The ERC Postdoctoral Fellowship

The ERC Postdoctoral Fellowship in Education Program has been formally active since 2005, with nine Fellows overall and it has become an important path in TERC’s commitment to create a socially just STEM educational system for underserved communities. As a non-profit R&D organization, TERC is uniquely positioned to provide intensive support to early career scholars in a non-competitive environment. Past fellows have successfully pursued a broad range of professional trajectories in academia, non-profit educational R&D/social services, and research and policy consulting.

Program Goals

- Nurture development of early career scholars whose work focuses on STEM education, social justice, and race, class, culture and language.
- Foster discussions within the TERC community around theories, methods and designs that attend to issues of equity, diversity, and opportunity in STEM education.
- Build capacity, internally and externally, to address inequality and create expansive learning opportunities for children, youth and educators in underserved communities.

Current Fellows

The ERC Fellowship Committee is delighted to announce our Fellows for 2017-19, Dionne Champion and Maria Olivares.

Dionne Champion will be receiving her PhD in the Learning Sciences at Northwestern University School of Education. Her research has focused on the design and ethnographic study of learning environments that blend STEM and creative embodied learning activities, particularly for children who have experienced feelings of marginalization in STEM. She is interested in understanding the ways these populations draw on their everyday practices and use their bodies as resources.

Maria C. Olivares received her PhD from the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. Her doctoral research focused on understanding whether and how emergent classroom norms and practices supported opportunities for students to learn richly with and about data through an analysis of the development of student learning identities. As an ERC fellow, Maria plans to continue her work on the development of STEM learning identities among non-dominant youth through continued analysis of her dissertation data, participation in research projects at TERC, and collaboration with members of the learning sciences community.

Past Fellows

“I developed long-term working relationships with people. It was important to be in a place like TERC, with a bigger intellectual cohort, even beyond my immediate working group.”

Mentoring Program

Members of possible mentoring teams

- Andee Rubin
- Ann Rosebery
- Beth Warren
- Eli Tucker-Raymond
- Judy Storeygard
- Karen Economopoulos
- Marlene Kliman
- Martha Merson
FAQs

- **What are the start and end dates of the ERC Postdoctoral Fellowship position?**
  The position begins September 2017 and ends in August 2019. The specific start date in September is negotiable with the Fellowship Committee.

- **What kinds of projects would the successful applicant be working on? Is there an opportunity for Fellows to work on analyzing their own data?**
  Fellows have the rare and exciting opportunity to spend the majority of their time focusing on their own work: turning their dissertation into publishable articles or a book, and/or launching a new line of research. They may take advantage of opportunities to collaborate with TERC staff on ongoing projects, though the main goal of the Fellowship is to advance the Fellow’s own work. There is no obligation to teach or serve on committees; there is no restriction against them, either. In the past, Fellows have had opportunities to teach a course at local universities, either as part of a research project or independently. Fellows will be expected to share their work with the TERC community and to co-organize a broadening participation event, such as a speaker series.

- **How do I find out more about potential mentors and ongoing projects at TERC?**
  Learn about TERC staff, as well as many past and ongoing projects, at: TERC Staff Directory.

- **Should potential mentors be named in the application, or will TERC help identify mentors for Fellows once they have the award?**
  If you identify TERC staff members with whom you’d like to work, you are welcome to name them in your proposal. Otherwise, the Fellowship Committee will work with Fellows to find TERC staff members who can meet the Fellow’s mentoring needs.

- **I would like to know more about mentoring and working with a mentor team. What does the relationship between Postdoctoral Fellow and mentor typically look like?**
  Mentoring relationships vary greatly, depending on the needs of each Fellow. Typically, a Fellow meets once a month with his or her mentoring team towards fulfilling the Fellow’s goals. They work together on tasks such as reviewing collected data, giving feedback on a mock conference presentation, or discussing a manuscript draft. In the past, Fellows have also worked with mentors on the mentees’ own projects in order to learn new skills such as grant writing or data analysis.

- **What should be included in the 2-year plan of work? How many pages should this document be?**
  This document should describe the work – e.g., new research you might like to conduct, manuscripts you plan to develop from your dissertation, analysis of existing data, grant development, or teaching at local institutions – that the applicant plans to do over the Fellowship’s two-year term. In this description you should include a discussion of how the proposed plan connects with your prior research and experience with respect to the education of children, youth, or adults from historically underrepresented communities. There is no maximum number for the plan of work, but the ideal number is 2-3 pages.

- **Should the self-assessment of the applicant's research competences and areas where growth is sought be a separate document from the cover letter?**
  Yes, the self-assessment of competencies and growth should be a single, separate document, ideally 2-3 pages in total.

- **What counts as samples of academic writing?**
  Submitted samples of academic writing can be dissertation chapters, manuscripts in progress, published chapters or articles, conference papers, or course papers. The samples should convey your interests and commitments at the intersection of STEM and social justice as well as your understanding and use of theory, method and practice. Both samples should have the applicant as sole or lead author; articles where the applicant is not listed as the lead author should contain the verifiable statement, “All authors contributed equally.” Please note that full dissertations will not be considered.

- **Does the application deadline apply to letters of recommendation as well?**
  Letters of recommendation must be received within a week (7 days) of the deadline. The referee can send them directly to erc_fellowship_2016@terc.edu.

- **What is the timeline for the decision-making process of Fellowship awards?**
  The Fellowship Search Committee will begin review of applications in early November and expects to proceed in a timely manner. We anticipate that finalist interviews will begin before the end of the year and conclude by the end of February. We will inform applicants of the status of their applications as we proceed.

- **I received my degree in 2013. Is there any flexibility on the applicant being within three years of their degree?**
  No. You must have earned your Ph.D. or Ed.D. (or equivalent) in 2014 or later to be eligible. And your degree must be completed by September 2017.

- **Do you accept applications from non-U.S. citizens?**
  While don’t have to be U.S. Citizen, you must be eligible to work in the U.S. (for example, certain student visas).

- **Does this Fellowship opportunity extend to those who have done work in international contexts?**
  If you are a U.S. citizen who does work in international contexts, then yes. We would be especially interested if your research can comparatively illuminate aspects of STEM education in the United States.
I’m coming from a STEM background, and I have not taken any formal education courses, but I’m very interested in education. May I use this postdoctoral fellowship to “transition” from STEM to STEM education?

The Fellowship is intended for early career scholars with a Ph.D, or equivalent, in a STEM education-related field, whether science or mathematics education, multiliteracies, learning sciences, cognitive science, curriculum and instruction, or teacher learning, to name a few. We assume that applicants have received doctoral training in education-related research and are interested in deepening their knowledge and skills in STEM education research during their fellowship. The program is not designed for scholars in other fields who wish to transition into education as a field.

Where have former Fellows gotten jobs?

Fellows have left the Fellowship program and gone on to prestigious positions in academia, non-profit institutions, and consultancies around the country. They are currently tenure-track assistant professors, tenured associate professors, visiting assistant professors, research scientists, former COOs, consultants, and associate directors. Several former Fellows have ongoing research collaborations with TERC staff. One Fellow, Eli Tucker-Raymond, is a Principal Investigator at TERC.