

Service has always been a personal ethical commitment for how I live my life, and the professional commitment reinforces how I engage as a scholar, educator, and part of society. For as long as I can remember, I have taken the time to put in the work for others, and continuing to do so must remain a part of my practice. In particular, my service contributions center on advocacy for underserved youth and neurodivergent learners, mentorship within my academic community, and professional service at the national level. These areas form a cohesive service identity as each effort is aimed at bridging gaps. These are gaps between learners and opportunities, between research and practice, and between professionals across our field. By aligning my service with my scholarly focus on technology integration, inclusive pedagogy, and support for neurodivergent learners, I not only advance causes I care deeply about but also enrich my development as a researcher and educator.

Advocacy for Youth

One pillar of my service is advocating for those who have been traditionally underserved, including at-risk youth and students with invisible disabilities. Prior to my doctoral studies, I spent several years volunteering with *Camp New Day U.P.* – a free week-long summer camp for children aged 9–14 with incarcerated family members. There, I leveraged my training in trauma-informed practice and technology to support youth facing adversity. I designed and maintained the camp’s database and website, and I trained new staff and volunteers to use these tools effectively. This not only improved the camp’s operations but also ensured the continuity of support for dozens of campers each year. Even after transitioning into my doctoral program, I continue to assist Camp New Day U.P. remotely with technology updates and data management, demonstrating my long-term commitment to youth advocacy. The measurable outcomes of this work are evident in the camp’s sustained capacity to serve its campers. For example, the digital systems I implemented have streamlined camper enrollment and feedback processes, enabling the organization to track better and respond to campers’ needs.

Advocacy for Those Who Are Neurodivergent

Within higher education, my advocacy extends to promoting inclusivity and accessibility for neurodivergent learners. As an individual with invisible disabilities (including ADHD and visual processing challenges), I have firsthand insight into the structural barriers and inflexible practices that can impede student success. I use my voice and experience to shape the future and help others move to a culture that proactively embraces neurodiversity. I also openly share practical technological tools (speech-to-text software, audio recording, digital tools, etc.) that can “level the playing field” for students with executive function or sensory processing needs. In the long term, I aim to influence systemic change in our field: I will continue to promote improved teacher training and professional development on inclusive technology use, and I will support expanded definitions of academic rigor that recognize the realities of the digital age and the diverse ways students demonstrate learning.

My vision is to help build an educational culture where considerations of executive function, mental health, and sensory needs are central to instructional design and policy. I plan to collaborate with advocacy groups like the Disability Rights Center of Kansas and professional organizations to push for these changes, and I will hopefully measure my impact by observing shifts in policies (such as more flexible classroom policies or new training initiatives) and by gathering feedback from neurodivergent students regarding their educational experiences. Ultimately, this advocacy-driven service is tightly interwoven with my scholarship on inclusive

technology practices, ensuring that my research findings directly inform, and are informed by, efforts to create more equitable learning environments.

Professional and National Service

The third pillar of my service agenda is active involvement in professional organizations and service to the broader field of special education. Contributing to our professional community at the national level is both a responsibility and an opportunity to shape the future of our field. To that end, I am an engaged member of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and several of its divisions, including the Innovations in Special Education Technology (ISET) division, the Teacher Education Division (TED), and the Division for Research. These memberships align deliberately with my scholarly interests – ISET connects to my focus on technology integration, TED aligns with my dedication to teacher preparation and pedagogy, and the Division for Research complements my identity as an emerging scholar. Through these platforms, I stay up to date with innovative practices and research, and I contribute my insights to discussions on improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Additionally, I am preparing to present my scholarship at upcoming conferences: I have submitted a poster proposal to the TED Conference this year based on my recent literature review of technology-focused teacher professional development. By presenting at TED and similar venues, I aim to disseminate evidence-based practices from my research to teacher educators and practitioners, creating a feedback loop where I can also learn from attendees' questions and experiences. I will gauge the impact of these presentations through attendee feedback and engagement (such as follow-up contacts or requests for resources), using that information to refine both my research and how I share it.

Service In the Future

Looking ahead, I am eager to expand my leadership in professional organizations. I plan to become active in TED's Kaleidoscope committee, which is the doctoral student arm of the Teacher Education Division. Through Kaleidoscope, I will collaborate with other graduate students nationwide to organize research-sharing sessions and support networks for early-career scholars. This involvement will not only allow me to mentor and learn from peers beyond my home institution but also help shape the direction of teacher education conversations within CEC.

By participating in high-impact service roles, I can contribute to guidelines and resources that many teachers and students will benefit from. These plans exemplify how my service is aligned with a long-term vision: as I grow into a faculty career, I will continue to blend scholarship, advocacy, and professional service to lead positive change in our field. Going forward, I see my service commitment evolving into a cohesive scholarly service agenda.

I also recognize that advocacy cannot exist without community. I aim to listen to and learn from other students with exceptionalities, amplifying their unique voices and needs and partnering with them to push for change. My service emerges from where I have been, moves through where I stand, and heads toward the future we can build. One that listens more, harms less, and holds space for every learner to thrive.