fellows may choose to take the leave in the fall of 2016 or the spring of 2017 (or both, if the fellow and her home institution agree). All fellows will participate in two convenings, one each in the summers of 2016 and 2017, 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 the fellow continues to receive his or her full benefits without interruption. The Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship can be taken consecutively with institutional or other grant-supported leave, if the nominating institution approves.

**What are the selection process, timeline, and criteria?**

Approximately forty schools have been invited to nominate one candidate each. We encourage schools to select nominees using an internal version of the Foundation’s review process described below.

Nominees should complete the online application form by October 15, 2015. Applications will be peer-reviewed by a committee of distinguished humanities scholars and public humanists from across the disciplines. The 2016-17 fellows they select will be notified in February 2016.
The committee will consider each project in light of the following three criteria:

- **Intellectual significance**: Does the project make use of the nominee’s scholarly expertise in a rigorous way? Will the project make a meaningful intellectual contribution for its audience, conveying the complexity and nuance of humanistic learning? Does the nominee have an outstanding history of intellectual accomplishment that lends itself to the proposed project? 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 of the best scholarship, it need not make an original contribution to disciplinary knowledge.

- **Anticipated public impact**: Is the project conceived with an audience outside the academy in mind and designed thoughtfully to engage them? Is the form of the project suited to its topic and audience? How significantly will the project affect the public, in terms of both breadth (e.g., size of the audience) and depth (e.g., level of engagement)? Does the nominee have a clear plan to reach the intended audience(s)? Has the nominee demonstrated an ability to speak effectively to broader audiences in the application and in previous work?

- **Feasibility**: Does the nominee have the qualifications to complete the work proposed during the timeline laid out in the application, with substantial progress made during the fellowship term? Is the project itself manageable, taking into account any work the nominee has already done? If success depends on collaborators or another third party, does the proposal include persuasive evidence that the collaboration will be effective?

**What does the application consist of and where and when can it be filled out?**

Each nominee should complete an application form by **midnight EST on October 15, 2015** on the online portal linked through [http://www.whiting.org/WPEF](http://www.whiting.org/WPEF). The portal will go live by September 15. Letters from nominating institutions, references, and (if applicable) collaborators should be submitted by the same deadline; applicants can upload them directly or supply the e-mail address of the external party who will provide the letter. Applicants using the latter method should submit their applications in advance of October 15 to ensure their nominator, references, or collaborators have time to upload their letters before the deadline. Please note that the online portal will automatically shut down at midnight.

The major components requested in the online application form are:

1. **Project description** (up to 5 single-spaced pages): Describe how you would use the fellowship leave and stipend, with special attention to the selection criteria laid out above. Include the following sections, as applicable:
   - **Summary**: Describe the project, intended audience, and desired outcomes. Be sure to make clear, in language compelling to a non-specialist, why the project will be engaging to the public you have chosen. In addition, indicate the project’s current status and, if applicable, describe any work already completed; describe your plan to reach the target audience; note the project’s connection to your scholarly expertise; and describe how you will know if the project succeeds.
   - **Timeline**: Lay out the main activities and anticipated timeline for completing your project. If the project will not be completed within 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.
o **Budget** (if applicable): If there are significant costs associated with the project aside from your time (e.g., travel, collaboration, tech, program costs), summarize them and indicate which, up to $10,000, you wish to cover with the stipend during the fellowship. Please also list any other sources of funding you have secured or intend to pursue for the work, if applicable. The project portion of the award will be based on this budget.

o **Collaboration** (if applicable): Identify any partners who will be critical to the success of the project and the nature of your discussions or work with them so far. You may submit letters of support from up to two key collaborators indicating the nature of their participation. This is optional but highly encouraged if your project depends on the involvement of another individual or organization.

2. **Role of public engagement in your career** (up to 1 single-spaced page): Describe how you see engagement of a public beyond the academy as part of your career. For example, include any previous experience you have reaching audiences outside the academy and discuss how public engagement may fit into your future work.

3. **Resume / CV**: Include a concise CV highlighting your scholarly work most relevant to the project and any previous public-engagement experience, if applicable.

4. **Biographical questionnaire**: The online submission form will request the usual biographical and professional information.

5. **References**: Please request two letters of reference to be submitted by October 15. Taken together, they should address both the intellectual merits of your previous scholarship and your ability to communicate with an audience outside your field. The online submission form will request the e-mail addresses of your references and will automatically send them a link to use to upload their letters.

6. **Nomination letter**: Your dean or provost should provide a short letter of nomination. The online submission form will request the e-mail address of your dean or provost and will automatically send a link to use to upload this letter, which should:
   - Indicate that the school has selected you
   - Briefly describe the internal nomination process
   - Confirm your current role at the school and when you received tenure
   - Confirm that the school will provide normal fringe benefits during the fellowship and briefly enumerate them
   - Indicate whether the fellowship leave will be instead of or in addition to any additional leave for which you would otherwise be eligible
   - Describe any support the school will provide for the proposed work
   - Lay out your department or institution’s criteria for promotion to full professor and the role your project may play in that process

**Where should questions and drafts be directed?**

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

Nominees who wish to submit a draft of the first and/or second application components for comment may e-mail them with a CV to fellowships@whiting.org by October 1. Foundation staff will provide feedback within a week of receipt. This is entirely optional.