

# PUBLIC RESEARCH FELLOWS

HUMANITIES COLLABORATIVE • COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND

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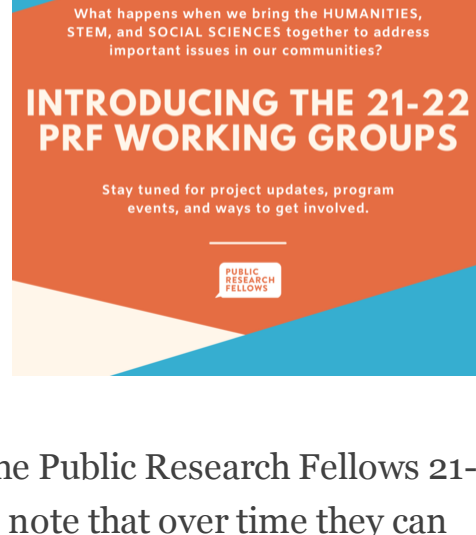
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### PRF 21-22 Provides Platform for Interdisciplinary Exploration

What happens when we bring the humanities, STEM, and social sciences together to address important issues in our communities?

That's the animating question behind the Public Research Fellows 21-22 program. Students and faculty often note that over time they can become "siloes" in their departments or majors, less likely to cross those imaginary lines that divide us on campus. But the complex issues we face in our world can't be understood, not to mention addressed, through a single discipline—they require conversation and exploration across academic fields of inquiry to come into true focus. To that end, this year the program brings together three working groups of faculty and students who are investigating topics of their own design from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, from English and Music to Environmental Studies, Psychology, and Integrative Health and Wellness. Read on to find out more about each group and stay tuned for ways to participate in program projects and events!

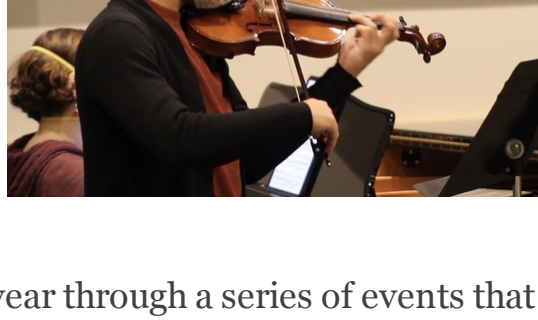
[Read a recent article on the value of interdisciplinary education>>](#)



### Table Talk Working Group Blends English, Environmental Studies to Explore Portland Food Culture

When we think about food, we often think of a favorite childhood recipe, family tradition, or go-to restaurant; but how much do we think about where our food comes from, how it gets to our table, and who helps produce it? The goal of the working group "Table Talk: Stories of Our Dinner" is to reframe how we think about food by telling the stories that lie beneath the surface of what we eat every day. After reading about how [Portland-based chef Jacobsen Valentine](#) transformed his cooking class into a way to serve people in need during the pandemic, faculty fellow Cheri Buck-Perry (English) realized that "there are stories that need to be told" about the role food plays in our communities. Junior student fellow Trini Sepulveda is hoping that through their work this year, Table Talk can help start conversations on campus that aren't solely focused on academia. By listening to the stories of the communities that provide Portland with so much of its food and "learning about their culture as much as we learn about academic culture," Trini and the group aim to create productive conversations about food and how it shapes our world.

[Read more about the project on the PRF site>>](#)



### Loosen UP Brings Art, Humanities to Wellness at UP

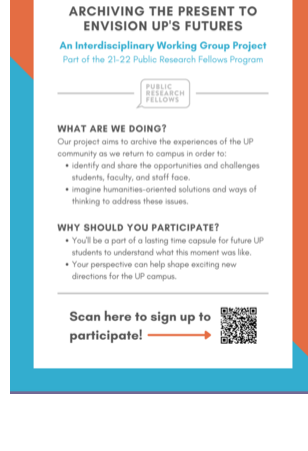
Can the arts and humanities improve our health? The Loosen UP working group thinks so, and they are setting out to prove it this year through a series of events that will allow them to study the impact of art, poetry, and music on wellness. Faculty fellow Rebekah Hanson (Music) predicts that these events will create a measurable reduction of stress in participants, while simultaneously building a greater sense of connection within the UP community. Student fellow Kendall Minter, a junior psychology and Integrative Health and Wellness major, agrees; while she never thought she'd be able to participate in original research during her undergraduate career, she was excited to join the project because she knows firsthand how stress has consumed the campus in this challenging year: "I've never heard anyone say 'I'm great, I'm not stressed at all.'" Minter thinks that demonstrating the impacts of art on our minds and bodies can help UP build a culture that prioritizes individual and community wellness, in turn showing how we can make a difference in the world around us by bringing disciplines together.

[Read more about the group and their events >>](#)

### College After Covid Working Group Asks: We're Back; What Now?

After a year of fully online classes, the return to UP's campus had many hoping to get back to a sense of normalcy only to find upon returning that things are not how they once were. The PRF working group "College After Covid: Archiving the Present to Envision UP's Futures" strives to capture this crucial moment of re-entry—its challenges as well as possibilities. Faculty fellow Dr. Cara Hersh (English) points out that this archival project has the potential to help us understand how the pandemic has affected our communities in different ways: "when we think of the public, there's nobody that has escaped the impact of this." Using humanities methods like conversation, film, and archival analysis, the group will collect and share the narratives of the UP community, with a particular focus on minority voices so that, as senior student fellow Isabel Hidalgo put it, they can "prosper along with their white counterparts." This working group ultimately hopes to show how the humanities can help us both understand the impacts of the pandemic and translate those understandings into meaningful action that makes a difference in our community. If you would like to participate, you can start by [completing this initial survey](#).

[Read more about the working group on the PRF site>>](#)



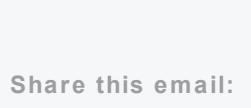
### PRF Awards New Scholarship

The program is pleased to announce that Isabel Hidalgo, a senior double majoring in Biology and English, is the recipient of the first annual Public Research Scholarship. This new award of \$2500 was established by UP alumna Dr. Amy Kintner (Class of 2005) in honor of Dr. Laurie McLary, longtime UP Professor of German and a founder of the Public Research Fellows program. As the first ever graduate of the German Studies major, Kintner had the opportunity to work closely with McLary, an experience that was formative for her as a student and scholar. While McLary has moved on from UP, Kintner created this scholarship to "honor her legacy by challenging students to participate in public discourse about their research." The award, geared toward BIPOC students, recognizes the importance of representation in undergraduate research. For Hidalgo, the first recipient, this focus is key; she believes that diversifying who does research will not only lead to benefits for minority groups, but also better research that benefits the entire community. Congrats Isabel!



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