

The City and the Campus: Models for Becoming the University *for* Portland

Faculty Development Day 2023 Proposal

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Proposal Overview

The divide between university campuses and the communities in which they're situated has been a perennial source of tension in higher education. We see this friction in long-standing "town/gown" rhetoric, in headlines highlighting the polarization of attitudes about the value of college, and in our own students who wonder how their education connects to the world in which they live. While certainly one impulse has been to politely ignore these conflicts and retrench into our traditional research interests and teaching practices, how might a university like UP respond more proactively? How can we begin to engage with the city around us in ways that invigorate our work, our students, and our mission as an institution committed to the common good?

To imagine responses to these questions, we propose a 2023 Faculty Development Day theme on "The City and the Campus: Models for Becoming the University *for* Portland." The day would be kicked off by a keynote address by Dr. Nicole King, a renowned scholar and practitioner of place-based public engagement. Dr. King's keynote will spring from her experience building a series of public humanities projects and programs between universities and local neighborhoods, including [Baltimore Traces](#) and the [Baltimore Field School](#). Following the keynote, we plan to hold two workshops during the first breakout session: one led by Dr. King on public humanities methods and another led by Marshall Welch, a local scholar with a wide range of experience in community-engaged teaching and learning.

As we strive to meet the need to grow experiential learning opportunities for our students and to answer President Kelly's call that UP become a "University *for* Portland," it's vital that we support faculty in developing successful pathways for connecting their work to these wider fields. Indeed, we met with President Kelly on Feb. 15 and he has offered his strong support, endorsing this FDD proposal as a timely way to capitalize on UP's new strategic plan. We envision this faculty development day as an important step toward UP's long-term objectives in these areas, one that can inspire faculty from all disciplines to heed the call for scholarly public engagement in their research and teaching that can make a difference both on our campus and in our city.

Description of Keynote and Breakout Sessions

Dr. King will offer an opening talk arguing for the benefits of learning by engaging locally, inviting faculty from across the disciplines to consider ways to bring Portland into our classrooms. By sharing the lessons she's learned by developing collaborative projects between her home campus, UMBC and the city of Baltimore, King will introduce key aspects of community-engaged learning and its benefits, as well as pathways for UP to connect more fully with the city we inhabit.

During the first breakout session, Dr. King will also offer a workshop for interested faculty on using humanities-based methods for community-engaged learning. Using the Baltimore Traces project as a model, in which UMBC students and faculty partner with Baltimore community organizations to

create new understandings of the city through collaborative storytelling and archiving, King will lead faculty in discussion of how they can bring similar methods to their own classrooms. Through a hands-on exploration of an example project with King, faculty will learn practical ways to begin engaging locally and how to do so equitably and in non-extractive ways.

A concurrent workshop during the first breakout session will be given by Oregon scholar Marshall Welch, who will lead faculty in thinking through community engaged learning from a local perspective. While King’s workshop will take a humanities angle on engagement, Welch’s will focus on providing a “start-up kit” for faculty who would like to learn more about getting involved in engaged learning practices. Welch will draw from his background at several universities and community organizations, including Campus Compact, to outline the concrete steps faculty can take to begin connecting their work to the communities in which they live.

Why us, Why now

As co-founders of the Public Research Fellows, we have worked with dozens of UP faculty and students since 2019 to connect classroom learning and research to larger publics and the world outside campus (see example projects [here](#) and [here](#)). This year [we were awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant](#) to support the planning of long-term engaged learning opportunities and build more durable connections with local community partners to enable this learning. While we had always planned to bring a visiting consultant like King to campus to help us in this work, we realized that combining that visit with Faculty Development Day—and thus sharing her expertise with a much larger audience—is a valuable opportunity to make an immediate and broader impact on our campus. The NEH grant also offers the benefit of bringing significant additional funding to faculty development day (see budget below).

Keynote Speaker Background

Dr. Nicole King is Associate Professor of American Studies and Director of the Orser Center for the Study of Place, Community, and Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. She is co-founder of the “Baltimore Traces: Communities in Transition” public humanities project where students work with local partners to research historic neighborhoods and complete oral history interviews focused on preserving the opinions of those who live and work in Baltimore. She also co-organizes the Baltimore Field School, which creates a framework for UMBC graduate students, staff, and faculty to collaborate with community partners in building ethical and sustainable research and teaching projects focused on public humanities. King’s research, teaching, and program organizing is based on the belief that looking and listening to a place can be a transformative act.