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## *A Message from the President*

*Dr. Ashley Simpson, President  
ECE\EDU Department Chair, Community College of Aurora*

### *Why Diversity Matters in Education?*

“Leave your baggage outside the classroom and be prepared to learn when you enter,” is what I use to hear so many teachers tell their students. But, the question that I used to ask is, “Why?” Why should students be asked to leave what gives them a unique edge on life outside of the door? Or, why would that unique edge not be included in the learning process? Is it because the teacher found no value in child’s experience as it related to the content being taught? Or, is it because the teacher “just knew” that asking the student to utilize that experience would not be a skill needed in college or the workforce? That brings us to the big question of “why diversity is needed in education?”



Now, I know to some, diversity only includes race and gender, but the truth is diversity is defined as “a range of different things” (dictionary.com). In other words, diversity includes everything we are and are not.... race, color, language, sexual orientation, religion, gender, socio-economic status, age, disability and ability. These are the very things that make up each individual student in our classroom. And, these are the bags asked to be left outside our classrooms ...each student and each bag is a minority with no voice in the classroom or the learning process, at least not one that pertains to their unique experience. The Census Bureau, however, projects that by the year 2060 the minority population will rise to 56% of the total U.S. population (United States Census Bureau, 2015). Thus, the bags will just keep growing to become a majority, but a majority means nothing if they don’t know how to interact with the minority. In other words, all students (both the minority and majority) will need to think beyond their own baggage and learn how to interact within each other. What does that mean to the educator? We as educators will need to allow students to bring that baggage into the classroom infusing it into both content and life lessons. Creating culturally aware students, who have a sensitivity and respect towards those that are not like themselves thus combatting cultural stereotypes.

And, if this isn’t enough, major organizations and companies not only appreciate diversity, but hire because of the unique perspective that individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to the company. Yes, diversity within an organization can lead to innovation and better market results (Why Diversity Matters | Education Pioneers, 2017). And, the rationale behind this is simple...we are not living in a one-dimensional world. We are living in a diverse world and the only way that a company or organization can grow is to hire a staff that reflects the market. So, it’s important that we as educators prepare our students to work in that market bringing their own unique perspectives and experiences to the table of innovation. Let’s put this into a two-point teacher preparation perspective.

First, as a college teacher preparation program we need to always think about recruiting with diversity in mind. Our students, and their future students, need to see someone like them “make it.” This is not just about race or gender, this is everything we are and are not...this is the community and the present with which our students currently live. Students identify and strive to work hard to live up to a role model that looks like them, that are from the same community, that have similar experiences and can

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understand “their” struggle. Think about your own role model? Did they look like you? Did they understand your struggle? And, did you work to be just like them? This is something that we need to keep in mind as we recruit future educators. Recruit with DIVERSITY in mind! And in the process we are not only impacting students, we are also impacting the workforce.

Secondly, don’t fear teaching with culturally relevant content. As we prepare our educators we must be open to creating lessons that draw on each student’s personal experience with the world around them and those lessons need to be open for everyone to experience. Our job as a teacher preparation program is to prepare educators to view their students through multiple lenses. We want those educators to advocate on behalf of all students and families, and this can’t happen if they stay within their own baggage. This also means that we must train our educators how to teach lessons that highlight diversity and are open to difficult conversations. Again, we are in the field of always preparing the future and the future starts with our program.

“Bring your baggage in the classroom and be prepared to unpack it as we learn...because the future needs your perspective” is what every teacher should be excited to say when students walk into their classrooms.

### **References**

- United States Census Bureau. (2015). New Census Bureau Report Analyzes U.S. Population Projections. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-tps16.html>
- Why Diversity Matters | Education Pioneers. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.educationpioneers.org/blog/why-diversity-matters>

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## *A Message from the Executive Director*

*Kimberly Tobey, Director, Community Partnerships -Educator Preparation Field & Student Teaching Experiences, Rio Salado College*

### *Can Everyone Be Included?*



We live in a day and age where it is relatively easy to use catchphrases such as partnership, collaborative and stakeholder! We also live in a time when words like equity, access, inclusion and diversity seem to roll off our tongue in every conversation we have about education. The question is are we really seeking to create partnerships and cooperatives that are equitable and diverse? If we are building partnerships and cooperatives to grow the teacher preparation pipeline, are community college teacher preparation programs being considered in the conversation?

I would challenge each of our members to reach out to their local department of education or standards board and ask how many community college representatives are sitting at the table when conversations about recruitment, preparation and retention are being discussed. Are the partnerships and stakeholder groups representative of the communities that need to be served? Is someone sitting at the table that can bring a voice to the issues of nontraditional students?

I would challenge you to reflect on your own cooperatives within your program? Are you actively seeking to ensure that different voices are represented within your own program? When was the last time you reached out to a senator and congressional representative that might have a different point of view from your own? We can't talk about civil discourse and social justice if we can't model this within our own programs and with our own collegiate partners. I will continue to talk about equity, access and diversity for the rest of this year. But you will also hear me talking about the need to act as one to impact the teacher preparation pipeline. Gone are the days where higher education programs can operate in silo! It must be our goal to ensure equity and access at all levels, not just within our PreK-12 classrooms.

It's okay to invite yourself to the table? If "we" keep talking about equity and access for all; then no one will be surprised when you bring your ideas to the table. Be bold, be intentional and use your voice! I recognize that it's not always easy, but our student's need us to speak out for them and their needs. We must be sure that articulations work for ALL students, that grant funding is allocated to all and not just to research institutions and that all pathways are supported as long as they ensure rigor and accountability.

If you are interested in getting involved in this conversation at the state or national level, please contact me directly at [nacctep@riosalado.edu](mailto:nacctep@riosalado.edu). Do some research into serving on a board, create a state-wide teacher education organization or invite yourself to someone else's meeting and bring your passion for your community to the conversation. Once this happens then we may see true equity, access and diversity within our partnerships, cooperatives and stakeholder meetings.

See you all in Baltimore with AACTE!

~Kim

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## *Club Ed at Community College of Baltimore County*

*Jessica C. Brown-Strott, Instructor*

*Teacher Education Department-Community College of Baltimore County*



Future educators are a curious bunch. They are eager to spend time with children in classrooms observing, engaging and teaching, but are not always afforded that opportunity when they are in the early semesters of the teacher preparation process. At the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) in Maryland, we have found a way to help our undergrads learn more about education beyond their classes, observations and internships.

Enter Club Ed, the education club at CCBC. Launched in the spring of 2016 with six students, the club is a place where students explore and are immersed in education-themed activities based on their interests and

availability. Students typically return to Club Ed for the duration of their time at CCBC and each semester brings new members.

During the first few meetings each semester, Club Ed members meet with their faculty advisor and discuss their interests and curiosities. Together they plan the semester and divvy up the work. In the Fall of 2016, club members were eager to see different educational models. Two separate trips were taken to four different Baltimore-area schools: one traditional urban elementary school, an urban charter elementary school, a suburban elementary school and a homeschool. The students were permitted to sit in classes and work directly with students; interview teachers during their planning time; tour the buildings with administrative staff and ask specific questions about the school, teachers, students and instructional choices.



The students had a blast! More importantly, the visits changed many of their preconceived ideas about the various models. Among the many things they did and learned, was about a principal who created a daily Power Hour where *every* student was in a small leveled reading group and *every* adult in the building facilitated a group. They saw a teacher who taught science to all students in kindergarten through fifth grade in the charter school and had to get a Captive Reptile and Amphibian Permit to care for and safely release baby terrapins since they are an endangered species. They sat in a kitchen with a homeschool mom and two of her four children learning about Classical Conversations and the very rich and intricate homeschool co-op network in the area. Club Ed gave the students a chance to see the inner workings of schools and unfettered access to the administrators, teachers and students.

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The spring 2017 cohort of Club Ed directed their energies toward the Children’s Learning Center, the on-campus childcare center for children 2-5 years old. After talking with the center’s director and touring the facility, the college students created the materials for a writing center suited for preschool children. Working with their faculty advisor and the CLC’s director, the Club Ed students made laminated sheets with shapes and letters on which the preschoolers could use dry-erase markers and practice their handwriting readiness skills. Additionally, using materials the CLC had in storage, the Club Ed students made take-home literacy backpacks, each with a high-quality book and the props and materials for a literacy or math activity the preschoolers could do with their families at home. The activities with the CLC were incredibly gratifying for the Club Ed students; they worked hard and the preschoolers, along with their teachers and director, were thrilled.



The fall 2017 Club Ed students are finalizing their focus, though they are leaning toward creating reading circles with the preschoolers at the on-campus CLC. They are also interested in learning more about running a childcare center, so students are researching the state’s licensing office as well as private childcare centers to identify and invite different speakers to the club meetings. Long-term planning include a visit to the Maryland General Assembly while it is in session in the early spring to learn about education policy and the legislative process.



The CCBC Teacher Education Department prepares students to work with children from newborns through high school and awards certifications and associates degrees to students who seek positions in childcare facilities and those transferring to four-year schools.

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***Alumni Connection: Reconnecting with Community College Graduate, Educator  
& NACCTEP Scholarship Recipient- Noelle Jessica Mineart***

***Submitted by Danielle N. Denton, M.Ed.  
NACCTEP Program Coordinator***

**Did you attend a community college? If so, what is the name and your major at that time?**

- ▶ I attended Howard Community College from 2011-2013. I majored in Secondary Education in Mathematics and receive my AAT degree in May of 2011.

**Why did you choose to attend a community college?**

- ▶ I knew that I wanted to go to Towson University, but I also understood how expensive it would be if I started that way. Also, I had read information regarding the Rouse Scholars program at Howard Community College and I wanted to see what it would be like to be in an honors cohort in college. I also applied for many different scholarships throughout my time there. During my second year at Howard Community College I was nominated by my advisor and other college staff members for the NACCTEP scholarship.

**How was your experience attending a community college?**

- ▶ Attending community college, Howard Community College (HCC), was one of the best experiences of my life. I was able to take classes that challenged me and spend time learning about myself as a learner at HCC. I spent much time at school studying and learning about the different concepts I was exposed to in each of my classes. I learned about different psychology and mathematical concepts that have served me well in my chosen profession, teaching.

**How did your education experience (community college or university) enhance or change your current career path?**

- ▶ My career path never changed. As I took classes, at the community college and university level, I was able to visit the classroom.

**What piece of advice would you give to students considering a career as an educator?**

- ▶ I would suggest that students continue to build connections with everyone they meet and present themselves in a positive way at all times. Connections are what gets you hired and never fired.

**What do you enjoy about the education arena?**

- ▶ I enjoy the connections I make with my students and how I can tell the impact on them. I also enjoy being a role model and learning to connect with them in a variety of ways. Each day, I can see the relationships develop between my students as I through the interactions that we have together. As they begin to trust my abilities students are not only open to my methods and strategies regarding mathematics, but many of them confide in me. The most beautiful moments which I hold dear to my heart are the ones where I make a comment referencing a student or in response to their behavior/question and a genuinely happy smile beams across their face. As they see how important they are to me, I am able to reach them in new ways.



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### **Where has your job taken you?**

- ▶ I am currently a Special Educator that specializes in Mathematics at the high school level. I have returned to the county I grew up in, Howard County, and I am teaching at the Secondary Level (high school). Daily I work with a variety of students who need my help in order to access the content material. I also act as an in class behavior specialist and must pay close attention to all of the students throughout the entire class period. At the same time, I must also be the scaffolding expert. I must know the curriculum enough to individualized instruction to each student who I interact with.

### **How has your education impacted your professional life?**

- ▶ My education impacted my professional life because it provided me with a variety of experiences that helped me to affirm my desire to become a teacher. Over the years I have taken countless positions that have allowed me to teach in some form and through those experiences I have learned strategies to use when teaching which has improved the quality of instruction I can provide to my students. Now, in my Instructional Technology Master's program, I am learning how I can provide more specialized instruction using online forums. I am also able to develop materials that meet different learners needs such as visual and auditory with the use of videos, pictures, infographics, etc.

### **What is the most valuable information you learned while you were in school (community college/university)?**

- ▶ While in school, both community college and university, I learned that making connections with your students and being informed of the changes in your profession are imperative to the preparation of students for life after high school. Without building a relationship with the students, the content seems meaningless and students will quickly become distracted with other things. Building relationships with students also allows me to get to know their interests and incorporate them into problems that I create for my students or other materials that I develop i.e. videos, infographics, interactive images, analogies, etc.

### **How did receiving the NACCTEP scholarship impact your college or professional career?**

- ▶ Receiving the NACCTEP scholarship allowed me to continue my educational endeavors without the financial burden that college can bring upon a person. It also allowed me to attend the NACCTEP conference in Dallas where I made connections with the Teacher of the Year and learned about new techniques/methods being used in the classroom. While in Dallas, I also developed the desire to teach future teachers after experiencing the passion of all the attendees. Though I currently teach in the summer at the college in a program called Project Access, following the completion of my Master's in 2020, I will hope to teaching in both the Teacher Preparation programs and the Mathematics Department at Howard Community College.

*If you know or are a graduate of a community college teacher preparation program, we need your voice and would love to hear about your achievements, career plans and future aspirations. Visit our website and submit your information via our [Alumni Connection](#) TODAY!*