Informational Report on Fostering Diversity at Penn State

Presentation to the
Board of Trustees'
Committee on Campus Environment
and Committee on Educational Policy

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University Park

Presentation Script

[Slide: Informational Report on Fostering Diversity at Penn State   ]

<u>Dr. W. Terrell Jones</u>

<u>Vice Provost for Educational Equity</u>

[Slide: W. Terrell Jones   Vice Provost for Educational Equity]

Thank you, Dr. Erickson.

Good morning and thank you for providing us with this opportunity to speak to you. It is our pleasure to provide you with an update on one of our favorite topics, Penn State's progress related to diversity. Penn State continues to make dynamic strides and improvements in how we all understand and embrace diversity. As President Spanier wrote in our original 1998-2003 *Framework*:

At the heart of the *Framework*, you will find three concepts that I have promoted during my Presidency:

- We must do more to expose students to a variety of cultures and international perspectives in order to prepare them adequately for the future;
- We must continue to foster a humane University community in which everyone feels welcome, by eliminating disrespect and harassment and by working toward the goal of civility and acceptance of everyone; and
- We must consider among our most important educational goals the development of character, conscience, citizenship, respect for others, and social responsibility.

Let me give you just a few new diversity indicators that have happened since my last Board of Trustees presentation in 2004.

[Slide : The Dickinson School of Law   ]

The Dickinson School of Law now tops the list of American Bar Association Law Schools in both percentage growth of its diverse student population — 273 percent — and absolute numbers. Dickinson's increase in student body diversity has been accompanied by an equally dramatic increase in student academic credentials.

[Slide: Penn State ranks 5th   ]

Penn State ranks fifth in the nation and third in the Big Ten in the number of black faculty at flagship state universities.

[Slide: Penn State's LGBTA Student Resource]

Penn State's LGBTA Student Resource Center is listed among the Top 20 "Best of the Best" schools in the nation.

[Slide: Penn State ranks 10th]

Penn State ranks tenth in the nation and second in the Big Ten for graduation rates among African American undergraduates at flagship state universities.

[Slide: 6 Year Graduation Rates]

Our six year graduation rates are strong across the board.

[Slide: Penn State's Minority Enrollment]

Minority enrollments have steadily increased at both University Park and the campuses over the past 10 years. Total minority enrollment at all campuses increased to 13 percent in 2006, 10,905 students.

[Slide: We Are a Strong, Articulate Voice]

Penn State's Commission for Women has published a book on the accomplishments of women at the University. Stories and photos from the University archives, as well as interviews, convey the rich experiences of female students, faculty, and staff. To date, the book has sold 355 copies with proceeds being used to fund initiatives for women at Penn State.

A few of the highlights include:
- In 1871, Penn State became the first institution of higher education in Pennsylvania to admit women as students.
- In 1872, the first female instructor joined the faculty.
- By 1926, women had been full professors, deans, and members of the Board of Trustees.
- In 1981, the Commission for Women was founded to recognize and further the accomplishments of the women of Penn State.

[Slide: The New Faces of an Ancient People]

The New Faces of an Ancient People Traditional American Indian Powwow is one of the largest traditional powwows in the east, drawing more than 105 dancers and 6,000 visitors to the annual two-day event. Dancers come from more than twenty different American Indian communities around the United States; between four and six traditional drums are invited, again representing rich traditions across the country; twenty-five nationally acclaimed American Indian vendors are selected who offer traditional arts and contemporary items for sale;

and a Native kitchen features a taste of foods from Indian country to complete the powwow experience. Now in its 5th year, the powwow is a partnership between Penn State and the State College Area School District.

[Slide: Alliance for Earth Sciences, Engineering, and Development]

The Alliance for Earth Sciences, Engineering, and Development in Africa is an interdisciplinary research, education, and outreach initiative aimed at harnessing geo-resources for sustainable livelihoods in Africa, with a focus on underrepresented populations. It operates through partnerships among Penn State, Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States, select African universities, and public and private sector organizations.

[Slide: Penn State Supplier Diversity Program]

The Supplier Diversity Program is a direct outgrowth of the *Framework*. It was established to ensure that woman-owned, minority-owned, veteran-owned, and HUBZone-certified businesses have full opportunity to compete for the University's business. Informational seminars are offered through the University and through the state of Pennsylvania to increase participation, and information is available online.

[Slide: "In Their Shoes"]

"In Their Shoes" is a Web-based interactive training module on disability issues and is part of an overall initiative at Penn State Altoona intended to enhance the educational experience for students with disabilities. More than 7,500 faculty and staff from more than sixty schools nationwide have gone through the module, and the program was highlighted at the national conference of The Association for Higher Education and Disability.

[Slide: Each year there are 1,000 diversity-related events]

Each year there are approximately 1,000 diversity related-events held at Penn State. These include activities related to race/ethnicity, gender studies, LGBT, adult learners, disabilities, international studies, low-income, first-generation college students, veterans.

[Slide: Institutionalizing Diversity Strategic Planning at Penn State]

These are just a few of the indicators we have observed and I was tempted to use all of my time with you this morning reporting only on progress indicators. However, I think it is more beneficial to give you a feel for what is driving our diversity programs. As you know, my office has the responsibility for monitoring Penn State's diversity progress and we take this assignment very seriously.

As you are aware, Penn State has engaged in strategic planning for diversity for over a decade. Our efforts began with an analysis of existing ad-hoc efforts in the mid 1990s that resulted in the original *Framework*, which was launched in 1998. Our current *Framework* was launched in 2004. It is based on the central tenets of the first *Framework* and was updated and strengthened based on our progress.

[Slide: Institutionalizing Diversity Strategic Planning at Penn State]

We have just completed the mid-point evaluation, with a rigorous review process. Feedback from this review and responses from the units will be posted on our Web site in mid-September. The current *Framework* cycle will conclude in 2009 with a final progress evaluation and the launch of the next *Framework*.

[Slide: Advantages to Planning Strategically]

Why does Penn State need to have a *Framework to Foster Diversity*? There is an old saying that says: "If you don't know where you're going, then any road will get you there." In a book by that same title, author Julia McDaid suggests that there is research that shows that only 3 percent of people write down their goals, and on average these people earn ten times more than those who don't have goals. Plus, research also shows that people with up-to-date written goals are as much as 3,000 percent more successful than people who do not have up-to-date written goals.

Any system will fail if it relies on the assumption that people will do the right thing without knowing the rules and expectations that govern the system. A strategic planning approach identifies both the destination and the road to reach it.

Penn State is a national leader in diversity planning. Many other universities have a plan for diversity; only a few have assessment components. But no one else is doing anything at this level. We are the benchmark.

Dr. Victoria Sanchez will give you an overview of the *Framework*, the review process, and the best practices.

Victoria Sanchez
Assistant Vice Provost for Educational Equity

[Slide: Victoria Sanchez

Assistant Vice Provost for Educational Equity]

[Slide: A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009]

Thank you Terrell.

The seven Challenges of the *Framework* are positioned within the context of four dimensions of diversity that current scholarship suggests must be addressed in higher education. These are:

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
　　　　Challenge One: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
　　　　Challenge Two: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
Representation (Access and Success)
　　　　Challenge Three: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
　　　　Challenge Four: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

[Slide: A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009]

Education and Scholarship
　　　　Challenge Five: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies
Institutional Viability and Vitality
　　　　Challenge Six: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

　　　　Challenge Seven: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

[Slide: Accountability: the Review Process]

The most unique feature of the *Framework* and one of its greatest strengths is the review process. The review process is very comprehensive and participatory and includes the significant public accountability feature of having final materials posted on the Web. The assessment questions that units are asked to answer guide their reporting of their progress. We have maintained continuity of the data used and the assessment questions and we continually monitor for process improvements. The highest emphasis is placed on integrity of the process and the results.

[Slide: Timeline: the Review Process]

Mid-point updates were submitted by each of the forty-three planning units. Five review teams were assembled to evaluate the updates. The review teams were representative of broad constituencies across the University. They included faculty, staff, students, and administrators, with representatives from the commissions, Faculty Senate, campuses, and diversity student organizations. Each team was staffed by a representative from Educational Equity.

The Review Teams are encouraged to make honest and thorough evaluations. The Review Team staff emphasize consistency of the process, approach, and tone across all the teams and from one review to the next.

[Slide: Timeline: the Review Process]

The Review Team feedback was provided to the Provost and Dr. Jones who then met with each unit head to discuss the evaluation. The units had an opportunity to make a written response following the meeting.

The review process is confidential until final materials are posted on the Web site. Outcomes of the review process include compiling and analyzing a list of Best Practices identified by the Review Teams, and posting final materials on the Educational Equity Web site. These materials include the unit's update, the Review Team's report, and the unit's response (if any). These will be posted soon.

[Slide: Best Practices]

Our analysis of the best practices identified by the Review Teams reveals several themes that are critical to success:

- Purposeful, integrated approaches across units, particularly colleges, and coordination of central and department level efforts. This can include elements such as integrating academic and student life activities around diversity themes; instituting a tiered diversity committee structure to enhance coordination of departmental level activities with unit-wide goals; and approaching curricular integration in a purposeful way.

- Collaborative, participatory approaches within the unit, across the University, and with applicable external resources. Approaches may include retention initiatives, mentoring, and leadership development programs for students, faculty, staff, and aspiring administrators; collaboration with Penn State resources such as the commissions, Affirmative Action Office, LGBTA Student Resource Center, and other offices, as well as intercollege partnerships; and also partnerships with community organizations, external stakeholders, and other institutions.

- Broad and inclusive communications strategies can include use of multiple communication formats and cutting edge technologies to disseminate information broadly and to project Penn State's inclusiveness and the benefits of diversity.

- Alignment between diversity planning and general strategic planning places diversity among the unit's core values and competencies, supports allocation of resources to meet these goals, and ensures accountability.

- Identification of effective measures of success and use of assessment to gauge progress. Ideally, a variety of data sources and available expertise can be employed to empirically measure success.

- Most importantly, active leadership from the unit's administration is crucial.

You will find in your handouts the executive summary of the Potential Best Practices. This summary and the complete list of practices identified by the review teams will be available online.

Dr. Jones will conclude with challenges and next steps.

Dr. W. Terrell Jones

Vice Provost for Educational Equity

[Slide: What We Have Learned: Challenges and Next Steps]

The review process gives us a clear picture of where the University stands in implementing diversity goals. We have found that there has been an increase in the active support and participation of executive leadership, which is so critical to success. We have also found that there has been more active involvement in embracing the goals of the *Framework* at all levels of the University. Clearly, more progress is made when efforts are sustained throughout the cycle.

We have asked units to identify their own measures of success. For continued progress, we must move beyond measuring activity to measuring achievement.

One of our next steps is identifying additional university-wide performance indicators by which we can gauge the progress of the *Framework*.

One challenge is that progress tends to be data driven but data are not readily available on populations beyond gender and race/ethnicity. Our emphasis must go beyond these populations to additional diverse populations -- for example LGBT; disabilities; veterans; first-generation, low-income students; adult learners, etc.

Another challenge is that units and colleges may have broad and inclusive definitions of diversity, yet this is not always apparent in a similarly broad range of programming, curriculum, and other initiatives.

[Slide: What We Have Learned: Challenges and Next Steps]

In the case of colleges, diversity strategic planning often takes place at the college level, yet many curriculum, hiring, and programmatic initiatives take place

at the department level. College level discussions need to be more effectively driven down to the department level.

Across the University, and often within each college or campus, there are a broad array of diversity-related courses. One way to increase effectiveness of curricular integration efforts is a more purposeful approach to Challenge 5 "Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies."

Of the *Framework* Challenges, we have found that Challenge Four: "Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce," Challenge Six: "Diversifying University Leadership and Management," and Challenge Seven: "Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals" continue to offer the most opportunity for improvement.

In general, we need to pay more attention to "strategic thinking" rather than operational reporting, and to better performance indicators to measure progress.

[Slide: Discussion]

Let me now ask Trustee Alexander to join us to lead our discussion.