STELAR Fellows

A primary goal of the STELAR Center is to build the capacity of future PIs and help diversify the ITEST portfolio and PI community. With this in mind, for the second year PIs of ITEST projects were given an opportunity to nominate a non-PI "fellow" (such as an educator, postdoc, graduate student, or a leader at an institution that serves diverse learners) who could jointly attend the Summit and enrich our deliberations.

Fellows attend the Summit as the guest of the nominating PI in order to learn about the ITEST program and consider submitting proposals in future solicitations. Fellows are encouraged to attend all Summit sessions and participate in discussions. The Fellows may have limited experience with NSF or other federal funding mechanisms, but are engaged in STEM work with youth or teachers. Interest in nominating a fellow was high, and selection was very competitive.

Please join us in welcoming both the 2018 Fellows and our returning 2017 Fellows!

2018 STELAR Fellows

Kinnari Atit, University of California, Riverside
Nominated by: David Uttal

Kinnari Atit is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Riverside. Atit's work focuses on understanding the role of spatial thinking skills in STEM domains, and also on identifying how to bolster and develop STEM-relevant skills in students.

Michelle Cerrone, Education Development Center
Nominated by: James Diamond

Michelle Cerrone's work focuses on the role of educational technologies in supporting student learning and teacher professional development. Cerrone specializes in research methods, survey development, and statistical analysis, which she applies across a range of evaluation and research projects. Her most recent work examines the design of effective tools for educators and learners to promote progressive teaching.

Dionne Champion, TERC
Nominated by: Eli Tucker-Raymond

An engineer, arts educator, and education researcher, Dionne Champion received her PhD in Learning Sciences from Northwestern and is currently a postdoctoral fellow at TERC. Champion's research focuses on the design and ethnographic study of environments that blend STEM and creative embodied learning activities. She is interested in developing programs that engage children in authentic STEM experiences.

Sherice Clarke, UC San Diego
Nominated by: Victor Minces

Sherice Clarke is an Assistant Professor of Education Studies at UC San Diego. Clarke's research focuses on teaching and learning through science argumentation. She examines student engagement in science. In addition, she examines the ways in which technologies can support teachers in using high leverage practices that support students in developing scientific habits of mind.

Megan Ennes, North Carolina State University
Nominated by: Gail Jones

Megan Ennes is a NSF Graduate Research Fellow at North Carolina State University. Ennes is a former science center educator and curriculum developer. Her current research focuses on science interest, self-efficacy, identity, and career aspirations. Megan is currently assisting with a study of family support of underrepresented youths' science interest and career aspirations in science museums.

Jonathan Townes, Hinds Community College
Nominated by: Noel Gardner

Jonathan Townes obtained a B.S. in Biology from Jackson State University and a Masters of Education in Biological sciences from Mississippi College, and is currently a PhD student in Computational Biology at Jackson State University. A former high school biology teacher, Townes now serves as the STEM Coordinator at Hinds Community College-Utica campus. Jonathan has a deep passion for science education.

2017 STELAR Fellows

Ram Alagan*, Alabama State University
Nominated by: Marcia Rossi

Ram Alagan is an Associate Professor of Geography in the Department of Criminal Justice and Social Sciences at Alabama State University. Algan's research interests focus on GIScience, Participatory GIS, Civil Rights GIS, Alabama Black Belt, Geo-visualization, and Participatory GIS approaches to Environmental Impact Assessment. He has co-edited the 25th volume of Research in Political Sociology on "Environment, Politics, and Society"(May, 2018).

Natalie S. King*, Georgia State University
Nominated by: Brendan Calandra

Natalie S. King is an assistant professor of science education in the Department of Middle and Secondary Education at Georgia State University's College of Education and Human Development. King's scholarly work focuses on K-12 science education with an emphasis on middle grades science experiences, advancing Black girls in STEM education, community-based informal STEM programs, and the role of curriculum in fostering equity in science teaching and learning.

Sheron Mark*, University of Louisville
Nominated by: Mike Barnett

Sheron Mark is an Assistant Professor of Science Education in the Department of Middle and Secondary Education at the University of Louisville's College of Education and Human Development. Mark was previously a Post-Doctoral Fellow and Keck Foundation Teaching Fellow 2012 – 2015 at Loyola Marymount University's Center for Urban Resilience (CURes), Seaver College of Science and Engineering, and the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts.

Ashok Basawapatna, SUNY Old Westbury
Nominated by: Alexander Repenning

Ashok Basawapatna is an Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Computer & Information Science at the State University of New York (SUNY) Old Westbury. Basawapatna's research interests are in broadening participation in computer science through game and STEM simulation, abstract Computational Thinking Patterns (CTPs), and lowering barriers of entry to STEM simulation programming.

Ricarose Roque, University of Colorado Boulder
Nominated by: Tom Yeh

Ricarose Roque is an Assistant Professor in the Information Science department at CU Boulder with a courtesy appointment in Computer Science and Education. Roque lead the Family Creative Learning project, and was previously a member of the Lifelong Kindergarten research group at the MIT Media Lab, a member of the MIT Scratch Team, and faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University.

*_Program Committee Members and 2018 Session Leads_