

Alan K. Simpson Fellowship in Western Political History

The University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center (AHC) invites applications for the 2026 Alan K. Simpson Fellowship in Western Political History through March 31, 2026. The fellowship is designed to support scholars conducting research in western political history, leveraging the Center's comprehensive collections. The aim is to support a 20-day research stay at the AHC for academic scholars at any level, from graduate students to tenured faculty.

We are dedicated to supporting a vibrant and diverse research community and encourage applications from scholars of all backgrounds, including those traditionally underrepresented in academic research. The AHC values the importance of considering political history from many angles and welcomes diverse perspectives and approaches to research.

The Fellowship

The fellowship is named for Alan K. Simpson (1931-2025), who served as a United States Senator from Wyoming from 1979 to 1997. During his tenure, Senator Simpson held several leadership positions, including Senate Republican Whip from 1985 to 1995. Known for his straightforward approach and bipartisan collaboration, Simpson was involved in major legislative efforts including immigration reform, social security reform, and environmental policy affecting the American West. After leaving the Senate, he continued his public service through various commissions and advisory roles, including co-chairing the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform in 2010. The fellowship is funded through an endowment established to honor Senator Simpson's legacy in western politics and to facilitate scholarly research in this field.

Research Fields

The fellowship facilitates scholarly research utilizing the AHC's western political history collections, which document the development of political movements, governance, and policy issues affecting the American West. Projects may address any topic related to western political history. The AHC's archives offer insights into the careers of a diverse array of politicians, activists, and influencers within the political landscape, including significant holdings that represent a wide range of political beliefs.

Acceptable related fields include political biography, policy development, legislative history, political movements, electoral politics, governance studies, and the intersection of politics with environmental, indigenous, economic, and social justice issues in the Western context. The AHC maintains many archival collections that can be used by scholars as source material in conducting historical research.

Commitment to Varied Perspectives: The AHC values a wide range of viewpoints and backgrounds in all aspects of its fellowship program. We strongly encourage applications from individuals who contribute to the breadth of academic perspectives, including but not limited to, those from various racial and ethnic groups, all genders, diverse sexual orientations, people with disabilities, and veterans. Our goal is to create an environment that welcomes different outlooks and approaches to research.

Features of the Fellowship

The fellowship includes a \$3,000 stipend to support a one-month (20 business days) residency at the AHC. However, the stay can be divided into shorter periods or reduced in length to accommodate the fellow's schedule, with the stipend being prorated accordingly. Fellows will have access to personalized support from AHC staff and the opportunity to engage with the university community. The residency should be completed by August 31, 2027.

Payment of Stipends

The Fellow will receive the stipend at the end of their stay and receipt of the précis. No advances will be authorized.

Application

Proposals should include the following:

- A project description (no more than three single-spaced pages) that includes:
 - An overview of the research question(s), methodology, and expected outcomes.
 - Specific reference to how the AHC's collections will significantly contribute to the ultimate success of the proposed project.
 - A brief explanation of how the project aligns with the applicant's research interests and expertise.

Additional attachments:

- The applicant's CV.
- A timeline outlining the plan of research and dates for anticipated products.
- Names and contact information of three references.

Please ensure that the project description does not exceed the three single-spaced page limit. The additional attachments (CV, timeline, and references) do not count toward this page limit.

Email all application materials as one pdf to Dr. Mary Beth Brown, AHC Toppan Rare Book Curator, at mary.brown@uwyo.edu by March 31, 2026.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

- The extent to which the proposed project draws upon the collections of the AHC.
- The research project's potential contribution to the understanding of western political history.
- The potential for professional presentation and/or publication upon completion of the research.
- The applicant's ability to complete the research project in a timely fashion.

Additionally, consideration will be given to proposals that incorporate varied perspectives and methodologies. The selection committee, comprising AHC staff and University of Wyoming faculty, is dedicated to an impartial and comprehensive review process, reflecting our commitment to excellence in research. The recipient will be informed by email.

Notification and Award

The selection committee will review all applications and notify the chosen fellow via email no later than May 15, 2026.

Travel, Accommodations, and Local Information

Fellows are responsible for arranging their transportation, lodging, and meals during residency. For travel directions to Laramie, Wyoming, and information about accommodations, dining, and local attractions, please visit the Laramie Tourism website at visitlaramie.org. Information about the University of Wyoming, including campus maps, can be found at uwyo.edu.

About the American Heritage Center

The AHC is a public research institution located on the campus of the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The Center houses collections of local, regional, and national significance. Its holdings emphasize the American West, from the 19th to 21st centuries. The AHC has extensive holdings in military history, popular entertainment (including Hollywood and comics), mining and petroleum, as well as the environment and natural resources. The AHC also serves as the University of Wyoming's manuscripts repository, rare books library, and university archives. With more than 90,000 cubic feet of material and 3,500 collections, the AHC stands among the largest non-governmental repositories in the nation.

For more information about AHC, please visit our website at uwyo.edu/ahc/.