

2025 Smithsonian Faculty Fellowships

THE PAUL PECK HUMANITIES INSTITUTE AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Faculty! Submit your application for this rewarding academic professional development opportunity.

Museums as Catalysts for Collaborative Change in a Complex World



To learn more and apply:

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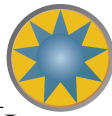
Or contact: Professor Denise Dewhurst, coordinator (denise.dewhurst@montgomerycollege.edu)

or Professor Matthew Decker, co-coordinator (matthew.decker@montgomerycollege.edu)

For information about the Paul Peck Humanities Institute at Montgomery College, the Smithsonian Faculty Fellowships, and how to apply, visit us at:

www.montgomerycollege.edu/humanities

Applications for the 2025 Cohort are due by October 21, 2024



THE PAUL PECK HUMANITIES INSTITUTE AT MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

2025 MC-Smithsonian Faculty Fellowship Program Museums as Catalysts for Collaborative Change in a Complex World

Deadline for Applications: October 21, 2024

“By 2022, the Smithsonian will build on its unique strengths to engage and to inspire more people, where they are, with greater impact, while catalyzing critical conversation on issues affecting our nation and the world”

(Smithsonian Annual Performance Plan, 2022, p. 2)

Daily news can spur flight or fight responses. War, climate change, social unrest, tech innovations and interventions—the topics that populate news cycles are especially demanding. Investment in these topics can linger, too, in our conversations with colleagues and our interactions with students. Fortunately, museums, too often thought of as storehouses of artifacts that document history, are not in the business of ignoring national and international conflicts or sugarcoating modern ills. Over the last decade, there has been an evolution in the museum world driven by the belief that the museum serves best when it offers dynamic and engaging exhibits capable of speaking to the challenges of our complex world. The impact of this critical work is palpable and ready to be leveraged in Montgomery College (MC) classrooms.

The Smithsonian Institution’s 21 museums, research centers, and the National Zoo showcase this evolution in approach in spaces dedicated to developing accessible and inclusive exhibitions, challenging existing narratives, provoking critical thinking, and fostering global citizenship. These spaces actively engage us in essential dialogue centered on the intricacies of our world. Increasingly we see social, cultural, and environmental issues being addressed throughout multiple museums and their exhibits, with accompanying educational resources that help further and transform conversations. Stories once overlooked are renewed and recovered, as attention is paid to missing voices. Efforts to decenter common negative narratives of climate change instead prioritize "Earth Optimism" and human-led innovation. Through Earth Optimism Summits, the Smithsonian Science for Global Goals Project, and 2022’s Earth Optimism x Folklife Festival, the Smithsonian has helped to pioneer the message of a sustainable future, attempting to address the world’s most pressing matters from a lens of sustainable action. Moreover, the talents of content experts and scientists have found new life and energy thanks to the contributions of communities and everyday citizens.

These endeavors align with the mission of Montgomery College educators, who masterfully weave innovation, collaboration, and critical thinking skills into their conversations with students. Our 2025 MC-Smithsonian Faculty Fellowship (SFF) theme, Museums as Catalysts for Collaborative Change in a Complex World, is one that faculty from all disciplines can apply in their classrooms, too. They can invite students to examine topics, such as the power of historical reinterpretation, the inclusion of marginalized voices, and the significance of missions in social justice. They can discover their own role in solving environmental problems rather than accepting them as irrevocable. They can explore what it means to be not only citizen contributors but also how to serve as catalysts for change in their own communities.

To learn more, please visit www.montgomerycollege.edu/humanities or contact:
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