

Emily Hestness

AY 2015-16 All-S.T.A.R. Fellow

College of Education

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My positive experience as a graduate assistant during my Master's degree program at the University of Maryland was the primary motivator for my decision to return to pursue a doctoral degree in Science Education under the direction of the same faculty advisor. Now entering my eighth consecutive semester as a Ph.D. student and graduate assistant in the department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership (TLPL), I believe that my GA work has provided invaluable opportunities to gain the knowledge and experiences in research, teaching, and service that drew me to pursue a doctoral program.

As a GA researcher on a National Science Foundation grant focused on climate change education, I have been able to experience and contribute to scholarship that is not only of personal interest, but that I believe is of contemporary ecological and educational importance. My GA research experiences have prepared me to collaborate across disciplines and institutions, design and lead workshops for secondary science teachers and students, and to engage in all facets of the research process, including presenting and publishing our work.

In addition, serving as a GA instructor for two semesters in a senior-level undergraduate science methods course has connected me to science education in local school systems, while providing opportunities to learn from the perspectives of diverse stakeholders in teacher education.

I am confident that when I look back on my University of Maryland education, I will regard my time as a graduate assistant as providing essential learning experiences in my professional development.