

The logo for Public Research Fellows is an orange speech bubble with the words "PUBLIC RESEARCH FELLOWS" in white, bold, uppercase letters inside.

PUBLIC RESEARCH FELLOWS

Public Research Fellows 2023-24: “Engaging Portland” Call for Student Fellow Applications

The Public Research Fellows brings students and faculty together from across disciplines to explore timely topics and problems through publicly-engaged research projects that use engaged humanities approaches. In 2023-24, the program will support five projects inspired by the theme “Engaging Portland.” If you’re interested in an undergraduate research experience that connects scholarship to the wider public and the communities in which we live, check out the program details and project descriptions below and apply to be a Student Fellow.

What do Student Fellows do?

- Take a 1-credit reading course, CAS 391: “Introduction to the Publicly Engaged Humanities” in the fall (**Fall 2023 meeting time: W 6:00-6:55pm**). The course provides background and tools in public humanities methods with the goal of helping engage research teams’ projects with a wider community
- Enroll in one research credit per term with Faculty fellow organizing your project and participate in regular meetings with your project team (at least once every two weeks); help develop the project and conduct research under faculty guidance
- Participate in 3-4 program meetings with all faculty and student fellows in the Spring
- Help plan and participate in program events, including the Spring Showcase (date TBD).

What’s in it for Student Fellows?

- 3 credits total (1 credit for CAS 391 readings course in fall; 1 credit each in fall and spring for Undergraduate Research; together these can add up to an elective course toward your degree)
- Experience in undergraduate research and working closely with faculty
- The chance to collaborate with a close-knit, dedicated group of students from a variety of disciplines
- The opportunity to help shape the program and the conversation around public humanities at UP
- *Opportunity to apply for the Laurie McLary PRF scholarship*—a \$2350 scholarship with preference for female BIPOC fellows. Once selected as PRF fellows, qualified applicants will be considered for the scholarship.

What’s the program looking for in Student Fellows?

In addition to the desired qualifications listed underneath each project below, PRF in general is looking for students who meet the following criteria:

- Creative, flexible, and work well with others
- Desire to learn about the engaged humanities and how they can help build connections across disciplines and with the public
- Have sufficient room in their schedule to dedicate time to the course and their research project (~3-5 hours per week)

What do previous Student Fellows say about their experience in the program?

Click on the links below to watch short clips of Student Fellows discussing their takeaways, such as:

- Athena Hills on [what made her work in PRF different](#) from her other academic work
- Grace Fortson on [the value of connecting research to the “real world”](#)
- Sarah James on [how the program created lasting connections for her](#)

- The PRF interns' [short film](#) showcasing a prior year's program work

You can also explore [PRF's website](#) and [Instagram](#) for more about the program.

To apply:

Send an email to hiro@up.edu with the following:

1. Your name, year, and major(s)/minor(s).
2. The title of the project you would like to serve as a fellow for. If you are interested in applying to more than one project, please list all the titles and rank them by order of interest (1 for most interested, and so on).
3. For each project you are applying to work on, answer the following in a page at most:
 - a. Why do you want to serve as a student fellow for this project?
 - b. What past experience or personal strengths qualify you to work on this project (please refer to specific criteria listed below) and/or as a PRF fellow in general (see criteria above)?
4. your resume (attach to email).

Applications will be pre-screened by program directors and then sent along to the faculty fellows for selection. Applications will be screened on a rolling basis throughout the summer; last chance to apply is Tuesday, August 1.

I. Project Title: Building the PRF Program

Faculty: Dr. Jen McDaniel, English (mcdaneld@up.edu); Dr. Molly Hiro, English (hiro@up.edu)

Project Description:

PRF is continuing to grow and we are seeking 2-3 students to serve as Program Fellows who can help us in this work. The Program Fellow position will be slightly different than the fellowship opportunities of the other 5 projects of the year, in that our goal will be to maintain PRF in its current form while also exploring exciting future program directions. Program Fellows will gain hands-on experience in program management while also getting research experience in engaged humanities curriculum design and community partnership development. This will include work in two different areas:

Program Publicity:

- Maintain and build the program's social media presence
- Document the work of the program (including interviewing other faculty and student fellows and writing short newsletter articles)
- Help with PRF event planning

Program Building:

- Aid in building potential connections and/or projects with community partners in Portland
- Help design a pilot course connecting humanities students with personal and professional development, including research of other universities' courses, interviewing students, and reviewing scholarship of teaching and learning

Desired Qualifications:

- humanities majors and/or minors with strong writing skills and an interest in learning more about how to engage the humanities with wider publics

- experience with graphic design (Canva etc.) or social media management is a plus, as is experience in journalism or in-person interviewing
- we're particularly interested in recruiting students who are creative, flexible, and game for interacting with others

II. Project Title: Democracy in Action: Promoting Civic Engagement in Our Community

Faculty: Dr. Maye Henning, Political Science (henning@up.edu)

Project Description:

Democracy in Action aims to develop curriculum modules that can be used in Political Science courses to promote civic engagement and learning and to highlight local politics, which are too often overshadowed by national politics. Engaging with the community will provide context and help students understand first-hand the politics unfolding in their very own "backyard." Student researchers may work together or independently to develop a module of their choice focusing on a community issue with a public engagement component, for instance, public policy, environmental sustainability, or houselessness. The modules that students developed will be incorporated into the classroom in courses such as Introduction to American Politics or American Public Policy.

Desired Qualifications:

- Interest in social issues and commitment to the community
- Ability to work collaboratively
- Strong critical thinking and communication skills

III. Project Title: The CHANGE UP project (Community Health Assessment of the Needs of GEn-Z with the University of Portland)

Faculty: Dr. Andrew LaFrenz, Integrative Health and Wellness (lafrenz@up.edu)

Project Description

We are looking for 2-3 students to be part of an interdisciplinary team from different schools within UP to assist in this unique project. The central theme of this project is to explore how the current generation of high school students would "define health" in the context of their life in their community in Portland. This particular generation has unique and unexplored health needs in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic during formative years of their youth. A primary aim of this project is to intentionally include participants with a wide diversity of backgrounds, including but not limited to: geographic location (within Portland-metro area), socioeconomic status, houselessness, within the foster system, racial/ethnic variability, affected by acute or chronic health conditions and more.

We hope to provide a platform for their voices to be heard while they engage with one another and then more broadly the community with the information they share. There are many possible ways these stories can be preserved and highlighted at the end of this project. Examples include: a permanent mixed media art exhibit of a human skeleton/model with "expressions of health" written all over the art piece from the hundreds of adolescents that participate across the Portland area, a video created highlighting the project as well as the many stories of what health means to different individuals, groups and communities across Portland.

Desired Qualifications:

- Any and all majors are encouraged to apply
- An interest in health and wellness
- Comfortable communicating with diverse populations
- A background or interest in creative visual arts

IV. Project Title: How Portland Learns

Faculty: Dr. Anna Myers, Education (myersan@up.edu); Megan Gill, Education (gillm@up.edu)

Project Description:

How Portland Learns is an ethnographic study that seeks to identify what learning and school look like across the varied landscape of Portland. Our objective is to highlight the voices within Portland's community at large and give voice to those to whom little voice is given. With the support of our student fellows, we will research Portland's educational history within the last 50 years. Our research consists of diving into the history of education in the Portland area, collecting interviews from members of our local community, and ultimately creating a videographic culmination of live interviews edited to tell the story of *How Portland Learns*.

Desired Qualifications:

- Passion for empowering the voices of others
- Desire to effect change in the educational system

V. Project Title: Understanding and Incentivizing Recycling Behavior in Gresham, Oregon

Faculty: Ruth Dittrich, Economics, Pamplin School of Business (dittrich@up.edu)

Project description: Portland is considered a progressive city where many take pride in pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors. Yet Portland Metro saw recycling contamination rates of 15% in 2017. In contrast, in 2019, Oregon's average contamination rate was only 11%. Contaminated recycling material refers to material which should not go into recycling such as plastic bags. Such contamination poses a cost to society due to higher waste hauling rates as the removal of these materials increases cost for recycling facilities. In addition, recycling mixed with contaminated materials will most likely end up on landfills instead of being re-used which poses an environmental cost.

In this project, we will develop strategies to assess and decrease recycling contamination in the city of Gresham (to the East of Portland). In a first step, the project will assess current recycling contamination through cart auditing by lifting the lid of recycling bins and looking at visible materials. In a second step, we will explore cart tagging (leaving information on correct recycling) and other interventions (e.g. possibility to win gift cards) to reduce contamination. These interventions would be followed by further cart auditing(s) throughout the year to determine their impact in the long-term. The objective is to identify strategies which successfully reduce recycling contamination and can be implemented in a cost-effective way. Finally, we hope to bring the insights back to UP campus and reduce recycling contamination among the student community.

Desired qualifications:

- Ability to work collaboratively
- Willingness to get up early for fieldwork (about 5 times)
- Passionate about the environment
- Interest in learning data analysis skills
- Confident to talk about the project with the general public