

Institutional Cultures of Ethical Community Engagement in Engineering-for-Developing Work

2016 call for interested graduate student researcher/s

A team of faculty from CU Boulder and the University of Washington has been granted a 3-year award through the NSF to study the formation of cultures of ethical community engagement in university-based engineering-for-development (EfD) programs. We are accepting applications for a PhD student researcher for the project. (We are also open to highly motivated MS students interested in participating in the research—either a masters-level research assistant or someone planning to transition into a PhD.) The project will support the student for at least three years and serve as the basis of her/his dissertation.

Our investigation uses qualitative social science methods (interviews, observations, and document analysis) to uncover ways university programs like the Mortenson Center in Engineering for Developing Communities (MCEDC) at CU Boulder and the Humanitarian Engineering (HE) Program at Colorado School of Mines shape cultures of ethical EfD work. We seek insight into how these programs shape the perspectives of students around the ethical and moral complexities of working in/for/with developing communities around the world. To do this, the student researcher(s) will need to have or gain exposure to social science research methods as well as studies of international development (e.g. through coursework in Geography).

This research will inform ways programs like MCEDC, HE, and many others around the country, can shape their institutions to instill students with knowledge, ideas, sensibilities, and, ultimately, cultures of ethical

community engagement. Our goal is to move EfD institutions toward a more sustainable and informed model of development work.

The principal investigators of the project are Shawhin Roudbari, who is on the faculty of Environmental Design at CU Boulder; Jessica Kaminsky, on the faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering at University of Washington (and a recent MCEDC grad); and Jill Harrison, on the faculty of Sociology at CU Boulder. In addition to working primarily with Prof. Roudbari—with the regular guidance of Profs. Kaminsky and Harrison—the researcher will occasionally interact with the project consultants and board of advisors: Bernard Amadei (MCEDC at CU), William Oakes (EPICS at Purdue), Cathy Leslie (Engineers Without Borders USA), Juan Lucena (HE at Mines), and Greg Rulifson (Mines, and a recent EDC graduate).

If you're interested in this project, please contact Shawhin directly (shawhin@colorado.edu or (510) 928-8846) or speak with Robyn Sandekian or Prof. Amadei. Applicants are required to be in high academic standing, with a minimum 3.5 GPA, and ideally, affiliated with MCEDC. You will be asked to submit a CV, provide two professional or academic references, and a 500- to 700-word statement of interest. The statement should speak to your interest in this particular research, qualifications you bring to the project, and your experience with EfD work and/or cultural and institutional analysis. We also encourage you to submit a writing sample that demonstrates your writing ability.

