

Counselor Education's Statement on Diversity, Multiculturalism, Inclusion, and Social Justice

UConn's Counselor Education preparation program is committed to creating a just society. The realities of social injustices in our social, political, and economic systems require more than a passive approach to these societal problems. Program faculty endorse an activist position by promoting consciousness-raising on how inequalities and social injustices play out in our interpersonal interactions, in school environments, and in all aspects of society. We believe that personal, cultural, and institutional discrimination creates privilege for some while creating cultural and systemic barriers for others. Our curriculum focuses on how inequities shape school and community policies, the distribution of resources, and how well the social-emotional needs of children are met. The existence of social injustice cannot be ignored because it negatively affects human learning and the lives of students and their families.

Our faculty teach from a social justice perspective. Emphasis is placed on social justice, diversity, multiculturalism, social capital, and inclusive principles during the school counselor preparation program. Courses in the curriculum infuse theory, research, and scholarly knowledge on how personal and institutional forms of oppression can lead to serious mental health issues as well as students underperforming academically. We value diversity in all its forms; for all people, across race, class, ethnicity, age, nationality, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, sex, gender identity, and other diversity indices. Furthermore, we believe that diversity and inclusion of all people and groups are potential sources of strength and renewal rather than division and strife.

Some of our curriculum invites students to review their own multicultural histories and explore their cultural origins. Because the counseling faculty has intentional goals related to diversity and social justice advocacy, these issues inevitably become personal in the classroom. Students and faculty are encouraged to embrace what they discover about their conscious and unconscious attitudes and behaviors that might discriminate against and oppress others. When conflicts or misunderstandings occur, we encourage and sometimes require, a "working through" of any interpersonal impasses at a high level of self-awareness, compassion, sensitivity, and effectiveness so that growth and healing can occur.

Furthermore, we define this part of the curriculum, not just as social-political issues that cause discrimination and oppression, but as violations of people's human rights that damage millions physically and psychologically world-wide. These human rights issues have been guaranteed and protected by state and federal laws, our Constitution and Bill of Rights, and laws in the state of Connecticut. Our statement on Diversity, Multiculturalism, Inclusion, and Social Justice is also congruent with UCONN's Statement on Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence, the American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics, and the American Psychological Association (APA) Code of Ethics.