

PUBLIC VOICES FELLOWSHIP

OVERVIEW

The voices we hear most in the world come from an extremely narrow slice of society: mostly western, white, privileged and overwhelmingly male. Key commentary forums are 80% penned by men. Wikipedia contributors are 87% male. Pundits on Sunday talk shows on TV are 84% male (and 90% white); corporate boards are 85% male; and 81% percent of Congress is male. **What could we accomplish, if we invested in our missing brainpower?**

The Public Voices Fellowship is a bold national initiative, undertaken in partnership with leading universities and foundations, to dramatically increase the public impact of our nation's top and most diverse thinkers. The root problem is not a lack of knowledge or experience, but a culture in which minority voices (especially women) rarely have the inside information, high-level support and inside connections to become influential on a large scale. The Public Voices initiative was piloted at Yale, Stanford and Princeton Universities, and has since launched at a dozen major institutions with stunning results. Each program is customized for up to 20 thought leaders at each institution. Fellowships last one year and are designed to lead to ongoing partnerships.

DETAILS:

- Year-long fellowship, cohort of up to 20 fellows (renewable)
- Four interactive day-long seminars designed to expand thinking and amplify expertise
- Dedicated Editors (2+ top journalists) provide individual one-on-one support/editing/coaching
- Monthly Media Calls with media gatekeepers/insiders (Including: TED, NYT, CNN, Wikipedia)
- Ongoing mentoring (fellows receive follow-up access to our journalist mentors)

METHODOLOGY: Our approach is playful, dynamic and results-oriented. Programs are based on time-tested models of transformational learning around thought leadership—games, high stakes scenarios and live thought experiments challenge participants to think more expansively and clearly about their knowledge and purpose. We aim to share the tools of powerful argument and generate concrete results, as well as to cultivate a sense of social responsibility by empowering participants to see their greatest potential impact on the world.

GOALS: We are not interested in providing a service, so much as creating an outcome. Our goal is 100% success: every fellow will produce tangible pieces of thought leadership in influential forums (which may include op-eds, TED talks, radio/TV appearances, speeches, wikipedia entries, books and more), and these will greatly accelerate their trajectory as thought leaders in their fields and in the world.

ABOUT: The **OpEd Project** was founded to increase the range of voices and quality of ideas we hear in the world. We are a community of journalists and thought leaders who actively share our skills, resources and connections across color, creed, class and gender lines. We train underrepresented experts (especially women) to take thought leadership positions in their fields; we match them with high-level journalist mentors; and we channel the best new ideas and experts to media gatekeepers who need them, across all platforms. We have been featured in most major media. We envision a world where the best ideas, regardless of where they come from, will have a chance to be heard and to shape society and the world.

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CURRICULUM THEMES

The Public Voices Fellowship curriculum is a radical experiment in knowledge, meaning, and what it takes to become influential on a large scale. We endeavor to test the best existing research, learn from live experiments, tackle big philosophical questions, cultivate a spirit of fellowship across wide-ranging thinkers, create an environment that is highly creative and wildly generative of ideas, and produce concrete results that light up the world.

1. KNOWLEDGE (1st Convening/Quarter):

What do we know, why does it matter, and how can we use it? In the first convening we use games, high-stakes scenarios and live experiments to explore the concepts of expertise and credibility, to examine the elements of powerful argument and persuasion (including evidence, how to address opposition and building consensus), and to challenge fellows to think in new and bigger ways about what they know and why it matters. We also reflect on the obligation that comes with knowledge.

2. CONNECTION (2nd Convening/Quarter):

How can we speed the pace of cross-pollination, and thereby develop better ideas that increase our value and relevance in the world? In the second convening we connect the dots between disparate ideas, fields, geographies, and time periods. We play games that explore the source of truly innovative thinking (where do good ideas come from?) and test our ideas of timing and timeliness. We discover unlikely yet authentic connections across people, time and space - and new ways in which our knowledge intersects with public events.

3. CONTAGION (3rd Convening/Quarter):

Why do some ideas travel farther and faster than others? What are the mechanisms and hallmarks of contagious thinking? The third convening explores the underpinnings and philosophical implications of a rapidly changing media landscape - in which ideas rise and spread in radically new ways. We work with multi-media platforms including TV/video, public speaking, TED and TED Ed, social media, and more. We also consider how teaching platforms can scale ideas across generations.

4. LEGACY (4th Convening/Quarter):

Why do we do what we do? And what is the enduring impact we wish to leave behind? In the fourth convening we use elemental questions to explore our individual ideas around purpose and legacy with a telescopic lens. What impact can we leave behind not simply on the day we die, but hundreds of years into the future, through our ideas? Fellows leave with a physical record of their motivations and accomplishments and with blueprints for the future.