

Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC)
Alternative Proposal Narrative Example
Faculty Diversity Resources Network

Our Penn State Campus proposes to develop a *Faculty Diversity Resources Network*, which will function as (1) a year-long colloquy on the integration of diversity into the curriculum and (2) a clearinghouse of diversity information, media, and data that will be gathered and catalogued to support diversity curricular integration. The goals of the *Network* are supported by *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2010-15*, Challenge 5, Developing a Curriculum That Fosters U.S. and International Cultural Competencies: “Infuse diversity issues, topics, and perspectives into undergraduate and graduate courses as relevant to the topic and scope of the course” and “Increase the capacity for diversity scholarship by providing opportunities and resources, such as access to research materials . . . that support curricular transformation” (p. 19).

Program Need

Despite the increasing profile of diversity in higher education since the 1970s, diversity still largely exists on the periphery of teaching and research. More than twenty years ago, Daryl Smith characterized diversity as “a special interest topic, not part of the mainstream research or teaching” (Smith, 1991), and we believe that only nominal progress has been made since then, as is the case on our Campus. Unfortunately, diversity scholarship and pedagogy usually occur in pockets within the academy, with individuals or isolated groups carrying the banner. On the other hand, increasing numbers of faculty members are interested in integrating diversity into their research and teaching, but many don’t know how to begin, what resources may be available, or where such resources are located, so they often leave diversity on the back burner. Sometimes, even with good intentions, attempts at curricular integration that are not supported by adequate expertise and resources can go awry. Inertia can be overcome and expertise nurtured simply by helping faculty find support.

Major Program Components and Activities

The first phase of the project, which we characterize as our “quiet phase,” will begin with a small group of faculty (three to four) who have an established history of being engaged in diversity scholarship and curriculum development and a research librarian who has familiarity with diversity resources. These individuals have already been identified and have agreed to

participate. They are all willing to work with faculty members who want to develop their proficiency with incorporating diversity into their classes.

In our first meetings, these members will bring key resources, share how they have used them in teaching and research and, begin to compile and catalogue these resources. We believe these two components of the program will be self-reinforcing, with fruitful conversations uncovering important resources and these resources spurring further conversation. Because we want the resources to be as available and widely utilized as possible on our Campus, our ultimate emphasis will be on publicly obtainable resources; these may include online/digital resources, library holdings, groups and organizations, and in some cases materials that are privately held among faculty who are willing to share them as well as individuals who are willing to offer support. The catalogue will ultimately reside on our Campus's library website.

Next, our Campus's executive and academic leadership have agreed to host an informal luncheon where other select faculty can come and explore the in-progress catalogue of diversity resources and discuss how to best use them to augment curricular and research integration. These faculty members will be individuals who have expressed interest in diversity curricular integration but have limited experience with it. We will gather information from them about how the catalogue and network can best be shaped to meet the needs of faculty who are less experienced with diversity curricular integration. We project that by the end of fall semester we will have a cadre of seven to ten faculty who have met three to four times to share ideas and to also expand our new catalogue of diversity materials and resources and who are willing to advance the project into its next phase.

During the spring semester, which will be our "public phase" of the project, our objectives will be to (1) expand our group to fifteen to twenty faculty members who are actively working on diversity curricular integration, (2) continue to build our online catalogue so that by spring break it will be ready for distribution to all Campus faculty (as judged by the librarian participating in our group), (3) send all Campus faculty the link to the catalogue, encouraging them to examine it and use at least one of the resources in at least one of their classes for the upcoming fall semester, and (4) hold a year-end colloquy that will be open to all Campus faculty to further encourage use of the catalogue and gain more information about how faculty members may plan to use it and how the catalogue and network can better serve their needs. To assist us

with this phase of the project, our Campus executive and academic leadership have again agreed to host a luncheon and to strongly promote attendance and utilization of the resources.

Measurable Outcomes that Will Define Success

- By spring break, a link to our online catalogue of diversity resources will be available to all faculty on our Campus.
- By the end of the academic year, this link will reside on the “Research” section of our Campus’s University Libraries website, complete with its own “splash” page, catalogue description, instructions for use, and a short narrative written by one of our faculty members on how to optimize it for teaching and research.
- Next fall, the percentage of syllabi with some diversity content will rise 10 percent from the previous fall’s baseline, which we have determined to be at 13 percent.
- The *Network* will continue for at least three years, with at least three new faculty members joining every year, and every year the diversity content in syllabi will rise at least 5 percent from the previous year.

Works Cited

Smith, D. G. (1991.) The challenge of diversity: Alienation in the academy and its implications for faculty. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 2, 129-137.