

***DreamKeepers Living and Learning
Community Policy Handbook
2012 – 2013 Academic Year***



***“Where Professional Educators Explore, Discover,
and Become Catalysts for Leading and Learning”***

**Department of Curriculum and Instruction
School of Education
North Carolina A&T State University**

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School of Education Professional Education Conceptual Framework

Philosophy of the Professional Education Program

The philosophy of the Professional Education Program builds primarily upon the ideals of Constructivism as a vehicle to engage the learner although faculty within the Professional Education Program introduces Candidates to a number of other theories of learning. Faculty understand Candidates construct meaning by connecting previous knowledge with new experiences such as interactions with various people, exposure to different resources, and the manipulation or evaluation of data. Given this understanding, the Teacher Education Program is structured for Candidates to utilize actively the information they acquire by working to make sense of it in real-world contexts. Using Constructivism as a framework, faculty create authentic learning opportunities for Candidates to design responsive learning environments for diverse populations of learners, to work collaboratively with various stakeholders to problem solve, and to seek various perspectives to achieve desired outcomes.

By adopting the metaphor "catalyst for learning," the faculty in the Professional Education Program is resolute in the goal to develop professional educators who inspire and promote lifelong learning. Our philosophy leads Candidates to become educational leaders who construct and articulate strategic goals, who apply what they discover through inquiry to create responsive, rigorous learning environments, who assess students fairly and consistently, and who reflect actively and continually on what occurs throughout this process to improve decision making and learning environments. In essence, our Candidates have the ability to ignite the curiosity of learners and to transform learning environments into responsive, engaging contexts.

Shared Vision of the Professional Education Program

The Shared Vision of the Professional Education Unit at North Carolina A&T State University was developed in collaboration with four academic colleges, PK-12 education partners, and other stakeholders. The Vision is grounded in the land grant and research intensive mission of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. Consistent with the mission of the University, the Unit strives to prepare 21st Century Professional Educators who understand the complex needs of a pluralistic global society and who respond to these needs by creating interdisciplinary learning environments where critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and commitment to service guide thinking and behavior. As such, the Professional Education Program at North Carolina A&T State University is committed to the development of 21st Century Professional Educators who are aware of diverse populations in their communities, who appropriately use and interpret assessment data to guide future decision making, who engage in the skillful art of reflection to transform thinking and practice, and who use various forms of technology to manage instruction and assessment.

Mission of the Professional Education Program

The specific mission of the School of Education (SOE) is to prepare students for careers in elementary and secondary schools as well as in industry, government and other agencies. Extracted from this mission is the Shared Vision, which is to produce 21st Century Professional Educators who are committed to teaching and learning in a pluralistic global society by creating responsive learning environments that challenge students to think critically, to collaborate, to communicate, and to serve mankind. To achieve the Unit's mission, faculty in the School of Education provide high quality programs through research, effective teaching, field experiences, internships, and ongoing formative

assessments. Each course offered within the Professional Education Program is aligned with state, national, and professional organization standards. To ensure the program meets the desired goals of these standards, data are continually collected and analyzed to examine the program's effectiveness in developing "catalysts for learning" and to improve program implementation when areas of concern or areas for improvement occur.

To meet this mission, the Unit strives to accomplish the following goals:

1. To provide candidates with a quality educational program at the Bachelor's and Master's level that satisfies requirements for licensure and accreditation.
2. To prepare candidates to think critically, to express themselves effectively, to collect data and draw appropriate conclusions, and to utilize their proficiencies to become a catalyst for learning.
3. To recruit quality candidates from diverse backgrounds, to retain them through quality programming and supportive resources, and to graduate them with the proficiencies required to function successfully in 21st Century learning environments.
4. To recruit, retain, and promote quality faculty, staff, and administrators.

Professional Education Program Coherence

At North Carolina A & T State University, the Dean of the School of Education is administratively responsible for the preparation of all 21st Century Professional Educators in the Professional Education Program. The faculty of the School of Education, PK-12 education partners, and key faculty in four external academic colleges—Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Technology, Business—are committed to the Professional Education Program's vision and mission and are invested with the authority to execute them. The Teacher Education Council (TEC), comprised of representatives from across the five academic colleges, provides curricular and policy oversight of all programs that lead to initial and advanced licensure in the state of North Carolina.

Core Values of the Professional Education Program

The Professional Education Program has adopted the theme "21st Century Professional Educators: Catalysts for Learning" as its core belief to produce educators who work with learners of all ages with varying experiences and various approaches to learning. Relying on an inquiry approach to teaching and learning where Candidates use critical thinking skills to work collaboratively with stakeholders, the Professional Education Program emphasizes the merging of theoretical and practical knowledge to develop educators who engage, inspire, and encourage learners to explore, discover, and become advocates for lifelong learning and service to humankind. Four core values interwoven throughout the Professional Education Program guide the development of professional educators at North Carolina A & T State University:

Diversity: 21st Century Professional Educators who are catalysts for learning have competence in the nine central tenets of human diversity: (1) race, (2) ethnicity, (3) gender, (4) socioeconomic status, (5) age, (6) sexual preference, (7) religion, (8) exceptionalities, and (9) geographic region (Diller & Moule, 2005). 21st Century Professional Educators are culturally responsive and committed to the ideals of collaboration, trust, equity, advocacy, and the ethical use of power and empowerment. As such, these educators have the ability "to construct pedagogical practices that have relevance and meaning to students' social and cultural realities"

(Howard, 2003, p. 195) and have the ability to use knowledge of the learner's family, community, culture, aspirations, and values as vehicles for engagement and learning.

Assessment: 21st Century Professional Educators "are continuously involved in making decisions about people or in helping people make decisions for and about themselves." (Thorndike, 2005, p. 7) As such, 21st Century Professional Educators know the importance of systematically collecting, evaluating, and using assessment data to drive their decision making process (McMillan, 2007). These educators create and select appropriate assessments, conduct appropriate evaluation techniques, and make sound educational decisions. They understand fair, reliable, and consistent assessment practices are essential for making decisions regarding curricula, instructional strategies, and program improvement to ensure all learners have the opportunity to experience academic success.

Reflection: The 21st Century Professional Educator engages in continuous "deliberate thinking" (Hatton & Smith, 1995) to improve future actions and decision making. These educators utilize an explicit reflective model to engage in a metacognitive process that involves thinking critically, exploring various solutions to problems, and making sound, evidence-based inferences when appropriate data are available. The goal of this type of reflective practice is not simply the improvement of student learning but also the enhancement of the educator's knowledge, the expansion of the educator's skills, and the development of the educator's awareness.

Technology: The 21st Century Professional Educator uses technology to gather, manage, and reach logical conclusions about data in the context of the subject area (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2007) as a means to bridge the social, cultural, economic, and cognitive gaps between learners. Such an educator knows when and how to use technology to help the learner examine content more critically, solve problems, and establish reliability. Such an educator knows what attributes of technology promote effective learning. The effective use of technology enhances the 21st Century Professional Educator's ability to engage learners in the exploration of real-world issues, personalize learning environments to address various learning styles, engage dynamic learner characteristics, provide learners with varied formative and summative assessments, and communicate relevant information and ideas effectively to stakeholders.

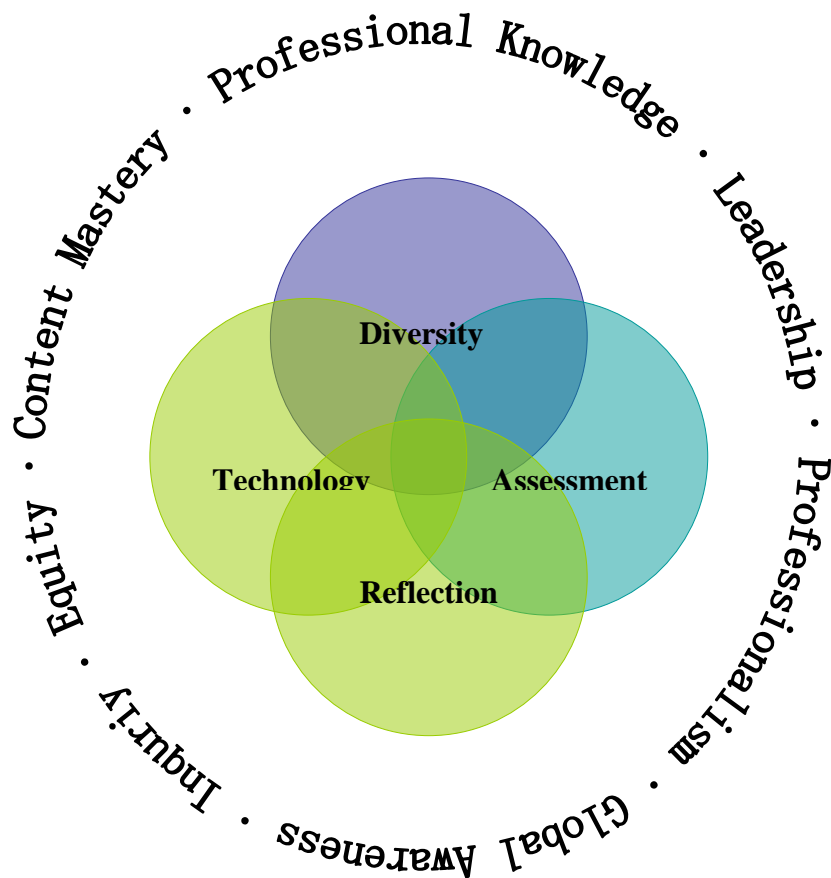
Core 21st Century Principles

Infused throughout the Professional Education Program are seven key principles necessary for the growth and development of an effective 21st Century Professional Educator. These principles emerge from and align with the Unit's core values:

- **Content Mastery:** The candidate understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches, supports and/or leads. Using this knowledge, the candidate has the ability to integrate other disciplines into the primary content area.

- **Professional Knowledge:** The candidate understands how learners develop and differ in their approaches to learning. The candidate uses one's professional knowledge to create instructional opportunities that encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and collaboration.
- **Professionalism:** The candidate practices ethical and caring behavior within and outside the classroom and engages in continuous professional development to accomplish self-directed growth.
- **Leadership:** The candidate responds to diverse populations by constructing and articulating a shared vision within the classroom that aligns with and expands the goals of the school, community, and professional organizations served.
- **Equity:** The candidate seeks to learn more about each learner as a means to create fair learning environments that present various perspectives and counteract stereotypes.
- **Global Awareness:** The candidate seeks opportunities to learn about various cultures, beliefs, and ways of learning and deliberately integrates this information into planning, instruction, and assessment.
- **Inquiry:** The candidate designs investigations to collect and analyze data to test hypotheses and beliefs that will transform future practice and decision making through reflective dialogue with students, colleagues, and community partners.

The following diagram captures the conceptual framework for the School of Education:



The DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community Policy Handbook

The DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community (LLC) is a program designed for prospective teacher education candidates in the School of Education at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. The purpose of the DreamKeeper program is to ensure that new freshmen students at NC A&T who are interested in pursuing a degree in a teacher education program develop a deeper understanding of the teaching profession and engage in the practice of servant leadership early in their academic careers. The DreamKeepers LLC is founded upon the following measurable goals and objectives:

- Goal I: To foster positive relationships between new teacher education students during their first academic year on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University.
- Goal II: To immerse first-year teacher education students into the intellectual and social climate of the University.
- Goal III: To promote the opportunity to raise teacher education students' performance levels through collaboration and support.

To meet these goals, each participant is responsible for familiarizing himself or herself with regulations and requirements set forth in this policy handbook. Failure to meet the requirements or comply with regulations because of lack of knowledge thereof does not excuse the participant from meeting the regulations and requirements.

Program leaders will make every attempt to give effective guidance to participants in all relevant matters and to refer participants to those qualified to help them in matters larger than the scope of the Living and Learning Community. However, the final responsibility for meeting all requirements rests with the participant.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Participants in the DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community are expected to conduct themselves properly at all times. They are expected to observe standards of behavior and integrity that will reflect favorably upon themselves, their families, the campus community, and the larger Guilford County community. Thus, participants in the DreamKeepers program must familiarize himself or herself with the policies that govern the residence halls on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University. Participants should read and review all policies related to housing and residence life.

Additionally, as undergraduate students, participants must familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures articulated in the *2012-14 Undergraduate Bulletin*. To access this document, please click [http://www.ncat.edu/admissions/undergraduate-bulletin/NCATSU%202010-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin.pdf](http://www.ncat.edu/admissions/undergraduate-bulletin/NCATSU%202010-2012%20Undergraduate%20Bulletin.pdf). Participants should pay particular attention to policies regarding student conduct on page 25. More specifically, students must read the section related to expulsion,

suspension, probation, and warnings. Students must abide by the policies articulated in these sections.

Additionally, students should pay attention to policies regarding student academic performance on page 49. Each participant must be aware of the conditions and stipulations the University has in place to remain in “Academic Good Standing.” Moreover, any student receiving Financial Aid (e.g., scholarships, loans, fellowships, grants, and so on) should read policies related to these funding sources on page 36. Students are ultimately responsible for knowing and understanding these policies.

Participants are further expected to abide by the laws of the city of Greensboro, the state of North Carolina, and the United States of America. Participants are subject to legal action if they violate any law, policy, or regulation at any of the aforementioned levels. Program coordinators for the DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community release any responsibility for matters related to the violation of these laws, and the individual is responsible for securing legal counsel for these matters.

Accordingly, any student who demonstrates an unwillingness to obey the prescribed rules and regulations that govern the program will be excused from the Living and Learning Community. If the participant violates any policy that governs Housing and Residence Life, then the participant runs the risk of dismissal from the residence hall. If the participant violates any policy that governs student conduct on the campus of the University, then he or she runs the risk of dismissal, expulsion, or any other University-sanctioned act.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DREAMKEEPERS PROGRAM

Because participants in the DreamKeepers program are prospective teacher education candidates, individuals in this Living and Learning Community (LLC) are expected to establish and maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.80 throughout his or her participation in this program. Participants who do not establish or maintain this cumulative grade point average will be required to create an aggressive “Plan of Action” with Mr. Terrance McAdoo, the Retention Coordinator for the School of Education. This “Plan of Action” will vary by student; however, the document will require participants to engage in a variety of activities including but not limited to: (1) participation in mandatory tutorial sessions, (2) regular and ongoing visitation with professors during their office hours, (3) regular and ongoing support sessions, (4) participation in workshops or seminars (i.e., retention workshops, writing workshops, academic workshops), and (5) mandatory visitations with academic advisors or department chairpersons. Students who require this level of support or assistance will be asked to sign an “Academic Support Contract” and these individuals will be monitored closely.

Students who refuse to abide by these expectations or who are unable to meet the academic expectations of this program may forfeit their participation in the DreamKeepers program. As such, these individuals will lose rights, privileges, and benefits associated with this program.

ATTENDANCE IN SUPPLEMENTARY SESSIONS

Throughout the academic year, participants in the DreamKeepers program will be afforded numerous opportunities to participate in a variety of workshops, seminars, activities, and other engagements. These workshops will occur on different days and at different times. Program Coordinators understand that students may have other responsibilities that may prevent them from attending all of these sessions (e.g., class conflicts, work study conflicts, tutorial sessions, and so on). Given this reality, Program Coordinators expect participants to work with them to plan an “Individualized Participant Work Plan” at the beginning of the fall 2012 semester. Participants must meet with Program Coordinators at the beginning of the spring 2012 semester to construct another work plan for that semester.

The “Individualized Participant Work Plan” is a document that is co-constructed between the student and the Program Coordinators to identify programs, projects, seminars, workshops, and seminars that students should strive to attend throughout the academic year. Each participant in the DreamKeepers program must document at least **10 hours** of attendance in various sessions throughout the fall 2012 semester and an additional **10 hours** of attendance during the spring 2013 semester. Each participant must provide evidence that she or he participated in these functions via an end-of-semester portfolio. Additional information will be provided to each participant regarding these requirements.

Program Coordinator’s Responsibility

- (1) The Program Coordinators from the DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community are responsible for describing all requirements to the participants at the onset of the program. All requirements must be provided to participants in writing and a signed copy of the participants’ understanding will be kept on file; program coordinators are required to explain all policies and address any questions that participants may have.
- (2) Program Coordinators are responsible for communicating and conversing regularly with participants throughout the academic year.
- (3) Program Coordinators are responsible for monitoring and tracking participant progress toward academic degree requirements.

Participant’s Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each participant to learn and comply with the requirements set by the DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community. The participant should:

- (1) have knowledge of all governing policies articulated by the Office of Housing and Residence Life, the School of Education, and North Carolina A&T State University.
- (2) abide by the degree program area expectations to remain in “Academic Good Standing” within that department (e.g., attend meetings, gain membership in organizations, and so forth).
- (3) establish and maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.80.
- (4) register for and pass the Praxis I examination.
- (5) attend workshops, seminars, programs, and other events throughout the fall 2012 semester that totals 15 hours.
- (6) attend workshops, seminars, programs, and other events throughout the spring 2013 semester that totals 15 hours.
- (7) meet with Program Coordinators to design and articulate a signed “Individualized Participant Work Plan” at the onset of the fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters.

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THE PROGRAM

Program coordinators may recommend student withdrawal from the program to the Office of Housing and Residence Life for behavior that is deemed disruptive or problematic. Program Coordinators are responsible for outlining and explaining explicitly behaviors that may warrant expulsion from the program on the first meeting date.

1. Binding Procedures for Program Coordinators

Program Coordinators must provide an opportunity for the participant to be heard before a recommendation is presented to the Office of Housing and Residence Life. In providing this opportunity, Program Coordinators must follow the procedure described below:

- a. The participant should be notified in writing that the Program Coordinators propose to expel the participant from the program for disruptive behavior, and the Program Coordinator must provide the student with written instructions regarding the time and place for a meeting with the Program's Governing Committee. A copy of this written notification must be sent to the Governing Committee and the participant's parent(s)/guardian(s) [if identified by the student as someone that he or she wants involved in these types of matters; appropriate FERPA documentation must be filed with the University].
- b. A time limit of ten business days (Monday through Friday) from the time written notification is given for the participant's opportunity to be heard by the Governing Committee.
- c. The participant is not allowed to attend any sessions of the program until a final decision is made on the recommendation. The final decision to recommend the participant for withdrawal is the Governing Committee's and not the Program Coordinators.

2. Student's Right to Appeal

If the student wishes to appeal the Program Coordinator's decision to recommend him or her for withdrawal from the program, he or she must follow the outlined procedures:

- a. Upon receiving written notification from a Program Coordinator that he will be recommended for withdrawal from the program for disruptive behavior, the participant must contact the Chairperson of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction within five business days.
- b. The participant must submit a typed-written account of the incident to the Chairperson of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction within ten business days of receiving the written notification from a Program Coordinator.
- c. The participant must attend the Governing Committee's Resolution Hearing on the date specified. Failure to attend this hearing leads to an automatic request to withdraw the participant from the program with no further discussion about the matter.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

The Governing Committee of the DreamKeepers Living and Learning Community reserves the right to withdraw any participant in the program. Individuals who are expelled from the program will be notified in writing of the decision, and a copy will be provided to the participant's parent(s)/guardian(s). Reasons for withdrawal may include but are not limited to:

1. Excessive absenteeism
2. Disruptive behavior
3. Failure to comply policies articulated within the Undergraduate Bulletin, within the School of Education, within the Office of Housing and Residence Life.
4. Any activity deemed illegal by the United States judicial system

Questions about specific infractions may be posed to the Governing Committee of the Living and Learning Community.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled students in this program as per the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (1993). If you have special needs, please inform Program Coordinators as soon as possible at the start of the program so that appropriate accommodations and considerations can be made.