Guiding Principles

Department of Secondary Education
Woodring College of Education
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What we do:
• Prepare teachers who are committed to a just, sustainable future for all generations
• Prepare teachers who are able to engage in systems thinking
• Provide tools and experiences to develop teachers who are change agents who can understand and work within existing structures to transform systems
• Hold and nurture space for the development of communities of learners
• Foster creativity and mindfulness
• Engage in respectful community dialog given a variety of viewpoints and perspectives
• Create contexts in which everyone can express their experiences with confidence, knowing they will be heard with sensitivity

We believe:
• Teaching and learning are collaborative and are built on critical inquiry processes
• Learning is a reciprocal, on-going process, requiring openness to new ideas
• Effective democratic teachers build on the valuable knowledge and assets students bring to the learning process
• In honoring and supporting the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.
• In recognizing that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.
• In promoting social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible

We center SOCIAL JUSTICE with the assertions that:
• Systems of power and privilege give rise to inequities in society
• Justice requires a critical analysis of social, cultural and institutional systems and how they contribute to inequity
• Critical self-reflection helps us understand the beliefs and positions we hold, our world view, and where those perspectives come from
• Staying open to other points of view, and understanding and valuing the lived experiences of others is a central requisite of working toward a more just society

We promote the development of critical inquiry by:
• Helping teacher candidates develop curiosity and the need to know
• Building powers of deep observation, listening, and interpretation
• Engaging school and community members in action research
• Using critical inquiry as a pedagogical tool
• Conducting inquiry at all levels – personal, classroom, systems

Candidates who thrive in our program possess and continue developing abilities to:
• Display curiosity and open-mindedness toward the life experiences and perspectives of others
• Listen to and observe student thinking
• Demonstrate intercultural understanding
• Employ critical consciousness
• Engage with and appreciate ambiguity
• Acknowledge and adapt to the tensions of critical communities and democratic processes
• Have an assets-based approach to students and to one another as colleagues
• Be flexible and ready to adapt when needed