



**CAL POLY**  
College of Engineering



# UNDERSTANDING ENGINEERING EDUCATION CULTURE

## DR. ERIN CECH

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

• ***TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2020*** • ***10 A.M.***

Join us on zoom at: <https://calpoly.zoom.us/j/92659194829?pwd=RDdmemFhbytyQzJ4MzFIdExpbjYwZz09> Passcode: ceng

Can the culture of STEM help reproduce inequality? The professional cultures of STEM, which give each discipline its particular “feel” and unite discipline members under a taken-for-granted system of meanings and values, are not benign. Drawing from several NSF-funded survey- and interview-based studies, Dr. Erin Cech argues that these professional cultures can have built within them disadvantages for women, people of color, and LGBTQ persons in STEM. In this talk, she will discuss the role of three particular cultural ideologies—schemas of scientific excellence, depoliticization, and the meritocratic ideology—in producing these disadvantages.

### About Dr. Erin Cech

Dr. Erin Cech is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Michigan. Before coming to Michigan in 2016, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University and was on faculty at Rice University. She earned her Ph.D. in Sociology in 2011 from UC San Diego and undergraduate degrees in Electrical Engineering and Sociology from Montana State University. Cech’s research examines cultural mechanisms of inequality reproduction, especially through seemingly innocuous cultural beliefs and practices. Her work on inequality in STEM professions focuses on the recruitment and retention of women, people of color, and LGBTQ-identifying persons. Cech’s research is funded by multiple grants from the National Science Foundation. She has served on the editorial boards of the *American Journal of Sociology* and the *American Sociological Review*, and her research has been covered in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *CNN*, *Harvard Business Review*, and the news sections of *Science* and *Nature*. In 2020, she was named one of *Business Equality Magazine*’s “40 LGBTQ+ Leaders Under 40.”