



College of Education  
Professor Protege Program

2026-2027 PROGRAM

# PROJECTS



The College of Education is excited to invite you to apply to the Professor Protégé Program. This unique initiative is designed to offer education majors early access to meaningful professional development opportunities.

## Podcasting and Literacy Research Project

with Dr. Jenna Copper  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

Seeking a motivated student to assist with a research project comparing listening and reading comprehension. The role includes managing study materials, coordinating data collection, and helping plan a related podcast and audio-focused conference. Ideal for students interested in literacy, educational research, and media, this position offers hands-on experience in research, collaboration, and event planning.

## SRU EdCamp

with Dr. Samantha Fecich  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

Join the planning team for EdCamp SRU, a participant-driven professional learning event for educators. As a student worker, you'll help with event logistics, marketing, presenter coordination, and day-of support. Ideal for students interested in education, leadership, or event planning, this role contributes to a meaningful, community-focused professional development experience.

## A.I. and the Future of Teaching

with Dr. John Hicks  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

Help future educators develop a clear, grounded, professionally responsible relationship with AI, avoiding both naive enthusiasm and defensive rejection. This is not about tools. This is about judgment, ethics, pedagogy, and professional identity.

## Kids In Action Afterschool Inclusive Physical Activity Program Assistant

with Dr. Dallas Jackson  
Physical and Health Education  
Department

Assist with the coordination and implementation of Kids In Action (KIA), an afterschool physical activity program for children with disabilities and their siblings. Duties may include supporting Dr. Dallas Jackson with research, maintaining program electronics, managing photo/video archives, creating an end-of-year program video, recording/editing activity sessions, developing marketing materials, and other tasks aligned with your strengths.

## RockTEACH Outreach

with Dr. Sararose Lynch  
Special Education Department

This protege will assist with recruitment and outreach for the RockTEACH Program, which supports students exploring teaching as a career. Responsibilities include planning and running activities that engage high school students from high-need schools, inspire college attendance, and promote teaching as a future path.

## Belonging & Becoming: Cultivating Teacher Identity in First-Generation College Students

with Dr. Kathleen Melago  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

This opportunity is for a first-generation college student in teacher education who wants to develop leadership skills while supporting peers. The protégé will partner with a faculty mentor to design and facilitate 5-6 professional development sessions, create practical resources, and help plan events that build belonging, confidence, and skills for first-generation education majors.

## Keystone State Literacy Association

with Dr. Amy Orville  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

The Protégé will support the Keystone State Literacy Association by helping plan literacy events, promote initiatives, assist with member recruitment, and collaborate on outreach. This hands-on role builds leadership, collaboration, and literacy education skills while contributing to the association's growth and impact.

## First-Year Family and Community Fellowship

with Dr. Tricia Shelton  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

This project introduces aspiring educators to children and caregivers through collaboration with Auberele Human Service Organization. Students help plan child-centered events, deliver mini-sessions for foster parents, and engage in reflection and mentorship to develop cultural humility, asset-based thinking, and strategies for building trust with families.

## Special Education and Siblings

with Dr. Jesse Smith  
Special Education Department

Sibling relationships are diverse and play an important role in healthy family dynamics. This project explores research on siblings where one has a disability, focusing on areas such as career influence and entry into helping professions. As an ongoing study begun in Fall 2025, the professor-protégé will review literature to support presentations, publications, and a deeper understanding of how these relationships shape life outcomes.

## Spain Student Teaching and Code Switching Research

with Dr. Sara Tours  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

The protege will help support getting student ready for the Spain student teaching program in the fall and then also work on a research project the entire school year on code switching.

## ACTFL Board of Directors Support

with Dr. Junko Yamamoto  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

Dr. Junko Yamamoto currently serves as board member for ACTFL, a national professional organization for world language educators. The protege will assist her work as a board member. Part of the work is looking for grant sources for educators' professional development.

## Reimagining the Future of Playful Learning and the Role of Educators in the Age of AI

with Dr. Luqing Zang  
Curriculum, Instruction, and  
Educational Leadership Department

This project explores how Artificial Intelligence can enhance play-based learning by acting as a creative partner rather than replacing teachers. As a Professor Protégé, you will investigate AI's impact on child development, examine how it reshapes the teacher's role, and explore its integration with art, music, and storytelling. You'll also gain early insight into the ethics and practices of 21st-century teaching while helping shape the future of classrooms.

CONTACT US



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