

PRESS RELEASE

The National Fellowship on the Future of Liberal Education Announces Inaugural Cohort

March 30, 2026

The National Fellowship on the Future of Liberal Education (NAFFLE) is thrilled to announce its inaugural class of twenty-four fellows, who collectively represent the next generation of leaders in liberal education. Sponsored by the [Teagle Foundation](#), NAFFLE convenes newly tenured faculty members for a multi-year program in which they acquire practical knowledge and a sustaining professional network, as well as time and space for reflection on the purposes of American higher education. Fellows will work together over the course of their careers to strengthen the sector for the good of our classrooms, our universities, and the nation at large.

NAFFLE fellows are nominated by leaders of their institutions based on their promise and demonstrated interest in advancing liberal education. The inaugural 2026-28 cohort is composed of early career faculty at public and private research universities across the nation, with fellows hailing from a wide array of disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

“Our fellows are naturally energized by projects of curricular innovation and eager to consider how their own teaching, research, and university service fit into the larger context of higher education,” noted Sarah Igo, the program’s Executive Director. “These talented faculty members are thinking actively about the urgent challenges—political, reputational, technological, and structural—that confront the professoriate and the very idea of liberal education today. We aim to prepare them for effective advocacy in the face of such challenges and to build their capacity for creative institutional change.”

NAFFLE fellows will participate in a series of convenings in New York across two years. They will inquire into the history and structure of the U.S. liberal arts tradition, examine case studies of institutional change, and hear from university presidents and other leaders on the art of guiding, managing, and transforming complex institutions. The fellowship pays special attention to curricular issues, including the place of general education, the future of doctoral training, and the problems and possibilities introduced by artificial intelligence. Fellows will also consider the strained relationship between college campuses and democratic society today—including the role that faculty can and should play in restoring public trust in the university.

NAFFLE is led by an Executive Board composed of experienced teacher-scholars who have been deeply involved in the revitalization of liberal education on their campuses and beyond. The fellowship also draws on the expertise of an Advisory Board of prominent higher education thinkers and leaders. A full list of the inaugural fellows, the Executive Board, and the Advisory Board can be found below.

For more information: contact Sarah Igo, Executive Director (sarah.igo@vanderbilt.edu) or Zachary Roberts, Program Manager (zachary.j.roberts@gmail.com).

NAFFLE FELLOWS, 2026-2028

Luis Alvarez León	Dartmouth College	Geography
Consuelo Amat	Johns Hopkins University	Political Science
Jacqueline Arthur-Montagne	University of Virginia	Classics
Emily Austin	University of Chicago	Classics
Lucas Bender	Yale University	East Asian Studies
Fannie Bialek	Washington University	Religion and Politics
Will Deringer	MIT	Science, Technology, and Society
Michael Dichio	University of Utah	Political Science
Michel Estefan	UC San Diego	Sociology; Teaching
Johann Frick	UC Berkeley	Philosophy
Sahar Heydari Fard	Ohio State University	Philosophy
Hyeryung Hwang	Cal Poly Pomona	Interdisciplinary General Education
Lauren Jarvis	UNC Chapel Hill	History
Khalil Anthony Johnson	Wesleyan University	African American Studies
Alexandra Kiefer	Rice University	Musicology
Athena Kirk	Cornell University	Classics
Jonathan Lande	Purdue University	History
Raisa Rexer	Vanderbilt University	French
Dustin Schroeder	Stanford University	Geophysics; Electrical Engineering
William Sturkey	University of Pennsylvania	History
Brandon Terry	Harvard University	Political Theory
Kaustubh Thirumalai	University of Arizona	Geosciences
Henry Thomson	Arizona State University	Politics and Global Studies
Ja'La Wourman	Howard University	English

NAFFLE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Sarah Igo, <i>Exec. Director</i>	Vanderbilt University
Dan Edelstein	Stanford University
Bryan Garsten	Yale University
Aishwary Kumar	Cal Poly Pomona
Peter Struck	University of Pennsylvania
Melinda Zook	Purdue University

NAFFLE ADVISORY BOARD

David Brooks	Columnist	<i>The Atlantic</i>
Craig Calhoun	Professor	Arizona State University
Jennifer A. Frey	Professor	University of Tulsa
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Yuval Levin	Senior Fellow	American Enterprise Institute
Lynn Pasquerella	President	American Assoc. of Colleges & Universities
Laurie Patton	President	American Academy of Arts & Sciences
Brian Rosenberg	President Emeritus	Macalester College
Michael Roth	President	Wesleyan University
Holden Thorp	Editor-in-Chief	<i>Science Magazine</i>
John Tomasi	President	Heterodox Academy
Raj Vinnakota	President	Institute for Citizens & Scholars
John Silvanus Wilson, Jr.	Executive Director	McGraw Center, Univ. of Pennsylvania
Nicholas S. Zeppos	Chancellor Emeritus	Vanderbilt University