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Back to school: UCSB teacher candidates assist local K-12s

Dozens of aspiring teachers in the UC Santa Barbara Teacher Education Program (TEP) are working alongside professional educators as thousands of K-12 students head back to school this week.

Each year in public schools across Santa Barbara, Goleta and Carpinteria, TEP graduate students provide invaluable support to teachers and thousands of students. As classes begin this week, 80 TEP candidates will complete uncompensated fieldwork, spending up to five days a week working four to eight hours per day at their assigned schools, while also tending to their own coursework at UCSB. TEP is an intensive 12-month program through which candidates earn a California teaching credential and a master's degree in education; the program is part of the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education.

Working during the day and studying at night can be a tough balancing act. Fortunately, state funding has made it possible for half of the TEP candidates this year to get full tuition support while they complete their studies and fieldwork.

Awarded by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to UCSB and the Santa Barbara County Education Office, $6.4 million in funding over four years via the Teacher Residency Implementation Project (TRIP) grant helps support graduate students seeking teaching credentials in high-need areas of special education,

bilingual authorization and secondary STEM subjects. The funding also encourages the diversification of the county’s teaching workforce by supporting teacher candidates whose backgrounds and experiences reflect California’s multilingual, first-generation and culturally diverse student population.

Students eligible for the grant receive approximately $38,750 in financial assistance. The total pays the full cost of the TEP tuition of approximately $21,000, plus support for housing, transportation and other living expenses during the intensive, year-long program. By the end of the 2026–27 academic year, the four-year initiative will have supported 147 teacher candidates.

Recipients of the grant commit to teaching for at least four years in a Santa Barbara County school or another California public school after earning their credential.

“Given the severe reductions of federal financial aid and the current attacks on education and diversity, this grant is essential to support the growth of the teaching workforce in California,” said Victoria “Tory” Harvey, director of UCSB’s Teacher Education Program.

“The impact of the TRIP grant on our local schools has been transformative,” added Amber Moran, a TEP teaching professor. “It has enabled our candidates — many of whom reflect the diverse backgrounds of the student population in local schools — to remain dedicated to the Santa Barbara community.”

“They aren't just learning to be teachers,” she added. “They are actively supporting our district partners and teaching in local schools. Our candidates are filling critical gaps in special education, bilingual education and STEM classrooms."

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of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.