SCHOLAR-FACILITATOR Opportunities

What are Quantum Leap Field Trips?

Indiana Humanities’ next thematic initiative, Quantum Leap, explores the spirit of possibility and problem-solving that occurs when we bridge the humanities with science, technology, engineering, math and medicine. In 2017-2018, our programs will share how Hoosiers have, do and could innovate in the STEM fields to create a better—healthier, happier, more prosperous, more fair—society, while creating space for Hoosiers to wrestle with changes, both exciting and scary, wrought by STEM innovation.

As part of Quantum Leap, we’re taking Hoosiers inside fascinating sites of scientific discovery and innovation to think, read and talk about how new frontiers of inquiry reshape our understanding of what it means to be human. During each QL Field Trip, a humanities scholar will co-lead a tour, pausing periodically to read aloud short humanities texts that help us consider the meaning of the research conducted at the site from a humanistic perspective. The tours will also be co-led by an expert from the site or facility—someone who can help us make connections between our readings and the science at play. We’ll conclude with a hearty discussion over food and drink, for an indelible, once-in-a-lifetime adult field trip!

The full scope of the 2017-2018 QL Field Trip series is still coming together, but here are a few of the STEM themes and questions we’ll be exploring on our excursions:

- Astronomy and our place in the universe
- The related STEM disciplines—including horticulture, genomics, biotechnology, chemical engineering—shaping the future of agriculture
- Civil engineering and the particular ways it relates to sustainable urban development
- Climate science and the impact of human technology, as it both creates and might ameliorate the effects of climate change
- Computer science and digital technologies, as they affect human connectedness for better and worse
- Big data and the ways it may be reshaping the idea of the self
- The related STEM disciplines—including molecular and chemical engineering, biotechnology, genetics and pharmaceuticals—shaping the future of medicine
- Plant ecology, geology and environmental science
- Particle physics and the nature of matter
- Zoology—especially primatology—and animal behavior

We hope to find scholar-facilitators with expertise and passion to help us think deeply and imaginatively about one or more of these topics as well as the more general role of science, technology, engineering, math and medicine in society.

Who are we looking for?

Indiana Humanities seeks humanities scholar-facilitators to lead each field trip and facilitate conversation that tie together the themes and big ideas of Quantum Leap. The scholar-facilitator will also select the texts for his/her field trip destination. The success of each conversation is highly dependent on the skill of the scholar-facilitator to draw in multiple voices to the
discussion, inspire deep thinking and reflection on the texts and help participants draw connections between literature, science and society.

The ideal scholar-facilitator:

- Sees the “big picture” of Quantum Leap Field Trips and shares Indiana Humanities’ vision for open-ended, thoughtful discussion of project themes.
- Has a spirit of experimentation and a sense of adventure; each experience will be unique and we’re looking for people who can adapt their ideas as details come together.
- Shares Indiana Humanities’ conviction that the humanities are vital to helping ordinary people make sense the role science, technology, engineering, math and medicine play in our lives.
- Is passionate about sharing great literature with regular people, regardless of participants’ prior experience talking about texts.
- Is a great listener, not just a great talker.
- Is open to learning new techniques and best practices for facilitating text-based discussions.
- Has advanced training, such as an M.A. or Ph.D., in a humanities field, including but not limited to literature, history, cultural studies, philosophy, or religious studies. We welcome inquiries from individuals who may have other relevant humanities training and experience, including librarians, writers, educators and pastoral leaders.
- Responds to email communication in a timely manner.
- Agrees to write a blog post (250-500 words) about their experience leading a Quantum Leap Field Trip.

Experience leading text-based conversations in general public settings is certainly preferred but not required. Prior humanities research or teaching related to one or more of the STEM topics outlined above a plus.

Scholar-facilitators suggest readings—usually 3-5 short texts, totaling no more than 2-3 pages for a 90-minute tour—for final approval by Indiana Humanities staff. Indiana Humanities will take care of event registration and organizing logistics of each event. The length of each field trip will vary by site, but generally the events will last 3 hours.

What’s in it for the scholar-facilitator?

- $500 honorarium + mileage per field trip.
- Learn public humanities skills, including best practices for leading successful text-based conversations with general public audiences.
- Be a part of a statewide cohort of engaged humanities scholars leading important and lively discussions about the role of science in society—and how these ideas affect Indiana’s future.
- Opportunity to connect your scholarship and practice to a statewide conversation about the role of science and technology in the lives of Hoosiers.

To apply

- Send a cover letter and CV/resume to Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement at Indiana Humanities. In your cover letter, be sure to share why you’re passionate about the ideas animating Quantum Leap and how taking part in this program fits with your scholarly and career goals. Let us know which area(s) of scientific inquiry you’re most excited to lead conversations about, and of course share any readings or writers who particularly inspire you. Be sure to describe any experience you’ve had leading humanities discussion with general public audiences. And finally, if you’re able and open to leading more than one field trip, tell us (ability to commit to multiple field trips will not impact final decision).
- Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until all positions are filled. Candidates may be contacted to learn more about their interest in the project.

Questions? Ideas?

- Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement at Indiana Humanities
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