ACM Field Museum Semester: Research in Natural History - Fall 2023

- **Program:** ACM Field Museum Semester
- **Position available:** Visiting Faculty Director
- **Appointment for:** Fall 2023 semester
- **Location:** Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois
- **Open to:** ACM faculty in the sciences or anthropology relevant to natural history
- **Application deadline:** March 1, 2022

The Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) seeks a Visiting Faculty Director for its Fall 2023 Field Museum Semester.

The Visiting Faculty Director leads a group of up to 12 students in an intensive research and course-based experience at the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois. ACM faculty from the sciences or anthropology relevant to natural history research are eligible to apply.

**Field Museum Semester**

A new partnership between ACM and the Field Museum, the Field Museum Semester is an intensive research and course-based experience for upper-level students interested in natural history research with a background in evolutionary biology, zoology, botany, anthropology, geology, and/or a related discipline at ACM institutions. The program provides the opportunity for students to explore scientific research and the Field Museum collections through a substantive internship, a semester-long course taught by the visiting faculty director, and a seminar led by Field Museum professional staff.

The internship component will pair students with ongoing research projects, the expertise of the Field Museum’s professional staff, and the extensive scientific collections held by the museum. The internship component will be 25-30 hours per week. (8 credits)

The ACM faculty-taught course is intended to be on a broad topic of interest to participating students. Topics should foster ACM’s and the Field Museum’s mutual commitment to advancing knowledge and understanding of scientific topics and the value of a liberal arts education. Since the program involves teaching, the Visiting Faculty Director should draw on expertise in their own discipline, the Field Museum’s collections, as well as on their ability to exchange insights with students and specialists in other disciplines. (4 credits)

The Field Museum-led seminar will be taught by professional staff from the museum and cover topics related to scientific communication, career development, and career preparation. (4 credits)

Students will gain skills in conducting research, learn how the scientific method and research discovery process fit into larger projects, and develop and understanding of the interdisciplinary
nature of research being conducted at the Field Museum. They will write about and discuss their internship through oral and visual presentations and written materials.

The learning objectives for students participating on the program are to:

- Understand the functioning of a large, research, public-facing natural history museum, as related to mission.
- Contribute significantly to ongoing activities of the museum while working closely with a supervisor.
- Develop your skills as a member of a research community, interacting with other scientists and experts, sharing the results of your work, and engaging with your peers on the program.
- Engage in an interdisciplinary course with an ACM faculty member and the full cohort of students on a topic connected to the work of the Field.
- Develop your understanding of how your internship and specific tasks fit into a larger ongoing project and make connections throughout the museum by actively participating in the seminar portion of the program.

**Responsibilities of the Visiting Faculty Director**

The Visiting Faculty Director is responsible for the overall success and academic quality of the semester and for the safety and well-being of the students during the program. The Visiting Faculty Director reports to the ACM Chief of Staff and works closely with ACM consortial staff and Field Museum staff.

**Before the program**
- Participate in 2022 Faculty Advisory Committee meeting
- Assist ACM staff with recruiting efforts
- Participate in review of student applications
- Assist with pre-semester communications to applicants and accepted students
- Participate in faculty training and orientation

**During the program**
- Teach an advanced, semester-long course to undergraduate students at the Museum
- Advise students on site
- Primary oversight of student health and safety
- Serve as main student emergency contact
- Maintain residency in Chicago for the duration of the program
- Assist with program orientation and, if applicable, symposium
- Offer extracurricular/field trip experiences for students
- Serve as liaison to Field Museum staff
- Conduct research at the Museum for the duration of the fall program
- Participate in 2023 Faculty Advisory Committee meeting

**After the program**
- Submit final grades for visiting faculty course to ACM Assistant Program Manager
- Provide report of the program to ACM Chief of Staff
- Participate in 2024 Faculty Advisory Committee meeting
- Participate in program review, as needed

Field Museum of Natural History

The Field Museum is home to more than 150 scientists and researchers and nearly 40 million artifacts and specimens. The collection grew out of items on display in the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition; the Field Museum opened in 1894. According to its mission statement, “The Field Museum fuels a journey of discovery across time to enable solutions for a brighter future rich in nature and culture.” The Field Museum community works to research objects in the Museum’s collections, document previously unknown species, conserve ecosystems, craft exhibitions, educate budding scientists, invite cross-cultural conversation, and more. The Visiting Faculty Director is strongly encouraged to participate in the Field Museum community and has the opportunity to establish valuable, long-term relationships. [https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about](https://www.fieldmuseum.org/about)

Compensation

The Visiting Faculty Director receives one-half of their annual base salary for leading the semester (an equal split between ACM and the home campus). ACM also provides a housing allowance for the Visiting Faculty Director for the duration of the program, as well as an allowance for round-trip travel from their home campus to Chicago and for the shipping of instructional materials. The Visiting Faculty Director is expected to be in residence by mid-August to work with ACM consortial staff and Field Museum staff on scheduling and planning. The Visiting Faculty Director can arrange to be in residence in Chicago earlier than required, at their own expense, in order to conduct their own research.

Proposal preparation and advance visits to Chicago

The Visiting Faculty Director for the Field Museum Semester is chosen through a competitive process on the basis of a written proposal. Applicants preparing proposals should closely examine the Field Museum through its website or an in-person visit, if permitted. Modest travel grants providing two nights housing in Chicago may be available for faculty preparing a proposal. For more information on travel grants, please contact Michael Vertovec, Assistant Program Manager.

Applications must include the following:
- A cover letter describing the applicant’s interest in and qualifications for leading the program.
- A detailed description and draft syllabus of the proposed course topic and its links to the unique resources of the Field Museum, including anticipated learning goals and plans for possible assignments. The proposed course topic should provide sufficient focus to encourage productive collaboration but should also cut across different disciplines to accommodate a wide variety of student interests. Topics that have the potential for engaging students broadly with the Field Museum’s impressive facilities are most
desirable. If selected, the Visiting Faculty Director will be able to edit the syllabus based on feedback from and in collaboration with ACM and Field Museum staff.

- Further description, based on past teaching experiences, of how the Visiting Faculty Director plans to meet the specific learning objectives of the program.
- A proposed research agenda/project for the duration of the fall program.
- A curriculum vitae.
- A letter from the chief academic officer endorsing the application, sent separately, to acm@acm.edu.

The letter of application and supporting materials should be submitted via email to acm@acm.edu. Please refer to the requirements above as you complete the application.

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