

TCNJ Department of Counselor Education Cultural Diversity & Human Rights Statement

Twenty-first-century counselors recognize the impact of white supremacy culture and colonization in creating and maintaining systems of privilege and oppression, which affect all aspects of human life, including mental health and wellness. To best serve the needs of our students and clients, we believe the counseling profession, counselor educators, practicing counselors, and counselors-in-training must develop a complex and nuanced understanding of human diversity and the conditions that impact human rights. Toward this end, the Department of Counselor Education faculty is committed to facilitating honest and respectful discussions to prepare students to become social justice advocates and agents of change.

Consistent with the American Counseling Association's Code of Ethics, the Department of Counselor Education requires that its students commit themselves to endeavor to understand all people's lived experiences and promote their well-being. The Department of Counselor Education at The College of New Jersey fully endorses the Association of Multicultural Counseling and Development's (AMCD) Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies. We expect students to commit themselves to an ongoing learning process to:

1. Increase their self-awareness, particularly regarding personal privilege/marginalization, biases, and assumptions;
2. Develop the knowledge and skills to understand their client's worldview deeply;
3. Cultivate the knowledge, skills, and advocacy interventions necessary to work with clients across the spectrum of human diversity;
4. Expand their understanding of how privilege and power impact the counseling relationship.

When students accept admission into the counselor education programs at The College of New Jersey, they agree to commit themselves to this ongoing learning process related to cultural diversity and human rights. In support of our students' commitment to this position, faculty in the department will create and nurture an inclusive learning community, and commit to:

1. Fostering the holistic development of all students, not just their academic adjustment;
2. Developing lines of scholarship and supporting student research and professional development on multiculturalism (e.g., dismantling systems of oppression; racial identity development);
3. Infusing multicultural and social justice issues into all courses, not just our course on multicultural counseling;
4. Genuinely sharing with all students our own experiences of cultural exploration and development, while supporting the multicultural journeys of our students;
5. Creating classroom environments where students can be both brave and vulnerable, with an understanding that insensitive and/or harmful comments and behaviors must be addressed;
6. Supporting and encouraging students' exploration of biases, preconceived notions, and personal strengths and/or limitations, while attempting to understand the worldview of his/her/their culturally different clients.

The faculty believes that this commitment by students and faculty alike will help to create and support an inclusive learning community within our department, the School of Education, and the College and will support the development of counselors who are culturally competent practitioners.

Verification of Understanding

The academic programs in the department are established to prepare graduates of the programs to enter “professions.” The term professions in this context means (a) an occupation/career for which there is a known body of knowledge (both theoretical and research), (b) an identified set of appropriate skills, and (c) a set of behavioral standards adhered to by members of the profession. As a student admitted to a program in the department, you are engaged in a professional preparation curriculum. Therefore, upon admission, the department accepts you as a professional and expects you to act in accordance with the highest professional standards.

You will be required to read and understand several different sets of ethical standards as a part of your coursework in your program of study. The department faculty expects you to be knowledgeable of these standards and to act in accordance with them. However, professionalism encompasses much more than just adherence to ethical and/or other written standards. It includes appropriate and effective ways of interaction with people, matters of personal conduct and self-presentation, and respect for people, property and processes.

In order to ensure proper training and client care, a counselor-in-training must be able to demonstrate professional character, the ability to communicate well and convey warmth, genuineness, respect, and empathy in interactions with others, including clients, classmates, staff, and faculty. Counseling students are expected to be able to demonstrate the ability to accept and integrate feedback, be aware of their impact on others, accept personal responsibility for their actions, express emotions appropriately, resolve conflicts, and demonstrate professional judgment in decision-making.

Student progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with ethical standards, or when intrapersonal, interpersonal or professional behavior interferes with education and training requirements for self or others. Therefore, it is crucial to become familiar with the policies and procedures of the program as published in the *Graduate Bulletin* and the departmental *Student Manual* in order to create an environment that is conducive to student learning and growth.

Students are asked to affirm the following statement with their signature:

I agree to read and be familiar with the following documents:

- The College of New Jersey’s *Graduate Bulletin*
- The Department of Counselor Education’s *Student Manual*
- The American Counseling Association’s *Code of Ethics*
- The Department’s “Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Statement”

Printed Name

Signature

Date