



Search for the President

TERC

Cambridge, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

TERC, a leader in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education research, seeks a committed, collaborative, and strategic leader to propel the organization forward as its next President. An independent research nonprofit organization, TERC improves the teaching and learning of STEM through research, curriculum and technology development, educator professional development, evaluation, and support for reform in formal and informal learning environments. TERC researchers and staff are committed to a future in which diverse communities of learners regularly engage in creative, rigorous, and reflective inquiry, and where educators, children, and youth celebrate questioning, problem-solving, and experimentation. TERC's next President will steward the organization through the continued evolution of research and discovery, build and facilitate external partnerships, secure TERC's financial future, and continue to develop an organizational structure and culture that meets the demands of a post-pandemic and remote work environment.

TERC researchers, educators, and scientists collaborate closely with schools, school districts, institutions of higher education, other nonprofit STEM education and research organizations, and a host of informal education settings, including science centers, museums, industry, out-of-school time programs, libraries, and social service, youth-serving, and community-based organizations. At any given time, TERC's over 80 employees lead more than 100 projects involving learners across early childhood, K-12, undergraduate, graduate, and informal and adult education spaces. TERC has become a national thought leader in cultivating equity in STEM education research. In 2022, the National Science Foundation invested \$10 million over five years for TERC to lead equity efforts in the informal STEM learning field through the creation of the pioneering Reimagining Equity and Values in Informal STEM Education (REVISE) Center.

TERC is governed by a 10-member board of trustees, and its FY2023 revenue totaled \$15.7 million, the majority of which was derived from competitive government grants. Much of TERC's financial, communications, technology, human resources, and equity infrastructure is centralized. Three primary work units, the Center for STEM Teaching and Learning (CSTL), the Education Research Collaborative (ERC), and the STEM Education Evaluation Center (SEEC), house the organization's researchers and evaluators and retain some of their own distinct community practices and governance structures.

Reporting to the board of trustees, TERC's next President will be deeply committed to and passionate about advancing STEM education for educators, adults, children, and youth, particularly those in

traditionally underserved communities. They will be a systems thinker, an inclusive and trusted leader, an exceptional collaborator and facilitator, and will demonstrate the ability to inspire a multifaceted and highly productive research engine. As TERC experiences a generational transition among its senior researchers, the President must be a skilled navigator of change and culture who will promote cohesion and efficiency, align decentralized staff around shared values, structures, and processes, and invest in the next generation of researchers and their success in competing and securing grant funding. The President will be an eager spokesperson for TERC, increasing its visibility with various STEM education stakeholders, federal and state governments, corporations, and foundations. As the national education landscape evolves and junior principal investigators step into senior roles, the President will ensure fiscal stability within TERC's soft money model, working internally and externally to nurture success in securing funding from a broad range of funding sources, including federal and state agencies, private foundations, and others. Existing diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging (DEAIB) commitments will be deepened, and DEAIB values will continue to be woven through every facet of TERC. The President will mentor direct reports, provide professional development opportunities for all staff across the organization, and drive a highly productive, positive, and results-oriented culture.

ABOUT TERC

History

TERC, formerly called the Technical Education Research Centers, was founded in 1965 in response to the unprecedented technological and social changes affecting the knowledge and skills required to successfully participate in a democratic society. To prepare a new workforce of needed technicians and paraprofessionals, TERC began researching and developing ways to increase access for underserved populations to quality educational programs and materials. This early research emphasized collaboration with teachers and students in classrooms and lab settings and the value of a "hands-on" learning experience. While TERC's work has broadened considerably, the hallmarks of its early work are still the driving force behind its development and research endeavors.

Current Context

TERC's research and development extends across all areas of STEM education and revolves around fundamental questions related to teaching and learning in both formal and informal settings. Much of this work stays grounded in the realities of today's education spaces through direct collaboration with educators, teaching professionals, families, students, and other community stakeholders. TERC's projects span the range of STEM domains and explore the integration across these and other domains, including making, computational thinking, executive function development, and more. TERC's research, evaluation, and professional development focus areas include early, elementary, middle, and high school; higher education; adult education; and in-school and out-of-school time. Overlaying and embedded within these areas is a commitment to working with marginalized groups, including English language learners, low-income and first-generation students, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), disabled, and

gender-diverse learners. To learn more about TERC's research projects, please see [here](#); to learn more about its professional development offerings, please see [here](#), and to learn more about its evaluation work, please see [here](#).

TERC's groundbreaking research projects often produce materials for learners of all ages, many of them free. These include bilingual engineering activities, materials that mix math into everyday life, unique approaches to studying matter and robot design challenges, and many more. One of TERC's hallmark products is *Zoombinis*, an award-winning adventure game that teaches and reinforces valuable life skills, including problem decomposition, patterns and prediction, data representation, algorithm design, and more. Additionally, TERC developed *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space*, referred to as *Investigations*, a curriculum that has been used in classrooms across the United States and beyond for three decades. To learn more about TERC's products, please see [here](#). TERC contributes to and produces numerous publications each year that provide an in-depth look at the research and projects undertaken by TERC staff. Publications include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, op-ed pieces, and conference presentations, as well as blogs and social media targeting educators and parents on how to apply the results of TERC's work. To learn more about TERC's publications, please see [here](#).

Structure

TERC manages its research and development projects through three institutional work units: the Center for STEM Teaching and Learning (CSTL), the Education Research Collaborative (ERC), and the STEM Education Evaluation Center (SEEC). Originally grouped around shared research content, these groups have evolved and become more fluid and diverse in focus, with the exception of SEEC, which continues to be the hub of TERC's evaluation offerings. TERC staff often transition among work units to join new research projects or collaborate with new colleagues. Work units have a measure of governance and operational latitude while simultaneously promoting and sustaining TERC's overall purpose and mission.

TERC researchers are responsible for competing for and winning grants and securing contracts, which cover their work and their salaries. Like other "soft money" organizations, TERC staff experience the challenges of quiet periods and, therefore, job uncertainty. Research staff are expected to continuously secure new work while simultaneously addressing the responsibilities of the work that they have already secured. TERC's President will understand this model and the need to invest in junior researchers to build their portfolios, promote partnerships among TERC researchers, and cultivate relationships with potential funders and external collaborating researchers. TERC's centralized general fund is currently utilized for a variety of purposes, including providing researchers the opportunity to pursue creative endeavors and providing staff the freedom to construct the foundations of a solid research portfolio.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging

TERC is committed to modeling how diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging (DEAIB) can improve STEM education and research practices to engender inclusive learning environments and

equitable outcomes for all. TERC examines how societal and systemic inequities impact broadening participation and access to STEM education and explores underlying unquestioned assumptions that interfere with inclusion. TERC operates the TERC Scholars Program and the NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates summer internship program, both for historically underrepresented students.

TERC's DEAIIB strategic plan, laid out in 2021, has focused on increasing staff diversity and broadening recruitment networks, building and maintaining a productive and inclusive work environment, expanding mutually beneficial collaborations with historically marginalized educational communities for research and fundraising, and supporting research proposals and programs that promote DEAIIB education. The new President will support ongoing reflection, learning, and growth in this area for individual TERC scholars, teams, and the organization as a whole. Internal structures, processes, and cultures will mirror TERC's aspirations for equity and justice in its educational initiatives and research studies. To read more about TERC's DEAIIB commitment, please see [here](#).

Organizational Details

TERC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and employs 84 staff located across the United States and Canada. The organization has long had remote staff, but since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of staff working remotely has increased significantly, though two-thirds of staff still reside in Massachusetts. TERC is committed to supporting its largely remote workforce. Reporting to the President are the Chief Financial Officer; Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, Inclusion, and Belonging Officer; Chief Technology Officer; Director of Technology and Facilities; Director of Brand Strategy and Communication; Senior Strategic Project Lead; and Executive Assistant. Approximately 65 percent of staff have advanced degrees in science, mathematics, engineering, education, psychology, and technology.

TERC is governed by a 10-member board of trustees that meets three times a year to guide the organization in the areas of finance, local and national matters of educational policy, and strategic planning. Standing committees include finance, governance, and nominating.

In FY2023, TERC's operating revenue totaled \$13.3 million. Approximately 85 percent of the organization's operating revenue is derived from grant and contract revenue, with the remaining 15 percent deriving from royalty income, foundation revenue, workshop income, and rental and miscellaneous income. TERC benefited from \$2.4 million in investment returns, bringing its total revenue to \$15.7 million. TERC's general fund totals \$17.6 million.

TERC is supported by various funders, with government funders, especially the National Science Foundation (NSF), funding the majority of its work. NSF funding accounts for 62 percent of TERC's support. Other significant funders have included the U.S. Department of Education, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary

Education, among others. Over the last two years, TERC has won 26 proposals worth approximately \$30 million. To learn more about its partners and funders, please see [here](#).

Leadership Transition

Current TERC President Laurie Brennan has a long and distinguished history with the organization, starting as controller in 1994. Her expertise and strategic vision quickly earned her promotions to director of finance, chief financial officer, chief operating officer, interim President, and finally President in 2016. After a successful nine-year tenure as President, Brennan will retire in 2025.

Brennan has been instrumental in driving significant growth and success for TERC. This includes achieving record-breaking proposal success rates (51 percent in 2022) and improving TERC's internal structures, culture, and collaboration. Internal groups have been created to drive cross-TERC initiatives, fostering advancements in computational thinking, robotics, early algebra, neurodiversity, and technology integration into curriculums. Additionally, mechanisms have been established to capture and share senior staff's wealth of knowledge and experience, enhancing staff advancement across the organization and a rejuvenated community culture across work units. Brennan elevated TERC's DEAIIB commitment through the creation of the DEAIIB Office, staff education via events and professional development, and a review of hiring policies. This has resulted in a significant increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of TERC's staff, including research and leadership staff (35 percent BIPOC staff in 2023). Brennan led a comprehensive overhaul of TERC's branding, digital presence, and external and internal communications strategies. After these much-needed investments, TERC's next President will inherit an organization primed for increased national visibility and impact.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

This opportunity calls for a knowledgeable, strategic connector with a proven ability to navigate an expansive, evolving organization with a people—and progress-focused approach. The President will be essential in charting TERC's future and developing vision, initiatives, and partnerships to further promote TERC's expertise, projects, and impact in STEM education.

The President will steward TERC as it continues to produce high-quality, leading-edge research and services and navigates a series of interconnected challenges. TERC's reliance on grant funding promotes an entrepreneurial culture yet requires the President to be attuned to shifts in funding trends, explore revenue diversification, seek larger grants, and grow discretionary dollars. The President will be an enthusiastic external representative for TERC, building its leadership and visibility in the field with various stakeholders. Recruitment, retention, culture, and DEAIIB will be at the forefront, especially within the context of a decentralized organization. These challenges are especially critical over the next five to ten years as TERC experiences a generational shift, with many of its senior principal investigators retiring. This provides an opportunity to continue to invest in the next generation of researchers and build the culture and organizational structure that best supports operational efficiency and staff wellbeing. The next

President will be a champion for TERC, bringing intellectual curiosity, a flexible approach to leadership, and enthusiasm for TERC's mission.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

In partnership with board, staff, and other relevant stakeholders, the President will:

Continue to develop TERC's organizational strength through proactive strategic planning.

- Nurture growth and innovation aligned with TERC's mission and vision for the future of STEM education. Enable TERC to be a leader in addressing the systemic challenges of our time through innovative STEM learning and research.
- Be attuned to and proactive about responding to current and future trends in national education policy and funding.
- Navigate internal organizational structures and dynamics, build cohesion amongst work units and projects, prepare TERC to evolve with external forces, and use TERC's influence as appropriate to shape those external forces in favor of an environment that fosters equitable STEM education.

Represent TERC as its principal spokesperson and enhance its visibility.

- Champion TERC on a national scale, raise its profile, and deepen understanding of its mission and vision in order to increase its impact across the STEM education landscape.
- Build partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, including schools, school districts, universities, informal education organizations, peer research institutes, corporations, foundations, government entities, and others.

Ensure TERC's current and future fiscal sustainability.

- Cultivate relationships with foundations, corporations, and other private entities and creatively diversify revenue streams. Consider further opportunities for fee-for-service revenue and strategic funding collaboratives.
- Develop mechanisms to support existing success in soliciting grant funding from the federal government, particularly NSF. Explore opportunities for TERC to submit for and win larger grants, at the scale of the REVISE Center grant.
- Work with staff and trustees to manage and ensure accountability for TERC's budget and finances. Ensure the fiscal health, growth, and strategic utilization of the general fund.

Assess and invest in TERC's internal systems and infrastructure.

- Adapt TERC's organizational structures judiciously to allow for the most effective and efficient operations.

- Strike the appropriate balance between centralized and decentralized governance. Value all perspectives and areas of insight and appreciate the principles of shared governance.
- Invest in new technologies, marketing and communication, and other critical internal functions.

Advance TERC's commitment to DEAIIB internally and throughout its research, products, and services.

- Further TERC's mission and vision for equity-driven systems change within STEM education, centering the experiences of historically marginalized communities.
- Foster an organizational culture of inclusion, trust, respect, open communication, and continuous learning.
- Continue efforts to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of TERC staff and trustees. Minimize the upheaval inherent to a soft money structure that can impact the retention of BIPOC staff. Support efforts to recruit and retain staff with diverse thoughts, backgrounds, and interests.

Attract, develop, and engage an effective staff team.

- Ensure that all staff, including administrative and research staff, have the necessary support, resources, and professional development tools.
- Develop robust staff recruitment and retention mechanisms that consider both the benefits and challenges of TERC's grant-based revenue model. Create more opportunities for research staff to withstand periods with little or no grant funding. Invest in the next generation of principal investigators.
- Serve as a trusted collaborator and connector across geographies, work units, projects, and roles. Create opportunities for connection and community within a remote environment.

Engage, inform, and work symbiotically with TERC's board of trustees.

- Engage board members as active contributors, ambassadors, fiduciary custodians, and thought partners, leveraging their diverse expertise in short- and long-term strategy.
- Encourage trustees to embrace their ambassadorial roles on behalf of TERC.
- Maintain a robust and deeply diverse pipeline of board prospects.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRESIDENT

The President of TERC will bring many of the following qualifications, professional experiences, and personal attributes:

- Commitment to the belief that STEM literacy is critical to strengthening and preserving a democratic society.

- Experience as an established or emerging leader in STEM education preferred. Familiarity with national STEM education policy, policy at the federal agency level, and national STEM education trends.
- Demonstrated success in increasingly responsible positions in organizational leadership, preferably in a nonprofit environment.
- Evidence of strategic planning experience and translating and implementing a vision and strategy into a practical plan with measurable outcomes. The ability to prioritize blue-sky thinking while confronting everyday practicalities.
- Experience thriving in a collaborative environment with a shared sense of leadership. Excellent coalition-building and negotiating skills and the ability to work effectively with a variety of stakeholders and achieve consensus among differing opinions.
- Track record of leading substantial investments that embed diversity, equity, accessibility, inclusion, and belonging within an organization's strategy, mission, and vision.
- Commitment to recruiting, inspiring, and nurturing the development of dedicated, diverse staff spread across multiple locations and success in nurturing a healthy, dynamic, inclusive, and equitable work environment.
- Understanding of fiscal management at an organizational level, preferably in a nonprofit context, and an appreciation of the realities of grant funding. Business and contract negotiation skills.
- Experience with the grant proposal process of the NSF and/or other federal funding agencies. History of success in building relationships with and soliciting funding from private funding sources preferred.
- Exceptional communication skills, including public speaking and interpersonal skills, to persuasively convey the urgency and value of TERC's mission to a variety of audiences.
- Experience working with a governing board or analogous expertise.
- Advanced degree in a relevant discipline, including but not limited to education, mathematics, science, policy, business, or finance. EdD or PhD preferred.

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Salary range: \$250,000-\$320,000.

Location: Residing within daily commutable distance of Cambridge, MA, is preferred but not required. If not local, the willingness to engage in routine travel to TERC's Cambridge headquarters is required.

Commitment: The President must be able to travel to attend conferences, trainings, fundraising events, and other business as necessary to fulfill the position's responsibilities.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES

All inquiries, nominations, and applications (including resumes/CVs and two- to three-page letters of interest describing relevant experience relating to the opportunities, challenges, and qualifications

outlined above) should be directed in strict confidence to the search team below. Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted. **To be assured full consideration, please submit materials by Friday, November 8, 2024.**

Pamela Pezzoli, Partner
Tatiana Oberkoetter, Managing Associate
Alexis Ditaway, Associate
Melissa Barravecchio, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

TERC President Search

It is the policy of TERC to recruit, hire, train, and promote, in all job titles, and ensure that all other personnel actions are administered without regard to sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, handicap, disability, protected veteran status, or age. All Personnel Actions: compensation, transfers, layoffs, termination; and all TERC benefits are administered without consideration of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, handicap, disability, protected veteran's status, or age.

In addition, employees and applicants shall not be subjected to harassment, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination because they may have filed a complaint, assisted in an investigation or compliance review; opposing any act or practice that is unlawful under any Federal, State, or local law requiring equal opportunity and nondiscrimination; or exercising any other right protected by Federal, State, or local equal employment/non-discrimination law.

This policy is a covenant and a legal obligation of TERC in conducting all of its business. Every employee of TERC has a personal responsibility to support and promote this policy. If at any time you have questions or concerns in this area, please contact the Human Resources Department.