**Class Culture:  Creating a “Learning Laboratory” when the Topic is Diversity**

This class can become a “learning laboratory” on diversity, but for that to happen, we need to work together to create a supportive environment that nurtures the creative and open exchange of ideas, perceptions, feelings, and experiences.  Adhering to the following guidelines will assist us all in working together to develop our own personal learning laboratory on the topics covered in this class:

1.       We all have some misunderstandings of and/or lack of exposure to some group, class or individual.

2.       We have all encountered others’ misunderstandings or lack of exposure to “people like us.”

3.       There are no “stupid” questions; we are all participating in this class in order to learn from each other and support each other’s learning.

4.       In order to accomplish that, we must be supportive of each others’ expression of thoughts, feelings and experiences, and show tolerance for thoughts, feelings and perspectives that differ from our own.  We also benefit from openness to each others’ questions about what we share in class.

5.       Students of color, students with disabilities, students whose religious groups/traditions are less represented on campus, and gay or lesbian students (as just a few examples) may choose to share their experiences (and we can learn so much from their doing so), but it is not their responsibility to educate the class or serve as a standard-bearer in the class for all perspectives of all students like them in terms of these characteristics.

6.       It is important that we respect the confidentiality of information and remarks shared in this class. If you feel the need to share a story with someone outside the class, first ask the classmate who shared that experience if they feel comfortable with your doing so.

7.       When we share observations of our own or other organizations’ successes or failures in managing diversity and being inclusive, we should describe not only *what* the organization’s specific practices were, but also provide our analysis of: *why*we think that practice succeeded or failed in *that*setting with *those targeted individuals/groups*.  This helps each of us turn our personal experiences into ones that others in the class may more readily envision and use to derive a more generalizable lesson.