

SOM
FOUNDATION

2026 STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING FELLOWSHIP



Structural Engineering Fellowship **2026**

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SOM FOUNDATION

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1. Fellowship

The \$20,000 Structural Engineering Fellowship is awarded annually to a student currently enrolled in a master's or PhD program or in the final year of their bachelor's program based in the United States who specializes in structural engineering to conduct independent travel and research that contributes to the SOM Foundation's current topic. The Structural Engineering Fellowship was created in 1998 to support research that has the potential to influence the practice and teaching of how structures can positively impact our built environment.

2. Topic: Exploring the Potential of Mobility Corridors

This year's topic aims to explore how every scale of movement infrastructure shapes our built environment. How might new approaches to mobility corridors provide sustainable growth, from improving how people and goods move from place to place to supporting the ecosystems, communities, and activities that surround them? Ultimately, how can existing or proposed interconnected systems help define the future of our cities?

3. Eligibility

Applicants must be graduating with a bachelor's degree or be currently enrolled in a master's or PhD program in civil and environmental engineering or architectural engineering with a specialization in structural engineering from a professionally accredited degree program in the United States. US citizenship is not required. Applicants must intend to enter the professional practice of structural engineering.

4. Application Requirements

Proposal

- Each applicant should briefly describe their interest in the role structural engineering has in our cities. The applicant is encouraged to select a group of structures that they believe envision responsible relationships with materiality and explain why they have the potential to shape a more equitable and sustainable future. Emphasis should be placed on structures that enhance the quality of life, creatively use materials, include high-performance systems, are environmentally responsible, and carefully integrate with architecture and/or the surrounding landscape.
- The proposal should range between 750 and 1,250 words.
- A short abstract (no more than 50 words) should be included before the proposal.
- The proposal must include a title as well as appropriate labeling and footnoting as necessary.
- The proposal should include additional images that support the thesis.
- The applicant is encouraged to work with an advisor to develop the proposal; however, work must be entirely the applicant's own.
- Nothing that identifies the applicant's name, gender, race, creed, advisor, or university may be included in the proposal.

Travel Itinerary

- The itinerary should include city(ies) and sites the applicant intends to document and analyze along with the estimated dates of travel. The travel itinerary should support the applicant's proposal.
- The applicant is encouraged to work with an advisor to develop the itinerary; however, work must be entirely the applicant's own.
- Nothing that identifies the applicant's name, gender, race, creed, advisor, or university may be included in the travel itinerary.

Preliminary Budget

- The preliminary budget should provide itemized use of the fellowship funds (e.g., travel, lodging, etc.).
- Nothing that identifies the applicant's name, gender, race, creed, advisor, or university may be included in the preliminary budget.

Letter of Recommendation

- One letter of recommendation, written by a faculty member or department chair familiar with the applicant's work, is required. The letter should be written on the university letterhead, should be no longer than two pages, and should address the applicant's specific strengths and how the award will further their growth. The letter should be sent directly to info@somfoundation.com. The email's subject should follow the format "2023 Structural Engineering Fellowship - Name of Applicant." The letter of recommendation cannot be provided by a current employee of SOM.

5. Application Format

- Single PDF format
- 8.5" × 11" portrait orientation
- 10 pages maximum
- 25 MB maximum

6. Application Deadline

Submit information via the application page form no later than **Friday, March 13, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. CDT**. Applications received after that time will not be considered.

You should receive an email confirming the information you submitted. If not, please contact us at info@somfoundation.com.

7. Jury

This year's jury will be led by **Yunlu Shen**, Associate Principal at SOM, New York, and will include::

- **Victoria Arbitrio** Associate Partner, Gilsanz Murray Steficek, New York
- **Nathan Brown** Associate Professor of Architectural Engineering, Penn State University, University Park, PA
- **Caitlin Mueller** Associate Professor in Architecture and in Civil and Environmental Engineering, MIT, Cambridge
- **Edward M. (Ted) Segal** Associate Professor in the Department of Engineering, Hofstra University; Segal Structures Group, Hempstead, New York

The SOM Foundation reserves the right to choose not to award, to co-award, or to split the prize as the jury deems appropriate.

8. Notification of Award

The winner will be notified no later than Friday, May 15, 2026.

9. Recipient Responsibilities

By accepting an award, the recipient agrees to:

- provide progress reports via email to the SOM Foundation Executive Director.
- complete their travel, documentation, and analysis within eighteen months of receiving the award, or within an agreed-upon time, depending on circumstances.
- forfeit all fellowship money to the SOM Foundation in the event that travel, documentation, and analysis are not completed within eighteen months, unless prior written approval is received from the SOM Foundation Executive Director.
- file a final report that summarizes findings and presents a thoughtful conclusion within four months after completing their travel.

Any changes to the proposal, including the itinerary and budget allocation, need to be submitted in writing and approved by the SOM Foundation.

10. Copyright

The winning application will become part of the SOM Foundation's archive. The SOM Foundation reserves the right to use the winning application—and recipient's monthly progress reports and final report—or any portion of them in press releases, presentations, exhibits, history books, and similar publications, as well as for public access for student and educational purposes in all media, including online. The author will retain the copyright of their work.