

PRF 2023-24 • ENGAGING PORTLAND

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PRF Showcase Recap: Engaging Portland

On Friday, April 24, PRF faculty and student fellows wrapped up a successful year of collaboration by showcasing their project findings to the UP community. The “Understanding and Incentivizing Recycling” team invited showcase visitors to take a quiz to test their recycling knowledge, while the “CHANGE UP” group filled a replica human skeleton with participants’ discoveries about health made during the COVID pandemic. A highlight of the event was showcasing this year’s community partnerships: [Don’t Shoot Portland](#), who collaborated with the “Liberated Archives” team to put on an exhibit in the UP Library featuring organizing work by Black UP students from the 1960s and 70s; as well as [Street Books](#), the bike-powered library serving Portlanders living outside, which street librarian Diana Rempe brought to campus to engage with showcase visitors.

Student fellows expressed enthusiasm about interacting with campus community members to demonstrate their year’s worth of learning through PRF. As senior Kat Motley put it, reflecting on her PRF participation, “I learned the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration to create meaningful community-centered research.”

Scroll down for a few photos from the event and then check out the outcomes of each project.

*Kat Motley, of the
"CHANGE UP" team,
shows off the skeleton
housing showcase
participants' insights into
personal understandings
of health.*



"Understanding and Incentivizing Recycling" team members Lili Gudgel and Olivia Grier quiz showcase visitors on their recycling know-how.

PRF Director Jen McDaneld and Street Books librarian Diana Rempe invite UP community members to check out the bike-powered street library.



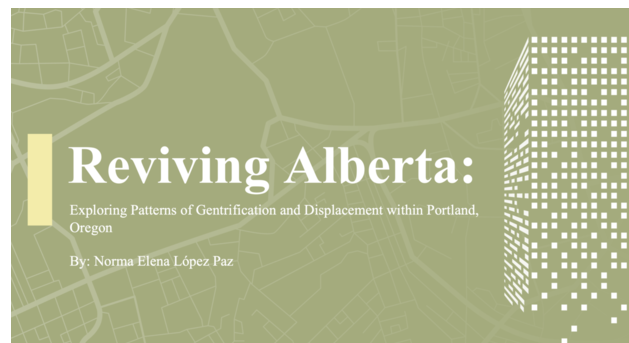
The CHANGE UP Project

The team explored how the current generation of 18-24 year olds define health in the context

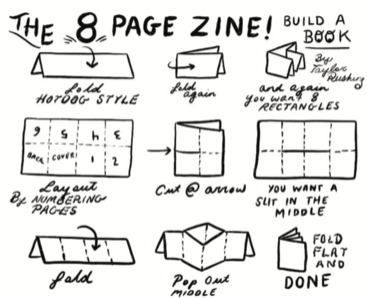
of their experience in various Portland communities and [created a short film](#) to demonstrate their findings.

Democracy in Action

This team [developed curricular modules](#) that will be used in Political Science courses to promote civic engagement and to connect to local politics.



Liberated Archives



In partnership with [Don't Shoot PDX](#), this interdisciplinary team researched how archives can be used for social justice and memory preservation, with the [project culminating in a zine and an art exhibition](#) on campus to demonstrate its findings.

Understanding Recycling in Gresham



This team [developed strategies](#) to assess and decrease recycling contamination in the city of Gresham through cart auditing and various incentives, such as information leaflets and gift cards, and then brought the insights back to UP's campus to help reduce recycling contamination among the student community.

How Portland Learns

This team did a series of ethnographic interviews to [create a video](#) that tells a story of education in the city through the voices of students not always centered in conversations about learning.

Building Humanities Futures

The team [designed and hosted events \(like a Humanities Alumni](#)

Panel) and built new curriculum ("Humanities Futures") to help students connect humanities skills to their personal and professional lives after graduation.



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Program Wins NEH Grant to Build Engaged Humanities Hub at UP

In early April, PRF directors Jen McDaneld and Molly Hiro, along with Core Director Andrew Guest, learned that their grant proposal, “Hub, Pathway, Core: Implementing Engaged Humanities Curriculum” has been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. This three-year \$150,000 grant is the largest Humanities grant in UP’s history, and one of only eight funded nationally at the Implementation level.

The grant will support three main activities that aim to use engaged humanities approaches to connect UP with timely issues and local communities. First, the team will design and implement an engaged humanities curriculum open to all UP students, composed of courses in the Core, high-impact experiences such as collaborative research

and internships, and humanities-oriented professional development. Fueling this work is the second component—working groups of students, faculty, and community partners in the Civic Humanities, Environmental Humanities, and Health Humanities who will develop courses and programming that bring the campus together around challenging topics. And the final component is the creation of an Engaged Humanities Hub—a permanent center to support this work into the future and serve as a home for the Engaged Humanities at UP.

With upwards of 30 faculty, dozens of students, and multiple local partners to be involved over the upcoming years, and featuring nationally-known speakers and other programming on our annual themes, the work of this NEH grant aims to engage broad swaths of the UP community. Hope to see you at one of our events—to be shared in future editions of this newsletter!



Introducing the Civic Humanities

Headline after headline informs us that we've never been a more divided nation, that our democratic norms are fraying, that polarization and isolation are determining whom we engage with and how we think. While political divides often take center stage in these

discussions, especially in an election year, other forms of division along lines of age, geography, or education can be just as difficult to breach. Rather than engage across what can feel like ever-widening gulfs, it often feels easier and safer to avoid difficult topics and re-entrench among like-minded peers and social media echo chambers, creating even more polarization. How do we break out of this pernicious cycle?

These are the sorts of questions that the new and rapidly growing field of civic humanities seeks to address. Using the resources and skills that we draw on in the humanities classroom, such as open-ended dialogue, reading primary texts together, and exploring alternative perspectives, the civic humanities create spaces of connection, conversation, and collaboration to build relationships across difference and strengthen democratic culture.

With the help of the NEH grant, in 2024-25 the program is bringing together an interdisciplinary working group of faculty, students, and community partners to co-create projects and courses that engage Portland through the lens of civic life. Using the program's annual theme "Civil Dialogue and Civic Engagement" as a guide, the working group will build reading lists, hold discussions, and develop projects across the year that create opportunities to engage timely, challenging issues that are important to our local communities.

[Interested in learning more about the civic humanities or joining the working group? Email us!>>](#)

Call for Student Fellows

Are you a student looking for a unique undergraduate research opportunity that will allow you to collaborate closely with students and faculty across disciplines? Interested in making connections between your academic work and the world beyond campus? Want to be able to say



that you participated in an NEH-funded project on your resume? The program is now accepting applications for students fellows--apply by August 5.

[Read the full Call for Student Fellows>>](#)



5000 N. Willamette Blvd.
Portland, OR
up.edu/prf | 503.943.7228 | prf@up.edu

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