

The following project proposal was created by a community partner of the Upstate Institute to describe the way they would like to engage with a Colgate student this summer. The research project proposed will be a full-time research project conducted by a Field School Fellow this summer. Below, the partner describes their organization and the research project, as well as a statement of benefit derived by the community for this project. The proposal also mentions logistical considerations and required skills for a student interested in doing this work.

National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum (NAHOF), 5255 Pleasant Valley Road, Peterboro NY
www.nationalabolitionhalloffameandmuseum.org

PROJECT: Developing Racial Bias Content Questions for an Interactive Exhibit

MISSION: The National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum honors antislavery abolitionists, their work to end slavery, and the legacy of that struggle, and strives to complete the second and ongoing abolition – the moral conviction to end racism.

What array of valid queries requiring brief responses by way of an electronic instrument can best help an individual assess and decrease racist bias?

The 2018 Upstate Institute Fellow took NAHOF over the long-awaited threshold of self-measuring racist bias using a bank of iPads during a thirteen day exhibit at the NYS Fair. With the opening of the Equal Rights Heritage Center (ERHC) in Auburn NY in November 2018, as well as new Visitor Centers that include NYS history, examples of electronic exhibits/kiosks/ tables have demonstrated how similar installations could be developed to assist a visitor to self- identify which racist bias tendencies are prevalent. Further, the installation could offer some suggestions for decreasing those self-identified racist biases. Through a continuing search of academic literature, social reform museums, consultation with campus faculty, discussions with the NAHOF Ongoing Abolition/Cultural Diversity Committee, visits to the ERHC, etc. the summer fellow will develop a bank of 75 – 125 questions (with answers and explanations provided) that academic research demonstrates may enlighten one to prejudices. This carefully scrutinized and analyzed question series will be fabricated into at least one private electronic kiosk with the assistance of a design agency. Upon completion of the activity a participant will be provided with a wrist band that reads, and reminds, *I am an Abolitionist*.

NAHOF and its Peterboro Heritage partner the Gerrit Smith Estate National Historic Landmark, along with the John Brown Lives project in Lake Placid, and the current twenty-two Partners of the Underground Railroad Consortium of NYS, have been invited to mount an exhibit at the 2019 NYS Fair in Syracuse NY August 21 – September 2. 28,151 people passed by the 2018 exhibit, with 11,104 committing to the exhibit room. A fast paced set of questions/answers installed in an attractive electronic exhibit would engage several thousand people in a thought-provoking exercise that may diminish racist attitudes. By collecting data (without identifying individuals) and comparing that data from year to year, the project may provide indicators of the status of racist attitudes in New York State – and especially Central New York. Further, after four years of advocacy by NAHOF, the National Park Service Network to Freedom (the national Underground Railroad (UGRR) Trail) annual conference will be held in NYS in September 11-14, 2019. The exhibit would be installed at that Niagara Falls location, as well. As the exhibit is used, evaluated, and edited, other UGRR sites may install copies of the exhibit.

By reaching across the state to address racial bias, NAHOF addresses the second portion of its mission – *to complete the second and ongoing abolition – the moral conviction to end racism.*

NAHOF would appreciate a fulltime student who would be on site for afternoons with mornings off-site for on-campus research, meetings, and visitations. (Having the Fellow on hand as a host to the site increases the open hours of NAHOF which are important in attaining the Absolute Charter from the Board of Regents/NYS Education Department.)

Colgate scholars and offices than can guide the Fellow's research on racist attitude identification and data collection will be important.

The Fellow will be supervised by Dot Willsey, President of NAHOF. Mary Bonderoff PhD (Diversity Officer at Morrisville State College) and Jeff McCarn (Chaplain at Hamilton College), the Co-Chairs of the NAHOF Ongoing Abolition Committee, may be supervising portions of the summer racism work.

5. Training & Skills necessary to complete this work. You should also discuss the experiences and skills a student will gain from working with your organization in general. For example, will students learn specific skills, have the opportunity to attend staff meetings, or grow in other ways through their experience?

High interest in outreach efforts to abolish racism and positive embracing of forging uncharted waters are essential. High regard and motivation for attentive and scholarly research, and the reporting thereof, is critical. Respect for the continuum of NAHOF's progress and the value of "taking care of business" details to assist the museum are important. The ability to be a self-starter and work alone, as well as work as a team player at other times is an asset.

The Fellow will be doing research in scholastic fields to which work may be submitted in the future for publication and/or workshop presentations at conferences. The Fellow's name will be on the author/editor/designer recognition list of the bias exhibit. The fellow will be attending local, county, state, and national organizational meetings as a participant according to the schedule of the summer. (Exs: NAHOF Board meetings of the Cabinet of Freedom, Madison County Cultural Heritage Tourism Committee meetings, Underground Railroad Consortium of New York State Exhibit Committee meetings, and National Park Service Network to Freedom Conference Planning Meetings)

You are welcome to send any attachments with this proposal that you believe highlights the needs for the project or the work that your organization does in the community.

Please submit one copy electronically to Julie Dudrick (jdudrick@colgate.edu) by Friday, December 21, 2018. Proposed projects deemed appropriate for the Summer Field School will be advertised to students currently enrolled at Colgate University, beginning in mid-January. As such, please write your proposal in a style accessible to all undergraduate students in all [four academic divisions](#).