NCATE Exhibit 4.3.a College of Education Diversity Proficiencies

1. An understanding of complex socio-cultural identities
Through selective courses, teacher candidates are encouraged to reflect upon their own cultural socialization and identify its impact on the development of their worldview. They are prompted to recognize alternative ways of being, while simultaneously identifying how issues of power shape differently the experiences of individuals and groups. They are introduced to forms of discrimination in society and schools and are asked to begin to identify the intersections of structural forces (i.e. class, gender, race, immigration status, language, etc.). They are guided towards the cultivation of openness towards difference and a gradual journey towards cultural competence.

2. A cultivation of the ability to identify and create culturally inclusive curricular material
Candidates are prompted to critically analyze existing curricular material and discern hidden messages and biases. Moreover, they are encouraged to assume an active role in the creation of globally and multiculturally inclusive thematic units, recognizing that inclusivity is not restrained to diverse ethnic content but various dimensions of diversity (such as language, ability, gender, etc). Inclusion of diverse perspectives and cultivation of critical analysis skills are promoted in curricular material that is used in the candidates’ classes, in an effort to model such an approach.

3. A development of culturally responsive pedagogical skill
The candidates are prompted to avoid stereotypical and over-generalized learning orientations but rather become aware of their prospective students’ individual and cultural learning styles. The unit worked with Educational Benchmark Incorporated (EBI) (see also Standard 1) to administer an electronic survey to our graduates, 2010-2013. The unit supplied the email addresses of 603 graduates and of the 576 emails that were verified, 19 opted out, and 177 responded for a return rate of 30.7%. Confidentiality was ensured through EBI who sent 3 follow-up emails to participants. The survey measured respondents’ views of their learning along five dimensions, and one dimension was Classroom Equity and Diversity. The mean respondent was a White Female between the ages of 21-40 who majored either in Elementary or Secondary Education and whose GPA at the undergraduate or graduate level was between 3.5 - 4.0 at graduation. Related to the development of pedagogical skill, the EBI survey of graduates asked them to scale a response to the statement (Q16), “I was prepared to create instructional experiences adapted for students who learn differently.” Responses to Question 16 (N= 123) showed that 72.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed with that statement. They were also asked to scale a response to the statement (Q17), “How confident are you that you have grown in your ability to use teaching and learning strategies consistent with an understanding of multiple perspectives, cultural and linguistic diversity, and the different learning styles?” Of the 46 who responded, 67.4% said that they agreed or strongly agreed with that statement.

4. A creation of alternative assessment techniques
Following along the culturally influenced curricular and pedagogical approaches, candidates become aware of the different ways in which demonstration of knowledge can be assessed. Thus, they are encouraged to learn and practice incorporating various informal assessment methods, while at the same time cultivating students’ abilities and confidence in performing on traditional formal assessments (e.g. written tests). Using the results of the EBI assessment, the unit found that graduates who responded to question, (Q11) “I was prepared to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate student progress” agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In responding to another question, (Q20) “To what degree have you grown in your ability to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate student progress?” seventy-four percent (74%) said that they had grown or grown a lot. The IETP Portfolio I contains a domain, Instructional Practice, that measures how well candidates understand how to use assessments to monitor student progress. Candidates in the Initial Licensure
undergraduate program had a mean score of 2.73, “Developing” for this domain and the graduates in Initial Licensure had a mean score of 4.0, “Proficient.”

5. A cultivation of cross-cultural competence
Following the development of students’ critical cultural self-knowledge is the cultivation of their skill in cross-cultural communication. Through their experiences in their core curriculum classes (prior to admission to Teacher Education) and in their clinical experiences in the COE, the candidates are exposed to diverse faculty (NCATE Exhibit 4.3.d Faculty Demographics) and a student body (NCATE Exhibit 4.3.e Candidate Demographics). They are asked to collaborate with their colleagues for class projects and are encouraged to work continually on cultivating their skill in cross-cultural communication. They are prompted to look for students’ strengths, avoid colorblind perspectives, and act out of a disposition of genuine care.

In the course EDUC 413/613 Education for a Changing World begins to help teacher candidates reflect continually upon their cross-cultural competence. Initially, the students write individually a reflective essay in which they reflect upon their cultural socialization experiences. Later on, they are invited to reflect upon the extent/quality of their cross-cultural interactions on a day-to-day basis through an activity called, Relationship Webs (Banks, 2008; Gay, 2010). This activity requires candidates to reflect individually on interactions with others to elicit personal or professional cross-cultural experiences. Then the candidates form small groups to compare and contrast their cross-cultural interactions, particularly noting the duration and quality of the interactions. Each small group creates a web to represent their group’s interactions, which is shared with the whole class. These provide a springboard for discussion and identification of strengths-weaknesses. Toward the end of the semester, candidates are encouraged to identify their strengths and weaknesses in the cultivation of caring cross-cultural relationships and steps that they can take to counteract their potential weaknesses. (See Appendix 4 References).