Question 4.6.5.a – What are specific examples of class activities that highlight diversity issues?

The faculty of the Department of Special Education, Foundations and Research, in which the EDUC courses described here reside, provided the following responses for the ECU CAEP Institutional Report Addendum:

**EDUC 3002: Introduction to Diversity** is about human diversity, therefore all assignments and activities are geared toward diversity related issues. Example assignments and activities noted below are a compilation across sections:

- In-class discussions and oral projects (scaffolded by readings done prior to the discussion) about issues ranging from racial and ethnic diversity, to sex, gender, and sexuality, to diversity of religion and cognitive differences.

- Activities to practice effective communication including 1) Individual presentations on world religions, 2) Discussions about how to deal with religion in the classroom, 3) Writing an essay about white privilege, 4) Watching and writing about a movie that depicts the American Dream.

- Completing a global awareness project.

- Engaging with diverse populations (e.g., a panel of ECU LGBT students, taking a “diversity field trip” in the community so as to engage with others dissimilar from oneself).

- Attending passport diversity events on campus, e.g., Julian Bond lecture, Diversity symposia, Office of Equity and Diversity workshops.

- Daily Classwork: Classroom and group discussions on culture, race, immigration, language background, gender, sexuality, and class. These discussions often involve analyzing print and video examples of current events, media, and narratives related to each of the topics.

- Quizzes: Separate quizzes on each of the following: racism, immigration and language, sexism, heterosexism, classism, and multicultural education.

- Reflections and Culminating Essay: Written reflections connected to in-class discussions on culture, race, immigration, language background, gender, sexuality, and class. Two examples of the reflections are:
  - For culture, the candidates identify and reflect on various aspects of their own cultural and/or social memberships. This is used, and an in-class discussion to learn about Sonia Nieto’s 7 characteristics of culture.
  - For race, the students compare the article “Stealing a Bag of Potato Chips and Other Crimes of Resistance” by Victor Rios with the TED Talk video, The Danger of a Single Story’ by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This leads to an in-class presentation and discussion on the definitions and types of race and racism.
• Use of anthropologist Horace Miner’s classic work concerning the Nacirema (American spelled backward) to help students understand how routine daily life practices are influenced by cultural beliefs. The citation is Horace Miner (1956). Body ritual among the Nacirema, American Anthropologist, 58(3).

• For a global focus, use of YouTube videos of the Roma to introduce students to discrimination and racism found in some European and Asian countries and videos of the Fa’afafine (or Fakaleiti) to introduce students to sexual roles "mandated" by some South Pacific nations.

• Use of maps of Bosnia and Serbia to discuss the concept of mono curriculums. These represent public schools that purposely use two different textbooks to describe historical events. The Bosnia-Serbian war, for example, is explained differently to Bosnian students in their assigned textbooks than it is in the textbooks used by Serbian students. All the students attend the same physical school building. This activity is designed to help students understand the need for non-biased accounts in instructional materials purchased by school systems.

• In EDUC 3002, panelists from the LGBT association engaged students in a discussion concerning their life experiences. Information from this discussion was included in a lecture concerning socially-related obstacles to learning in school classrooms.

• White Teacher: An in-class project where candidates learn to use the Cultural Proficiency Continuum (created by Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 1999). During two weeks of class, the students read Vivian Paley’s White Teacher, an autobiographical account of a white teacher learning to work with and be responsive to students of color in her classroom. Groups work together to use the continuum to analyze the author’s various levels of cultural proficiency in the area race. Then, in their groups, the candidates share their own views, actions, and personal examples with regard to cultural difference. They work together to analyze those examples according to the continuum.

• Cultural Awareness Paper: Stemming from the in-class project using the Cultural Proficiency Continuum, each student writes a paper on their stronger and weaker areas of cultural diversity and on how they can improve their cultural awareness so as to work more effectively and responsively with students from various cultural backgrounds.

• Activities about identifying stereotypes, biases, and logical fallacies regarding diversity issues in everyday life. For instance, discussion and identification examples of sweeping generalizations (e.g., "Poor people are lazy," or "Christians are intolerant"), the status-quo bias ("Almost everyone is straight; therefore, being gay is unnatural") to the ecological fallacy ("On average, girls show better than boys on mathematical problem solving, so girls are always better at that than boys"), and other biases.

• Interactive journals between candidate and professor, where they can write about any diversity issues that are interesting to them and are related to the class. While candidates have wide latitude on what diversity issues they can write, three of the five entries have to
respond to one of five possible prompts, usually asking them to reflect on biases that they know they have regarding diversity or their own perspective on diversity-related issues from class.

**EDUC 3200: Foundations of American Education** meets cultural diversity goals through INTASC Standard 3: Diverse Learners. That is, learning adapted for culturally diverse learners and understanding concepts like "cultural pluralism" and allied multicultural outcomes as an equality strategy recognizing the abandonment of prior attempts at "assimilation" and "separation" in education may not be workable. Examples of activities within the course which highlight cultural diversity include:

- **School Analysis Paper:** A 3000-word paper where the candidates analyze a North Carolina public school according to school and classroom culture. In one or two sections of the paper, they specifically focus on the experiences of students from traditionally marginalized race and class backgrounds.

- **Reaction Paper 3:** A 2 to 3-page paper where the candidates reflect on the issues of segregation, the hidden curriculum, and the myth of the culture of poverty.

- **Use of sociologist Ray Rist's classic work concerning teacher perceptions and their relationships to social class and the self-fulfilling prophecy.** The citation to a re-issue of the article is Ray Rist (2000). Student social class and teacher expectations, Harvard Educational Review 70(3), 257-301.

- **Use of guest speakers.** For example, Miranda Hurt was a guest presenter. Miranda is a currently enrolled, first-year student at ECU. Miranda was homeless for 9 months before becoming an ECU student. Miranda’s presentation supplemented textbook readings, census data, and North Carolina regulations to examine school policies and procedures set up to address the needs of homeless students. The focus was on The McKinney-Vento Act; the federal legislation designed to insure equitable schooling for homeless children.

- **Use of YouTube videos of school boards acting on disciplinary charges against teachers and a video of a school board whose demographics do not match those of the school children enrolled in the district's schools.** These viewings are now being followed by candidate’s role playing a school board that is addressing cuts to a school budget and ethical issues involving teachers. The cuts to the budget scenario emphasize the needs of children from all income groups, religious beliefs, and different disabilities. This allows candidates to demonstrate their personal views on diversity experiences and what they have learned from class lectures and activities.

- **Daily Classwork:** In class whole-class and group discussions and activities to prepare for the above assignments. These include:
  - Watching a video, Trading Schools, where the candidates examine how segregation affects school funding, resources, curriculum, pedagogy, and discipline.
  - Analyzing videos from the 4th season of the cable TV show The Wire. The candidates use specific concepts—e.g., the hidden curriculum, the structural aspects of
schooling, the myth of the culture of poverty—to learn to critically analyze the experiences of traditionally marginalized students.

**EDUC 4400: Foundations of School Learning, Motivation, and Assessment.** The focus is to provide pre-service teachers with an intellectual and operational foundation leading to classroom practices that are effective for all of their students. In this sense, the EDUC 4400 course is specifically designed to meet the needs of future educators. Examples of activities within the course which highlight diversity include:

Assignments include:

- Taking a “diversity field trip” in the community so as to engage with others dissimilar from oneself.
- Watching and writing about a movie that depicts the students with learning differences.
- Writing a paper in which candidates identify how teachers work with diverse students in their internship classrooms.
- Develop a culturally responsive lesson plan.