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Maine State Department of Education

FROM: Thomas College Education Program – Elementary Education

DATE: December 9, 2011

SUBJECT: Interim Report Addressing Review Team Report (Nov, 2009)

**Background**

The Thomas College Education Program Interim Report is in response to Board recommendations in the area of Standard 4 – Diversity, from the State Program Approval Visit of the Thomas College Teacher Preparation Program – Elementary Education.

A program approval visit to Thomas College was conducted November 1-4, 2009 for the purpose of reviewing the professional educator program in Elementary Education.

As part of the report the following recommendations were made:

*“The State Board of Education accept the Review Team Report of Findings and grant State program approval to the Thomas College Elementary Education program through December 31, 2011. It is further recommended that the Board require an Interim Report, addressing the Team’s findings and recommendations concerning Standard 4, Diversity, be submitted to the State Board by December 31, 2011. With acceptance of this report the Board may then extend State program approval to the Fall of 2014.”*

-From *Exhibit* to Members of the State Board of Education, entitled “Consideration of the Thomas College Team Report of Findings,” February 10, 2010 submitted by Susan A. Gendron – Commissioner

This Thomas College Education Program Interim Report is intended to be a “living” document that will be reviewed annually. Revisions, updates, and additions will be made as necessary to continue embedding diversity into the culture at Thomas College. The report is meant to be inclusive of all members of the College community, including the Education Program, focusing particularly on historically or currently underrepresented and minority groups through use of the terms *people of color, ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.*

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### **Bibliography**

### **Executive Summary**

Diversity is critical to the future of Thomas College. A diverse College enhances the breadth, depth, and quality of our programs by increasing the variety of experiences, perspectives and scholarly interests among our faculty and students.

In addressing the recommendations cited in the Review Team Report - November 2009, Thomas College is pleased to report that the Education Program has accomplished the following since the 2009 visit:

1. Conducted an extensive Inventory of Diversity in the Curriculum.
2. Designed a program standard related to Diversity, and created a new Education Course Matrix identifying where diversity and multicultural education are included in courses.
3. Adopted and implemented the Thomas College Diversity Statement in collaboration with an appointed College ad hoc committee on diversity.
4. Expanded field placements to include Montello Elementary School in Lewiston, ME.
5. Hired a new education faculty member from an underrepresented group.
6. Completed a comprehensive inventory and design of new assessment requirements.
7. Updated the 2009-11 Thomas College data related to student enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

In accomplishing these tasks, the goal of the Education Program has been to promote a culture of inclusion, opportunity and tolerance that will benefit all members of the academic and professional education community.

**I. Standard Four – Diversity** (from the Team Report of the Maine’s Standards for Initial Certification of Teachers, 2009)

*The unit designs, implements, and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. These experiences include working with diverse higher education and school faculty, diverse candidates, and diverse students in P-12 schools.*

**II. State Approval Team Recommendations to the Thomas College Education Program – Elementary Education**

1. *The unit needs to develop a diversity plan to make efforts to increase and retain both students and faculty with diverse backgrounds.*
2. *The unit needs to develop a plan for having their teacher candidates gain the knowledge and experiences necessary to prepare them to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This plan needs to include what experiences students will have in their field experiences to increase their knowledge and skills in working with students from diverse cultural groups. This plan also needs to include additional materials in courses that would increase teacher candidates’ knowledge of diverse cultural groups and backgrounds.*
3. *The unit needs to develop assessments for measuring teacher candidates’ proficiencies in working with students and faculty from diverse cultural backgrounds. The unit needs to specify and articulate how these assessments will measure these proficiencies.*

**III. Overview: The Importance of Diversity at Thomas College**

**Thomas College Diversity Statement (adopted 2011)**

*Thomas College is committed to promoting a diverse community in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We recognize and appreciate diversity in relation to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status, age, socioeconomic status, and disability. Prominent among the values that define the Thomas College community is civility, which includes mutual respect, fairness, and appreciation of differences. All members of the College are called upon to promote and value this ethic of common respect and civility.*

The Thomas College Diversity Statement was developed in the spring of 2011 by an ad hoc committee of faculty/staff created by the Student Life Committee of the Faculty Senate. It included four faculty (including Dr. Phil McPhee-Brown from the Education Program), and representation from student affairs, counseling, and retention services. The statement was approved by Student Affairs and then formally adopted by Provost’s Council for inclusion in the Student Handbook and the College Catalog.

The population of Maine is growing more diverse. A major goal of diversity and multicultural education is to provide students with the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their ethnic culture, the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures (Banks, 19990). If the Thomas College Education Program wishes to produce graduates equipped to take a prominent place in the world of education, those graduates must:

- Examine, explore, experience, and discuss cultural diversity
- Learn to be accepting of people and ideas not their own
- Learn to be sensitive to and accepting of people with disabilities
- Learn how to deal with diversity issues
- Learn to be sensitive to cultural differences
- Develop personal skills, and demonstrate competencies and proficiencies in

### understanding diversity

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that students of color and ethnic minorities will become the majority in K-12 classrooms by the middle of the 21st century. This dramatic shift in the proportion of minority students is already taking place, with 37% of elementary and secondary school students now identified as students of color or ethnic minorities. Current population estimates project that “minority” students will become the majority in U.S. classrooms by 2030, with an estimated 54% of all students being people of color and ethnic minorities.

Establishing a closer fit between pedagogy and culturally different learning styles positively impacts students both socially and academically (Gay, 2002). Culturally relevant pedagogy “not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469). Thus, diversity is a key component for educational excellence in the 21st century.

While diversity is an invaluable source of intelligence for our society, we should not believe that this new learning is achieved easily. Learning with and from people whose backgrounds and assumptions are different from our own is enriching, but given our national history of separation it is difficult. Diversity on campus and in the curriculum is producing new knowledge, new respect, and a new commitment to the community. This is an extraordinary resource for a democracy that is growing more diverse by the minute.

### **Our Guiding Principles**

The Education Program is guided in thought and practice by the Thomas College *Diversity Statement*. Since the 2009 Report, the Education Faculty has discussed and developed a series of actions associated with supporting and enhancing the preparation of teacher candidates. In the area of teacher preparation and specifically *Diversity*, we are informed by the work and research of James A. Banks – *Cultural Diversity and Education (2006)*, Geneva Gay - *Cultural Responsive Teaching (2000)*, and Randall Lindsey-Raymond Terrell-Kikanza Nuri-Robbins - *Cultural Proficiency (2003)* in addressing the areas of multicultural education and cultural pluralism.

According to Arrendondo (1996) there are three distinct stages of a successful diversity initiative. They are (1) Preparation, (2) Implementation, and (3) Long Term Activities. The following is an outline of the Education Program’s individual components within each stage:

#### **STAGE 1: PREPARATION**

- Organizational Response to a Need
- Preliminary Response Plan Elements
- Leadership Commitment Obtained and Formalized

#### **STAGE 2: IMPLEMENTATION**

- College Diversity Team Selected and Activated
- Organizational Diversity Statement Written
- Communication Plan Developed
- Diversity Training and Education Plan

#### **STAGE 3: LONG TERM ACTIVITIES**

- Progress Checks
- Education Activities
- Community Outreach Activities

### Program Assessments and Measurements

Using the aforementioned template for diversity planning and implementation, the Education Program has initiated a plan of action and activities that address the recommendations of the Team Report. First and foremost we have created a set of Education Program Goals related to Diversity. These are as follows:

#### **Education Program Goals - Diversity**

**Goal 1:** Foster an educational environment that respects differences and encourages inclusiveness.

**Goal 2:** Increase the recruitment, retention, and representation of people of color, ethnic minorities, women, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented students, faculty, administrators, and staff.

**Goal 3:** Develop and implement a comprehensive system of education and training focused on effectively managing and leveraging diversity for students, faculty, and staff.

**Goal 4:** Build and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities, businesses, and civic and community organizations to support diversity and multiculturalism in the education program and in external communities.

**Goal 5:** Develop and execute a comprehensive Diversity Plan.

The Thomas College Education Program has a commitment to cultural pluralism and provides opportunities for teacher candidate development in the areas of human rights, social justice, educational quality, and multicultural and global education.

#### **IV. Thomas College Education Program Response to Report Recommendations**

The following information addresses the specific recommendations made by the report. Our responses are organized in the following manner:

- 1.) The Report Team recommendation(s)
- 2.) Developing indicators that focus on building community, establishing inclusive values, organizing support for diversity, orchestrating learning, and mobilizing resources.
- 3.) The identification of Artifacts that list specific activities and measures for program that reflect the program goals related to diversity.

#### **Response: Recommendation #1**

*The unit needs to develop a diversity plan to make efforts to increase and retain both students and faculty with diverse backgrounds.*

#### **Education Program Indicators:**

- Exhibit practices that enhance both an understanding of diversity and instruction that meets the needs of society
- Professional participation in diverse communities
- Recruit diverse students, teachers and teacher educators

#### **Artifacts:**

The following strategies have been developed and implemented, with the support of the Thomas College community, in support of the education program's goal to increase and retain underrepresented populations and the diversity of our students and faculty.

1. Offer educational and training experiences to expand awareness, knowledge and cultural competencies that aid in the understanding and management of institution, school and classroom diversity.

2. Promote policies, practices, and procedures that provide opportunities to increase minority representation of students, staff, faculty, and administrators.
3. Encourage and promote a pedagogically sound curriculum that reflects the pluralism of our society.
4. Expand and enhance efforts by Thomas College in the area of recruitment, marketing efforts, retention and graduation (students) as related to underrepresented populations (faculty, staff, and students). Thomas College is continuing to expand its campus community with students from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, which also presents an opportunity to recruit students into the education program. (See Appendix A)
5. A new education program requirement requires education students to participate/attend on and off-campus events/lectures/activities that address diversity, multicultural education, and cultural pluralism. In addition, follow-up discussions are held in our courses pertaining to these presentations and how the information can be integrated into curriculum design, lesson organization, and assessment and evaluation practices. (See Appendix B – *Thomas College Diversity Standard*)

**Response: Recommendation #2**

*The unit needs to develop a plan for having their teacher candidates gain the knowledge and experiences necessary to prepare them to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This plan needs to include what experiences students will have in their field experiences to increase their knowledge and skills in working with students from diverse cultural groups. This plan also needs to include additional materials in courses that would increase teacher candidates' knowledge of diverse cultural groups and backgrounds.*

**Education Program Indicators:**

- Engage in culturally responsive pedagogy
- Model ways to reduce prejudice for pre-service and in-service teachers and/or other educational professionals
- Engage in activities that promote social justice
- Demonstrate connecting instruction to students' families, cultures, and communities
- Model how to identify and design instruction appropriate to students' stages of development, learning styles, linguistic skills, strengths and needs
- Foster a positive regard for individual students and their families regardless of differences such as culture, religion, gender, native language, sexual orientation, and varying abilities
- Demonstrate knowledge of their own culture and aspects common to all cultures and foster such knowledge in others

**Artifacts:**

- Expansion of partner schools relationships that have students working with students from diverse cultural, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although the location of Thomas College affords us access to a number of areas with significant socioeconomic diversity, we continue to seek out field experiences (pre-student teaching and student teaching) that have racially and ethnically diverse populations.
  - Benton Elementary School (Benton)– Socioeconomic diversity
  - James Bean Elementary School (Sidney) – Socioeconomic diversity
  - Clinton Elementary School (Clinton)– Socioeconomic diversity

-George Mitchell Elementary School (Waterville) - Socioeconomic, racial and ethnic diversity

New school added to field placement sites

-Montello Elementary School (Lewiston) – Socioeconomic, racial and ethnic diversity

- Curriculum offerings that address diversity, multicultural education, and cultural proficiency
- Development of Education Program course matrix that identifies specific courses that address diversity, cultural pluralism and multicultural education, which is included in the Education Handbook.
- Identification of diversity and multicultural education perspectives in education courses and field experiences, as per syllabi information.
- Identification of diversity and multicultural education information in course assignments, student work samples, instructional materials and resources, and e-portfolio
- All education course syllabi include the Thomas College *Diversity Statement* and the Education Diversity Program Goals. These are discussed in all courses.
- Establishment of an Education Program Curriculum Library that has numerous books, materials and resources related to diversity, cultural pluralism, and multicultural education.
- Evidence of involvement in schools and other organizations with diverse populations
- Evidence of Video and/or audio tapes of teaching
- Evidence of involvement in school based projects and/or service learning
- Evidence of providing professional development to others at all levels

### **Response: Recommendation #3**

*The unit needs to develop assessments for measuring teacher candidates' proficiencies in working with students and faculty from diverse cultural backgrounds. The unit needs to specify and articulate how these assessments will measure these proficiencies.*

#### **Education Indicators:**

- Promote inquiry into cultures and differences
- Teach a variety of assessment tools that meet the needs of diverse learners
- Recruit diverse teachers and teacher educators

#### **Artifacts:**

- Philosophical statement that reflects attention to diversity
- Assessment tools appropriate for use with diverse learners
- Identification of assessment instruments, particularly those at the output level, which provide essential information for successful program evaluation and assessment.

#### **▪ List of current practices in place and proposed areas for annual assessment:**

##### **Progress Checks**

- Recruiting, Hiring, Retention, and Promotion Practices
- Diversity Policy Review and Benchmarking

##### **Education Activities**

- Diversity and Multicultural Education Training
- ‘Managing a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Classroom’ Training
- Curriculum Design and Course Offerings

- Teaching Internship assessment and evaluation
- Multicultural Education Curricular Assessment* and evaluation materials from Banks (2006)
- Cultural Proficiency Curricular Assessment* and evaluation materials from Lindsey-Terrell-Nuri-Robbins (2003)

**Program Assessments and Measurements**

- Program Assessment and Evaluation (field experience, advanced field, student teaching, student portfolio)

<b><u>Program Area</u></b>	<b><u>Assessment Tool</u></b>	<b><u>When Given</u></b>
ED128 Preparation of Field Experience	Final assessment on Initial Portfolio construction	Formative assessment throughout the course
ED 129 Field Experience	Final assessment by Mentor Teacher (interview and student observation)	At the end of 30 hour Field experience
ED388 Advanced Field Experience	College supervisor assessment; Mentor Teacher assessment	Goals/objectives set at start of course; formal and informal student observations throughout field experience
ED 412 Internship	College supervisor assessment; Mentor Teacher assessment	Professional development plan at start/end of internship assignment
ED445 Student Teaching-Elementary Education	-Mid term self evaluation (Student Teacher) -Mid term mentor evaluation by Cooperating Teacher -Formal evaluations of teaching throughout the course by Cooperating Teacher and College supervisor -Final self evaluation (Student Teacher) -Final College Supervisor Evaluation -Final Cooperating Teacher Evaluation	-Mid term -Mid term -Throughout the course -End of Student Teaching -End of Student Teaching -End of Student Teaching -End of Student Teaching
Education Courses	Student course evaluations	End of course
Education Courses – Completion of Program	Professional Teaching Portfolio completed in ED 448 – Senior Seminar	End of Senior Seminar
Elementary Education Program	-Exit evaluation (by student teacher) -Cooperating Teacher	-End of Student Teaching -End of Student Teaching

**Community Outreach Activities**

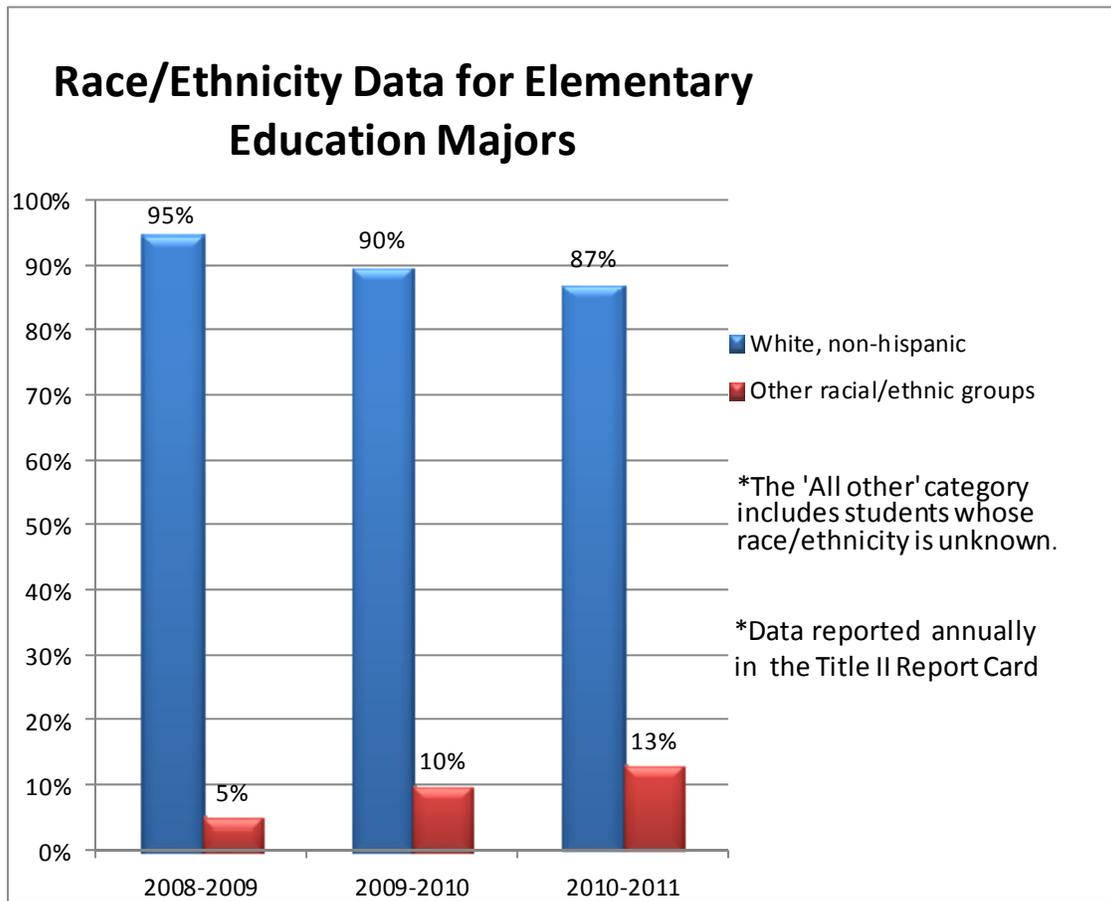
- Developing relationships with community organizations aimed at promoting diversity
- Sponsoring cultural & ethnic diversity community events

**Appendix A.**

**STATISTICAL INFORMATION**

The 2009-12 Education Program Goal 2.0 to increase cultural diversity with an emphasis on underrepresented populations as established in the Education Program Goals is being accomplished by developing and implementing strategic advertising campaigns to reach more historically underrepresented potential applicants.

During the 2011-12 academic year an academic appointment to the Education Program was made and filled by an African-American professor. This represents an initial step in intentionally recruiting underrepresented faculty to the program. Thomas College has increased its undergraduate enrollment of ethnic and underrepresented students from 2009-11, and the education program is making every effort to recruit students from this group into our program. (Source: Thomas College Registrar and Human Resources Department)



\*Data is indicative of full-time, undergraduate students reported to IPEDS

## Appendix B.

### *Thomas College “Diversity Standard”*

**Important Note:**

We designed our “*Diversity Standard*” to identify a specific standard related to the areas of diversity and multicultural education. Currently, there is no standard in the Maine Initial Teacher Standards related to diversity. The matrix below includes where *Diversity and Multicultural Education* are addressed in the Thomas College Education Program courses.

The activities, projects, readings and research methods, case study review and analysis, field experiences, on and off campus community programs/speakers/lectures/events, multimedia resources, professional education e-portfolio design and organization, and related items associated with diversity curricular offerings and diversity training are identified (X) in the following matrix. Course syllabi also include and support this information.

**Standard:** *Diversity expects that the program designs, implements and evaluates curriculum and experiences for candidates to acquire and apply knowledge, skills and professional dispositions necessary to help all students learn.*

CS 115	Introduction to Computer Applications	X
ED 122	Introduction to Education	X
ED 124	Teaching Process and Curriculum Design	X
ED 128	Preparation for Field Experience	X
ED 129	Field Experience	X
ED 215	Children’s Literature	X
ED 232	Educational Psychology	X
ED 245	Computers Across the Curriculum	
ED 315	Teaching Reading in Primary Grades	X
ED 316	Teaching Reading in Elementary School	X
ED 317	Methods of Teaching Language Arts	X
ED 320	Methods of Teaching Mathematics	X
ED 222	Teaching Students w/Exceptional Needs in Regular Classroom	X
ED 325	Methods of Teaching Science	
ED 326	Methods of Teaching Social Studies	X
ED 338	Advanced Field Experience	
ED 445	Student Teaching	X
ED 448	Senior Seminar	X
ED/PY 299	Nature of Intelligence	X
ED/SY 125	Experiencing Diversity	X
EH 221	Introduction to Literature	
HG/PS	History/Government/Political Science Elective	X
LB	Liberal Arts Elective	
MS	Math Elective	
PY111	General Psychology	X
PY225/336	Developmental Psychology or Child Psychology	X
SC	Science Elective	

## **Bibliography**

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