



A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998–2003

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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The process that initiated development of this document began in 1994 when each college, administrative unit, and campus was mandated to prepare a diversity strategic plan to promote equity for its faculty, staff, and students. This document addresses continuing challenges that are common to many units and for which the efforts of individual units are insufficient to resolve. The specific challenges discussed herein are:

- Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
- Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
- Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
- Developing a Curriculum That Supports the Goals of Our New General Education Plan
- Diversifying University Leadership and Management
- Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998–2003

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As part of its charge to design a strategic planning framework for 1998–2003, the University Planning Council (UPC) commissioned the Vice Provost for Educational Equity to develop a University-wide diversity plan. I am pleased to share with you the plan entitled, **A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State, 1998–2003**.

The **Framework** suggests seven challenges we must meet in fulfilling our obligation to prepare students for life and work in a civil democracy in the twenty-first century. Further, it prescribes concrete action plans to help academic and administrative units meet these challenges.

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.

I fully agree with the UPC that the values and goals found in the **Framework** should rest at the core of all future planning for the institution. Therefore, I commend the **Framework** to you and ask that you work closely with UPC and the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity to implement the action plans in order that we, as a University community, might come to embody and embrace the multicultural future that lies ahead for all of us.

Graham Spanier, President

INTRODUCTION

This document describes the actions that will be undertaken during the period 1998–2003 to strengthen Penn State's efforts to promote diversity as an essential ingredient in its quest for greater excellence. As Penn State positions itself to strengthen its role as an international leader in higher education for the twenty-first century, we must understand the parallel necessity to accelerate the process of self-transformation into a multicultural institution. This is not simply our own self-understanding, rather it is a perspective shared by all of the institutions belonging to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC). The CIC statement entitled, "Advancing Diversity, Achieving Excellence," issued in May 1996 cogently states the challenge as follows:

"American institutions of higher education . . . face the challenge of preparing students to live and work in an increasingly diverse society in which cultural knowledge and understanding are more important than ever before. To meet this challenge, the universities of the CIC must educate students from all segments of society and must provide those students with a meaningful exposure to cultures other than their own."

The basic thrust of Penn State's efforts over the next five years will be to increase the synergies between diversity initiatives and the other missions and goals set forth in the University's strategic planning framework. Penn State's leadership understands clearly that experiencing diversity is a component of a high quality educational experience for students, and further, that to achieve excellence in research and service it is also imperative to foster a greater diversity of perspectives and backgrounds among students, faculty, and staff. This understanding has been expressed in two important documents. First, the University's strategic planning framework articulates the goal for Penn State to become "a caring University community that provides leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world." Second, and more recently, the University Board of Trustees overwhelmingly reaffirmed its commitment to Penn State's existing diversity initiatives through the adoption of a formal resolution of support (October 1996).

While Penn State's commitments reflect internal decisions regarding the requisites for excellence, it is also important to keep in mind that such efforts are legally required. Public institutions within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have a special responsibility in

this regard related to ongoing efforts to comply with desegregation mandates from the U.S. Department of Education. No determination has yet been made as to whether the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has fulfilled the requirements of its previous (1983–88) desegregation plan. A review is currently underway that will likely lead to the development of a new desegregation plan. This plan will mandate expanded efforts on the part of Pennsylvania's public colleges and universities, including Penn State.

While the imperatives that lead Penn State to enhance its diversity efforts are clear to many, there are, at the same time, increasing political and legal challenges to certain types of programs designed to foster educational equity. Penn State's response has been to refine and modify its programs to ensure compliance with all legal guidelines. But more important is our internal commitment to institutional and public accountability, which emphasizes efficient use of

resources and establishing concrete measures of progress. Evidence of this perspective is provided by our groundbreaking efforts to explore the natural linkages between continuous quality improvement and diversity initiatives. As an illustration, we hosted a conference in fall 1997 entitled, "Best Practices in Diversity," which brought together teams from CIC institutions, private corporations, and the public sector to share information about the most effective strategies to achieve diversity objectives.

In the present contentious climate, the resolution adopted by the University Board of Trustees is especially noteworthy. This resolution reaffirms the collective assessment of this country's major educational leaders that enhanced diversity initiatives are an absolute necessity for continuing prosperity and social stability. Where will "leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world" be cultivated if not in the academy?

Higher education is uniquely challenged by changing national and regional demographics. As student populations become increasingly diverse, colleges and universities are expected to create and maintain a healthy learning environment among students, many of whom have had few opportunities in the past to develop familiarity with other cultures. As a consequence, campuses are facing growing interpersonal and intergroup conflicts that often lead to expressions of intolerance. In Pennsylvania, this phenomenon led to the establishment of the Pennsylvania Task Force on Intergroup Relations in 1991 to explore this problem in depth. The focus in Pennsylvania reflects, in part, the state's specific demographic characteristics and political culture. Pennsylvania is the least diverse of the six largest states and is, by far, the most rural. It also has more hate groups than any other state.

Despite these barriers relative progress is reflected in Penn State's enrollment figures. Fall 1997 minority enrollments surpassed 10 percent of the total student population for the first time. Our African American student population of 2,836 and our Hispanic student population of 1,539 represent new records. Our total minority student enrollment of 7,721 is an all-time high.

At the same time there is clearly room for improvement. Among undergraduate degrees conferred in 1995-96 (the most recent data available through the CIC), only 8.7 percent were awarded to minority students, ranking us ninth out of twelve CIC schools. We had greater success at the masters level where we awarded 13 percent of our degrees to minorities, ranking us seventh in the CIC. In awarding masters degrees to African Americans we ranked fifth. At the doctoral level, 15.4 percent of our degrees were earned by minorities (CIC rank: 7).

There are many other measures of success we can point to as outcomes of our efforts to date. We receive annual recognition as one of the top twenty-five producers of graduates from historically underrepresented groups in several fields. A number of our academic support programs are nationally-renowned. We are one of the few institutions of higher education authorized to operate all of the federally-funded programs for disadvantaged students. For nearly twenty-five years, our comprehensive program for veterans has stood as a model for other institutions to emulate. And Penn State provides the greatest institutional support for diverse religious expression of any public institution in the country. However, as noted above, there is substantial room for improvement.

Penn State will be expected to play an even greater role in the Commonwealth's diversity enhancement efforts as the new system configuration is implemented. Our special role is

derivative of both our land-grant mission and our absolute size, which contributes to the fact that Penn State enrolls the largest number of students of color of any institution in the Commonwealth. In addition, potential employers of our students are increasingly challenging us to produce a more diverse group of graduates **AND** to ensure that **ALL** students acquire solid cross-cultural communication skills while at Penn State. This will require both refinement of the existing curricula, including the encouragement of course development, certification options, and research projects in emerging fields that have the potential to broaden students' understanding of diversity.

The action plans presented in this document are designed to build upon our strengths in ways that improve outcomes. We seek improvement not only in areas for which traditional measures of progress are readily available, such as group representation and retention and graduation rates, but also in less quantifiable dimensions of a multicultural environment such as the quality of the climate in which all members of the University community work or pursue their educational goals. This will necessitate increasing the responsibilities of all units to build broader ownership in the multicultural transformation process.

The process that initiated development of this document began in 1994 when each college, administrative unit, and campus was mandated to prepare a diversity strategic plan to promote equity for its faculty, staff, and students. This document addresses continuing challenges that are common to many units and for which the efforts of individual units are insufficient to resolve. The specific challenges discussed herein are: (1) Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity; (2) Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate; (3) Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body; (4) Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce; (5) Developing a Curriculum That Supports the Goals of Our New General Education Plan; (6) Diversifying University Leadership and Management; and (7) Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals.

Addressing these challenges effectively requires centralized coordination because, in the end, the creation of a truly diverse and multicultural Penn State will require a collective understanding that the whole is greater than simply the sum of the many parts. To address the "continuing challenges" will require the commitment of the entire University community. As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly." It is as a community that Penn State must address the challenges of the future, for it is only as a community that we will be able to meet them.

DEVELOPING A SHARED AND INCLUSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY

GOAL: Develop and communicate clear and consistent descriptions of Penn State's diversity objectives and initiatives

The first challenge in our efforts to enhance Penn State's diversity initiatives is the development and collective acceptance of an inclusive understanding of diversity. Much of the history of diversity initiatives at Penn State, as at other colleges and universities, has been shaped by experiences with legal mandates prohibiting discrimination and policies promoting equal opportunity. As a consequence, the groups that most often come to mind when the term "diversity" is used are racial/ethnic minorities and women. While efforts to address inequities experienced by these groups constitute an important foundation for diversity efforts, they by no means delimit the scope of efforts necessary to integrate traditionally underrepresented groups more fully into the life and fabric of the University.

As an example, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) clearly establishes a mandate that equity of access to academic programs and employment opportunities be provided for individuals with disabilities, including appropriate accommodations to facilitate successful program completion and/or perform job responsibilities. In a similar vein, a number of years ago Penn State's nondiscrimination statement was amended to include sexual orientation as an additional category for which protection against discrimination is mandated. Veterans and returning adult students constitute important populations that contribute richly to diverse classroom experiences, particularly at locations other than University Park. The latter also constitutes a potential source of significant enrollment increases over time as a result of its rapid growth. In cases where underrepresented groups are not easily identifiable in the nondiscrimination statement and/or are not particularly visible or vocal, there is an even greater tendency to exclude them from dialogues about diversity.

Meaningful diversity initiatives **MUST** encompass initiatives targeted at **BOTH** domestic and international groups, and success in one arena does not allow units to forego aggressive action in the other. There is a tendency in some areas to assume that it is possible to trade off success in recruiting international graduate students and faculty against limited success in recruiting domestic students, faculty of color, and women. In fact, one of our deficits is the limited number of international undergraduate students, which restricts the opportunities of our domestic students to develop the type of cross-cultural experiences that will make them attractive to future employers.

Paralleling this problem is the challenge of providing more opportunities for Penn State students to participate in study abroad programs. The international council has set an ambitious goal of having 20 percent of our student population participate in such a program during their undergraduate career. The elevation of the status of the chief officer responsible for international programs to the position of dean constitutes an important step toward a more comprehensive approach to the challenge of "internationalizing" Penn State.

Misunderstandings regarding diversity are not limited to the issue of the relationship between domestically and internationally focused efforts. Information from the recent Faculty Staff Survey reveals gross misunderstandings about the thrust of Penn State's diversity initiatives. Specifically, the results suggest that many employees believe falsely that persons belonging to the categories listed in the nondiscrimination statement are differentially rewarded simply for their demographic characteristics. Such misunderstandings clearly provide potential fuel for hostility and nonacceptance of individuals from nontraditional backgrounds in the workplace.

In contrast, we seek to create an environment characterized by equal access and respected participation for all groups and individuals irrespective of cultural differences and, more importantly, where the multiplicity of characteristics possessed by persons are not simply tolerated but **valued**. Our community's understanding of Penn State's diversity initiatives emerges from a variety of sources and messages. Some of these understandings are generated through informal *dialogue* among students, faculty, staff, and administrators and information in public media. Such dialogue takes place in classrooms, offices, residence halls, and in out-of-class educational programs. While the content of such informal interactions and information sources will vary widely, it is important that Penn State make every effort to disseminate accurate information through formal channels that will hopefully permeate informal discussions. The dissemination of accurate and consistent messages about diversity must be coordinated and monitored. Currently, "official" messages about the University's diversity objectives are communicated through a variety of units including Affirmative Action and Diversity Education, Educational Equity, and Human Resources. Several videotapes have been produced in cooperation with WPSX-TV to assist faculty, staff, and students in understanding the University's diversity objectives. On the other hand, interpretations that vary widely in terms of accuracy and sophistication are also communicated regularly through individuals in a variety of positions including University executives, department heads, supervisors, faculty, and professional staff.

One of the most succinct statements about the University's diversity objectives is contained in a presentation by Provost John Brighton to the University Board of Trustees in November 1993. Under the topic "What Do We Mean By Diversity," Provost Brighton provided several descriptors:

- Reasonable representation from different minority groups
- Representation from different countries and cultures
- Reasonable balance of gender
- Diversity in curriculum content
- Climate supportive of different minority groups and cultures

This conception of diversity provides a viable foundation for official efforts to describe the University's diversity objectives and can serve as the basis for continuing exploration of the implications of diversity initiatives for Penn State's efforts to achieve greater excellence. The understandings reflected in the Provost's statement are sufficiently broad to allow ample opportunity for dialogue and refinement. To illustrate, the conception requires modification to encompass populations other than "minority groups." There is also room for disagreement regarding what constitutes "reasonable representation" and "reasonable balance." While this general conception can introduce more consistency into discussions about Penn State's diversity objectives, there is a need for a concise operational definition that is used by all units and

stakeholders. The actions that will be undertaken to achieve the stated goal by critical units are indicated in the following table.

ACTION PLAN

GOAL: Develop and communicate clear and consistent descriptions of Penn State's diversity objectives and initiatives

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Work toward a concise institutional definition of diversity
- Convert this section of the Diversity Strategic Plan into a stand-alone document for widespread distribution to the University community

EXECUTIVES

- Undertake a review of material describing diversity initiatives in unit-specific publications including the new Strategic Plan

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND DIVERSITY EDUCATION

- Coordinate the review of the content and scope of existing diversity training efforts with a specific focus on program content

VICE PROVOST FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS

- Incorporate detailed information about the University's diversity initiatives in orientation sessions for new department heads

DEPARTMENT HEADS

- Disseminate and discuss detailed information about the University's diversity initiatives to new and existing faculty and nonacademic personnel

DISABILITY SERVICES

- Disseminate Faculty Handbook outlining faculty responsibilities under ADA to all academic units

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Collaborate with Affirmative Action and Diversity Education in examining the content of diversity courses offered through HRDC
- Ensure that curriculum recommendations from the Leadership and Management Excellence Design Team appropriately incorporate specific information about Penn State's diversity initiatives

STUDENT AFFAIRS

- Disseminate information on religious diversity and opportunities for student spiritual development

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION/ STUDENT AFFAIRS

- Disseminate specific information to incoming students about the University's diversity initiatives through new student orientation programs and other appropriate venues

CREATING A WELCOMING CAMPUS CLIMATE

Goal: Institute systematic climate improvement initiatives and assessment processes at all levels and locations

Understanding and valuing diversity is only a first step in the process of institutional transformation. These understandings must translate into activities undertaken by all members of the University community that create an inclusive and welcoming climate for students, faculty, and staff. This process is multifaceted, involving interactions both in and outside of the classroom, within work units, and in the residence halls. A welcoming and inclusive climate is grounded in respect for others, nurtured by dialogue between those of differing perspectives, and is evidenced by a pattern of civil interaction among community members. This vision of a wholesome climate is clearly consistent with the "customer service orientation" that is an integral part of Continuous Quality Improvement initiatives. It is critical that the diversity of "customers" be understood, respected, and reflected in day-to-day interactions.

The creation of a welcoming and inclusive climate is increasingly difficult. One major barrier is the general concern about the workplace climate, which is largely unrelated to diversity initiatives. Evidence of such concern was revealed in the responses to the recent Faculty/Staff Survey. In those areas undergoing major reorganization employees are sometimes anxious about issues like job stability and changing job performance expectations. Some of the occupations that are perceived to be tenuous have high proportions of female representation. As a consequence of such demographic patterns, initiatives that reassure employees that they and their work are valued simultaneously enhance the climate for diversity. The Staff Assistants Convocation for clerical staff working at locations other than University Park held in fall 1996 is an example of the type of initiative that can address employees' anxieties while also contributing to the enhancement of the climate for diversity. Two hundred fifty of the 450 staff assistants employed at non-University Park locations attended this inaugural convocation. The 1997 convocation involved 220 participants. There is a need to address issues affecting staff assistants at University Park in a similar proactive manner, making use of the Staff Focus Group.

A second barrier to the creation of a welcoming environment is that a single highly-visible act of intolerance or hate violence can undo years of efforts to create a sense of community. In such situations, one of the best measures of the quality of the climate is the willingness of community members to sanction collectively the negative behavior. It is absolutely imperative that the University community speak with a united voice in the condemnation of acts of hatred and intolerance. The "Take a Stand" rally, held in fall 1995, is an example of the power of voices united in support of a diverse Penn State. This rally was organized by student organizations working together, supported by faculty and staff, and attended by over a thousand members of the University community. Such grass-roots responses to specific crises must be built upon institutional credibility that has been previously established through regular reiteration of the University's commitment to an inclusive and multicultural community. These articulations must come from a variety of responsible persons at all levels and in all venues, from the halls of Old Main to the first words at new student orientation. Regular reinforcement of the University's objectives is especially critical in residence hall settings, where the potential for acts of intolerance is especially high.

From the preceding frame of reference, the creation of the Campus Environment Team (CET) at University Park in 1987 marked an important transition in Penn State's efforts to monitor and improve the climate for diversity. This group, which is comprised of high-ranking staff representing various offices, was charged initially with designing and implementing university-level responses to acts of intolerance. Over time the role of the CET has evolved to one of continuous monitoring of problematic aspects of the University climate (related and unrelated to diversity initiatives) through weekly meetings. Occasionally the CET has undertaken proactive efforts to raise awareness and to communicate important University values. Examples include various poster campaigns with a variety of foci.

The CET is a nationally acclaimed climate enhancement innovation, but it is no panacea. To illustrate, efforts to implement parallel structures at other Penn State locations have met with only limited success. Initiatives to assess and improve the campus climate for diversity must be an ongoing activity at all levels of the institution and at all locations. Prior to efforts to introduce regular climate assessment procedures through the diversity strategic planning process, we were often forced to rely on information collected by volunteer groups. As an example, the assessment summits conducted jointly by the Commission for Women, the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity, and the Commission on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equity have yielded important "grass-roots" level information through focus group discussions. In a similar vein, the survey of the climate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals conducted by the Commission on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equity highlighted the disproportionate discomfort experienced by this segment of the University community.

For underrepresented students, the initial challenge of learning to navigate a highly bureaucratic environment like University Park adds to the sense of discomfort associated with being in a distinct minority. One of the most successful efforts to improve the hospitality of University Park for students of color was the "Buddy System" program, operated during the late 1980s through the Paul Robeson Cultural Center. This program made a faculty or staff "buddy" available to interested incoming students of color. The senior buddy served as an advocate, confidant, and support network for the new student. The retention rate for students participating in this program was 30 percent higher than for nonparticipants. This program has recently been reinstated and expanded as the "Fast Start" program, which also includes an alumni buddy to provide additional mentoring focusing on career exploration.

The Paul Robeson Cultural Center plays a critical role in making the University Park campus hospitable for students of color. A new and larger facility will soon be constructed and the Center's role as a forum for the exploration of knowledge of diverse cultures and as a "home away from home" for students of color will expand. The new Center's proximity to the Hetzel Union Building will facilitate all students' access to a multicultural experience.

Many of the most effective efforts to improve campus climate for students involve simply providing programming assistance to student organizations. Two examples of student initiatives that contribute in important ways to promoting a positive climate for diversity are the "Ebony and Ivory Program," co-sponsored annually by a predominantly black and a predominantly white social fraternity, and the programming of "Project Growth." Project Growth joined with a student planning committee in the Multicultural Resource Center to coordinate "Unity Days," a series of events designed to heighten awareness of diversity issues and to facilitate coalition building. Even more impressive is the fact that Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian American Awareness

Week, and Pride Week (celebrating the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community) are all organized and implemented principally by student organizations.

There is, however, a need for improved support for student initiatives and additional venues in which student leaders can provide feedback and suggestions to offices with responsibility for improving campus climate. The Minority Roundtable is a recent initiative designed to address this shortcoming. Student leaders of umbrella organizations representing African American, Latino, Asian American, Native American, and International students meet monthly with the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, the directors of the Paul Robeson Cultural Center and Multicultural Resource Center, and other key officials. There is a need for a systematic approach to the cultivation of leadership for organizations representing students from these constituencies, as well as a focused workshop for leaders of ALL student organizations to increase their familiarity with the University's diversity objectives.

It is also important to recognize that the intensity of efforts to increase hospitality has varied across groups. The most extensive activities have focused on African Americans and the least aggressive have been directed at lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. Given the anticipated increases in the number of adult learners, special attention should be focused on this population as well. In general, there is a need to undertake more intensive strategies to address the climate concerns of all historically underrepresented groups.

Whatever the difficulties may be in enhancing the climate for diversity at University Park, they pale in significance beside the challenges facing other locations. In general, it is more difficult to enhance the climate at nonresidential campuses, but efforts of both residential and nonresidential campuses are severely constrained by resource limitations. There is a need for a concerted exploration of strategies to enhance the climate for diversity at locations other than University Park for faculty, staff, and students.

The Diversity Strategic Planning process has led to a more systematic focus on climate enhancement and assessment in individual academic and academic support units. Most colleges and administrative units, as well as many campuses, have established committees to assist in the preparation of diversity strategic plans. Many of these committees have continued to oversee plan implementation and to serve as *de facto* Environment or Climate Committees. Each committee should be charged with providing oversight for diversity initiatives in the college or academic support unit or campus, as well as responsibility for the overall monitoring of the climate within the unit/college or campus.

The Diversity Strategic Planning process has also led academic and academic support units to assess systematically the climate for students, faculty, and staff. A variety of techniques have been employed including surveys, focus groups, and discussions between managers and groups. Such assessments have provided participating colleges and units with valuable information about the ways in which they might address problems specific to their own areas. At the same time, it has proven difficult to get units to share the results of their climate surveys with centralized areas charged with monitoring the overall climate for diversity. As a University community, no unit or college functions in isolation. A climate that is less than welcoming in any part of the University affects the whole community.

It is also imperative that units make effective use of information obtained from other sources, including the Staff Review and Development Plan Instrument, to identify climate issues and develop both unit-wide and individualized approaches to enhancing overall climate and individuals' satisfaction with their environment.

The action plan focusing on improving the climate for diversity at Penn State is presented in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

GOAL: Institute systematic climate improvement initiatives and assessment processes at all levels and locations

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Develop a plan to enhance the climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students, faculty, and staff
- Continue support for units' climate assessment efforts and coordinate comparison of climate assessments
- Continue efforts to involve students actively in climate assessment and enhancement initiatives

EXECUTIVES

- Initiate a multifaceted climate assessment process including: regular meetings with faculty, staff, and students from diverse backgrounds, statistical climate assessments via surveys, and qualitative assessments via focus groups; Report findings to central offices
- Establish a process to monitor progress in improving climate

CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT TEAM

- Initiate pro-active, ongoing media campaigns to support efforts to create a welcoming campus climate

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Monitor Staff Review and Development Plan submissions to identify climate issues

STUDENT AFFAIRS

- Assess the effectiveness of Residence Life and Centers for Community Education programs designed to familiarize students with Penn State's commitment to creating a welcoming climate
- Develop a plan to enhance the climate for adult learners and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students
- Develop and offer a diversity training workshop for all student leaders of registered organizations

RECRUITING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE STUDENT BODY

Goal: Reduce intergroup disparities in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates through improvements in recruitment processes and retention initiatives

Goal: Develop and implement proactive strategies to recruit and retain nontraditional students

Penn State's commitment to diversifying its student body is grounded in our historic land-grant mission—the education of the sons and daughters of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Yet in an increasingly global society, Penn State has also reached beyond the borders of Pennsylvania in the effort to build a student body that is truly inclusive and diverse.

Desegregation directives have mandated focused efforts to recruit larger numbers of African American students. One of the broad measures used by the U.S. Department of Education to gauge equity of access is the proportion of the student population comprised by various groups compared to their representation in the Commonwealth's college-going population. African Americans comprise less than 4 percent of the Penn State student body compared to over 10 percent of the college-going population. Using this measure, Hispanic/Latino Americans are also underrepresented, albeit to a lesser extent. The proportion of Asian American students at Penn State is greater than their representation in the pool of potential students. The representation of Native American students in both the Penn State and Pennsylvania populations is extremely small. In all cases, the enrollment trend is upward, with the strongest growth occurring among Asian American students, which is now the largest group of students of color at Penn State. The rapid rate of growth among Asian Americans has occurred without the type of focused recruitment efforts that have been employed to increase admissions of African American and Hispanic/Latino American students.

At the undergraduate level, principal responsibility for recruiting students from historically underrepresented groups is vested in the Minority Admissions and Community Affairs (MACA) unit of the Division of Enrollment Management. In addition to MACA's centralized activities, there are three community recruitment centers located in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh. These centers provide a visible presence in locales with large populations of students of color and strengthen recruitment efforts. Activities include high school visitations and sponsorship of bus trips for prospective minority students to University Park and other locations.

The work of MACA is also supported by the college directors of Minority Programs who, among other responsibilities, attend college fairs and work closely with students after applications have been submitted. These professionals are able to help prospective students define their academic interests more clearly and assist in identifying any available college-based financial aid.

The college directors have also played an active role in supporting Penn State's graduate minority student recruitment efforts. The Directors identify prospective graduate students through trips to institutions and conferences and assist in arranging campus visits for prospective students. The recruitment activities of the college directors are coordinated through the Center for Minority Graduate Opportunities and Faculty Development in the Graduate School, but

graduate admission decisions are made by individual departments rather than centrally, as in the case of undergraduate students.

Our greatest successes have been in the area of students seeking professional degrees, i.e., the MBA and the MD. These successes result, in part, from strong commitment by leadership and intensive support networks. These academic areas are also more attuned to changes in the workplace and society than other areas of graduate study.

A personalized linkage to the institution has been universally identified in the research literature as the key to positive retention outcomes for undergraduate students. Students who are members of racial/ethnic minority groups have consistently found it more difficult to establish this type of personalized connection. As is the case at most public colleges and universities, the retention and graduation rates of African American and Hispanic/Latino American students at Penn State are significantly lower than for other groups. Three strategies have been employed to address these disparities. First, the type of personalized connection described above is provided through the Multicultural Resource Center, the College Directors of Minority Programs, the Office of Veterans Programs, the Office for Disability Services, the Center for Adult Learner Services, as well as other offices. Where overlap exists it is largely intentional such that students can seek support from those offices in the best position to address a particular concern. The provision of "multiple points of entry" into the network of academic and personal support services provides a safety net which reduces the likelihood that individual students will become disconnected or slip between the cracks in the support system.

The second strategy involves identification of pedagogical and related barriers that contribute to retention and academic performance disparities. As an example, examination of course grades revealed that students of color were disproportionately failing calculus courses taught in large sections. This led to a pilot program offering calculus to some minority students in small sections, resulting in a significant improvement in student performance. As a consequence of this targeted initiative, instruction of calculus in small sections is now the experience of most students. This is an example of how pilot efforts initially targeted at specific groups have been extended to enhance retention for all students. New initiatives designed to enhance retention of all students will, of course, also improve the retention of at-risk students such as the new computer-based advising and information system.

The third strategy employed to reduce retention disparities is developing specialized forms of academic support to meet the specific needs of different constituencies. As an example, Academic Assistance Programs (AAP) offers special support, including developmental courses, to students from educational and/or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The CAMP program provides special support for students from migrant farm-worker backgrounds. At the other end of the spectrum, the Bunton-Waller Fellows program provides a residentially-based comprehensive support network for students with outstanding academic potential.

Because graduate study is much more of an individualized process, there is a more limited role for centralized retention initiatives. However, the Center for Minority Graduate Opportunities and Faculty Development does offer a variety of services including: assistance in identifying mentors, professional development workshops, support for participation in professional conferences, and counseling and advising services.

Penn State's long-term goals of diversifying its undergraduate and graduate student bodies will require an increasing involvement in early intervention programs to increase the pool of prospective students. Our major efforts have focused on middle-school students through the Penn State Educational Partnership Program (PEPP), which serves students in Erie, McKeesport, Reading, and most recently Philadelphia. PEPP is a collaboration between Penn State and the local school districts aimed at helping disadvantaged students develop the necessary skills and aspirations to attend a college or university. It is primarily an after-school program in which tutorial and other support services are provided on a one-on-one basis. In addition, the "After School Family Education Program," operated through Educational Equity serves students in grades 1-8 in three school districts in Beaver County. Over fifty Penn State programs are operated at various locations each summer serving pre-college students of different ages, many of which are funded partially through grants from the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee. There is a need to coordinate the transition of students between Penn State University programs as they progress through middle and secondary school. Such coordination can link students to Penn State throughout their secondary education, thereby improving our recruitment (and retention) outcomes.

Similar efforts are needed to increase the pool of graduate students. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation/Center for Undergraduate Opportunities-Summer Research Opportunities Program and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program are our most extensive efforts in this area.

While the recruitment, retention, and pool-building initiatives described above are impressive, as noted previously, the measurable enrollment outcomes do not compare well with our CIC counterparts. Consequently, every opportunity must be explored to improve our results. Recruitment and retention efforts will become more complicated with the reorganization of the Commonwealth Educational System. If adequate student services will not be available at all locations, then students from underrepresented groups should be directed only to locations with requisite academic and personal support structures. To make detailed judgments of this type will require more sophisticated analyses of factors affecting student retention/attrition.

New and continuing challenges will also be faced in the recruitment of graduate students from underrepresented groups and international students. The Center for Minority Graduate Opportunities and Faculty Development currently uses information on race and ethnicity from formal Graduate School applications to identify prospective candidates from underrepresented groups, and works with departments and college minority coordinators to recruit those applicants. The Graduate School will continue to have access to this information and pursue this approach in the new decentralized admissions process. However, independent of the particular institutional admissions model, Internet technology has resulted in an increasing use of home pages by departments and programs to engage in prescreening, using some form of preliminary application before complete application packages are provided to prospective students. These preliminary reviews of credentials (used most generally in the case of international applicants, but spreading to the wider pool of prospective students) create a risk that students from underrepresented groups, international students, and students with disabilities will be discouraged from applying on the basis of incomplete information that does not fully reflect the student's capabilities. Most of these preliminary applications do not request information about race, ethnicity, or any disabilities of the applicant. Although these prescreening processes have

the potential to save time and unnecessary expense for both programs and prospective students, great care must be taken to ensure that such processes are not exclusionary.

The successful recruitment of graduate students from underrepresented groups is increasingly competitive, and will not occur in the absence of a concerted and coordinated effort by all units and personnel involved including departmental faculty and administrators, the College minority coordinators, and the Graduate School. The recruitment and retention of greater numbers of minority faculty is also essential to the recruitment of students from underrepresented groups, and is often regarded by prospective students as an indication of the institution's commitment to educational equity.

As we look toward the dawn of a new century, our horizons must be broadened to recruit students actively from additional underrepresented groups including adult learners, veterans, students with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, and bisexual students. As our connections to the international community increase, we must move toward a corresponding increase in the numbers of matriculated international undergraduate students, as well as in the numbers of our Pennsylvania and U.S. students who study abroad. A more diverse student body, both nationally and internationally, will mean a more competitive Penn State, helping to ensure employers that we are cognizant of their needs.

Even as the University broadens the boundaries of its student body, however, it is imperative to maintain a continued commitment to the recruitment of historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups. There must be a focus on ensuring diverse enrollments in nonresidential course offerings through Continuing and Distance Education, as well as the traditional resident education focus. Future growth in this area is likely to be much larger than in resident instruction.

Special attention must be focused on improving the delivery of services that will reduce intergroup retention and graduation rate disparities. Undergraduate Education and Educational Equity have launched a new initiative to examine existing retention programs and develop strategies to achieve better coordination and results.

The action plan associated with the goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse student body is indicated in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: Reduce intergroup disparities in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates through improvements in recruitment processes and retention initiatives

Goal: Develop and implement proactive strategies to recruit and retain nontraditional students

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Review the impact of recruitment and retention programs funded through the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee and make recommendations for future initiatives

- Monitor and ensure compliance with commitments related to Pennsylvania's desegregation mandates

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Review effectiveness of pre-college student programs and develop strategies to coordinate student transitions between PSU programs

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION/EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Review the organization and effectiveness of current retention initiatives; Develop and implement improved procedures

DEANS (UP AND NON-UP COLLEGES)

- Develop a comprehensive retention plan to reduce intergroup retention rate disparities

GRADUATE SCHOOL

- Monitor and report the effect of pre-application screening on enrollments of minority, disabled, and international students

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

- Review the organization and effectiveness of existing efforts to recruit students from underrepresented groups; Improve and expand efforts as needed

CONTINUING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

- Develop recruitment plans and an array of programs that will ensure diverse representation

RECRUITING AND RETAINING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Goal: Develop and implement strategies to improve the success of search processes in identifying and assessing the credentials of women and minority employee candidates for faculty and staff positions

Goal: Expand faculty and staff retention programs to include all underrepresented groups

Goal: Accelerate the introduction of "family friendly" policies and programs, expanded reward systems, and expanded personal and professional development opportunities

The need for a diverse workforce is part and parcel of the human resource requirements associated with successful continuous quality improvement initiatives. A diverse workforce in which the contributions of each member—faculty, staff, or administrator, are respected and valued is an institution's most important asset. Such a workforce is able to synthesize a variety of perspectives and processes for the successful completion of tasks. Employers can build on established individual and group strengths and develop policies that create an environment to get the best out of each individual.

A crucial factor in the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce is the development of managers and supervisors within the staff and faculty who have the skills to recruit, manage, and mentor diverse populations. Managing diversity within the workplace means creating an environment where each faculty and staff member is empowered to contribute to the work of the unit, being sensitive and alert to the interactions among and between faculty and staff, and articulating clear expectations about behaviors in the workplace. Effective mentoring in a multicultural setting involves offering opportunities for faculty and staff to learn about diverse people and cultures. It means understanding diverse learning styles and approaches to problem-solving. Most significantly, however, mentoring in a diverse workplace requires provision of appropriate feedback to those being supervised about the contribution of their work and behavior to a multicultural Penn State.

A diverse and multicultural workforce will include more than token representation of racial/ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, veterans, women, and people with disabilities within all faculty, staff, and administrative ranks. Although comparative data are not available for all of these categories we do know that in terms of racial/ethnic diversity Penn State has one of the least diverse work forces of any CIC institution. To illustrate, based on 1997 data, for the nine CIC institutions for which data are available Penn State ranks eighth in the proportion of employees who are members of minority groups. These data suggest that our efforts must be even more extensive than those of our counterparts. Success in addressing this challenge will continue to be hampered by our low staff turnover rate.

As is the case at most institutions, the constraints affecting the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce vary for different types of occupations. Faculty and many professional staff are hired from national applicant pools, while other employees are hired from local labor markets. The demographics of the geographical area surrounding University Park limit opportunities to diversify nonprofessional positions through normal hiring practices. At the same

time, the geographical isolation of the State College area also hampers our ability to recruit faculty and higher-level professional staff who are members of underrepresented groups.

Several strategies have been employed to address these concerns. The President's Opportunity Fund and the Women's Recruitment Fund are sources of financial assistance for making competitive offers to prospective faculty and professional staff. These types of financial assistance must be correlated with efforts to increase the pool of faculty candidates. The CIC Chief Diversity Officers are currently attempting to increase the numbers of Ph.D. graduates from CIC institutions who move into faculty positions at other CIC institutions through systematic sharing of vita.

The Minority Professional Entry Program provides opportunities for prospective staff members with the necessary academic preparation, but little or no work experience to gain training in a professional support position. The Staff Assistant Training Program provides an eight-week training opportunity for Pennsylvania minority business school students during the summer months. Since the program's inception, about half of the participants have found permanent employment at Penn State. Penn State also maintains a Minority Recruitment Outreach/Vita Bank to identify and increase the number of potential University minority staff members.

Despite these various efforts to diversify the pool of potential employees, there is still a continuing complaint from academic and nonacademic units that there are insufficient numbers of candidates from underrepresented groups in job applicant pools. In its work with search committees, the Office of Affirmative Action and Diversity Education provides resources to facilitate the identification of strong and diverse external candidate pools. It is not clear, however, that the screening processes that search committees actually use do not inadvertently screen out well-qualified women and minority candidates. To counter this possibility, every search committee must be charged with clear instructions to ensure equitable treatment for women and minorities, as is mandated by the University's strategic goal to recruit, hire, and retain a diverse faculty and staff.

It is also not clear that units have sufficient information about nonwork related concerns of potential employees to create a comfort level with respect to issues such as religious worship, options for child care, primary and secondary education options, desirable residential locations, culture-specific opportunities for social interaction, etc. There is a need to establish a standard body of information that can be drawn upon, as well as a network of contact persons who can provide specialized information to candidates who are members of various underrepresented groups.

Problems in retaining faculty and staff who are members of underrepresented groups are also multifaceted. One of the most serious problems at present is the aggressive recruitment of high-caliber faculty and staff by other institutions. The success of such efforts is compounded by limited opportunities for upward mobility and other rewards within the Penn State system.

In the case of faculty, the Senior Mentor position in the Center for Minority Graduate Opportunities and Faculty Development is a nationally-renowned innovation. The Senior Faculty mentor works with untenured minority faculty to maximize the probability of successful navigation of the tenure and promotion process. Services include individual consultations, workshops on topics like the promotion and tenure process, publishing, proposal writing, and

vitae preparation. One of the interesting dynamics associated with these initiatives is the increasing attendance by majority women and men, which signals the need to expand access to these important professional development opportunities.

Support for staff is much more meager. Although a Minority Staff Development Center was established in 1991, it proved to be a short-lived venture. More generally, the Staff Focus Group has not yet proven to be an effective vehicle for propagating initiatives to reduce barriers contributing to attrition among staff. There is clearly an unmet need in the area of providing support for personal and professional development of staff at all levels, as well as mechanisms to acknowledge significant involvement in efforts to promote diversity.

Future success in recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce will depend significantly on the University's success in implementing "family friendly" policies and programs such as flexible scheduling throughout the University. Recent commitments to expanded child care programs provide a much needed service and send a positive message to the community. In addition, we will need to seize every opportunity for spousal/partner hirings to attract high-quality faculty and professional staff. Continued support of diverse cultural performances is also vital for providing a quality of life supportive of recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.

There is also an ongoing need to treat all employees as respected individuals and to provide the maximum feasible opportunities for personal and professional development. Too often such opportunities are restricted to higher-level staff. The results of the recent Faculty/ Staff Survey revealed an unacceptable level of discontent with the workplace climate, which does not bode well for the retention of the highest-caliber faculty and staff.

Used appropriately, the Staff Review and Development Plan instrument provides a means of constructing individualized approaches to preparing all employees to function comfortably and productively in a multicultural work environment. The Staff Focus Group can be of assistance in identifying barriers that prevent employees in some job classifications from taking full advantage of educational and other opportunities.

At the same time, we must also be willing to develop creative ways to reward faculty and staff for their contributions to Penn State, and such reward systems must recognize appropriately the diversity of individuals and types of contributions if a truly multicultural workplace of the type desired is to emerge.

There is also a need for better information about why employees leave Penn State. A multiunit effort to establish a systematic exit interview process is underway. It is important that this process address the issues of specific concern to underrepresented groups, rather than focusing only on generic issues.

The action plan to address the goals associated with recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce is presented in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: Develop and implement strategies to improve the success of search processes in identifying and assessing the credentials of women and minority employee candidates for faculty and staff positions

Goal: Expand faculty and staff retention programs to include all underrepresented groups

Goal: Accelerate the introduction of "family friendly" policies and programs, expanded reward systems, and expanded personal and professional development opportunities

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Monitor the success of efforts to create a diverse workforce

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND DIVERSITY EDUCATION

- Develop information packets and a list of contact persons to assist units in recruiting faculty and staff from underrepresented groups
- Develop and implement a plan to establish a functional staff development center serving women and underrepresented minorities
- Prepare annual updates on workforce composition

DEANS

- Appoint coordinators/directors of minority programs to search committees

DEPARTMENT HEADS/ MANAGERS

- Provide Educational Equity with job descriptions for all academic searches for dissemination to CIC institutions

GRADUATE SCHOOL

- Develop a plan to expand access to support services provided by the Senior Faculty Mentor

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Complete design and implementation of a systematic exit interview process; Use the findings to recommend policies to reduce disproportionate attrition of faculty and staff who are members of underrepresented groups
- Maintain support for the Minority Professional Entry and Staff Assistant Development Programs; Solicit increased participation as feasible
- Continue design of and advocacy for "family friendly" employment policies and augmented reward systems

DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM THAT IS SUPPORTIVE OF OUR NEW GENERAL EDUCATION PLAN

Goal: Institute curricula and research initiatives that provide students with the skills and orientation to function effectively in multicultural workplaces and social environments

Nothing more profoundly articulates the values of a university than its curriculum. Our Penn State community will not be diverse, nor will we be able to educate our students for participation in a diverse and multicultural world, unless our curriculum is diverse and multicultural as well. As noted educator James Banks states:

"Education within a pluralistic society should affirm and help students understand their home and community cultures. However, it should also help free them from their cultural boundaries. To create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good, education in a democratic society should help students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they will need to participate in civic action to make society more equitable and just."

Penn State graduates need to be prepared to work and continue to learn in a world that is increasingly interconnected. The advance of communication technology and the changing demographics of the nation and the world have transformed the concept of "the global village" from a romantic ideal into an economic reality. The most successful of our students will be those who are able to cross cultural boundaries.

This perspective has led many colleges and universities to mandate that students complete courses addressing diversity subject matter in order to graduate. One objective of such a requirement is the cultivation of cross-cultural communication and interaction skills. Such skills become analogous, in many respects, to the traditional basic skills of literacy and computational ability. Another objective is to help students develop a multicultural repertoire of problem/issue identification skills and approaches to analysis/solution. This is the foundation of the multicultural team problem-solving approach used increasingly in the private sector.

In 1991 the University Faculty Senate adopted a three-credit cultural diversity requirement "to increase awareness of the richness and variety of backgrounds which students, faculty, and staff bring to our academic community." Originally the requirement could be satisfied by taking either a "diversity-focused" course or several "diversity-enhanced" courses. Later the relevant Senate legislation was amended such that the requirement could only be satisfied by taking a diversity-focused course.

Recently the University Faculty Senate adopted a recommendation to alter the designation of the requirement to the "Cultural Diversity Skills and International Competence Requirement." This change will add coherence to the requirement and provide a framework for making more refined judgments about both the relevance of individual courses for the educational objectives and assessment of student learning outcomes. In addition changes in the foreign language proficiency expected of entering undergraduate students will facilitate cultivation of international competence skills. The same is true of plans to increase enrollments in study abroad programs.

Faculty will need assistance in developing and/or modifying courses to align them with the new general education plan. In the past, a limited amount of central support for "curriculum integration" projects has been provided by several offices. As an example, such support is provided on a project-specific basis through the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee. A new fund has been established that will provide much broader support for general education curriculum development, including courses focusing on cultural diversity skills and international competence. This fund will significantly extend the process of disseminating information to faculty undertaking curriculum integration efforts. Past efforts have included a series of conferences sponsored by the College of Education. The Commission on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equity is currently sponsoring workshops to assist in integrating material related to the experience of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons into appropriate courses. The University Libraries have played, and will play, a vital role in providing the resources necessary to support curriculum development and transformation initiatives. There is also an important role for the Instructional Development Program and the Schreyer Institute to play in creating a wholesome learning environment for students from all backgrounds.

Development of a multicultural curriculum is not limited to the issues described above. Another critical ingredient in a multicultural academic environment is the presence of viable and visible units engaged in instruction and research examining the experiences of groups historically ignored or stereotyped in the curriculum. The Department of African and African American Studies and the Women's Studies Program have long served as the principal contributors to reflecting this dimension of a multicultural curriculum. As we move into the next century there is a need for systematic strategies to establish venues for encouraging course development, certification options, and research projects in other fields including: Hispanic/Latin American Studies; Asian American Studies; Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies; and Disability Studies. A pilot research initiative focusing on the experiences of lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons is underway in the Colleges of the Liberal Arts and Health and Human Development.

There is also a need for increased support for current research efforts. This summer a new seminar entitled, "African American Traditions" was offered through the Institute for the Arts and Humanistic Studies. This week-long seminar provided opportunities for in-depth exploration of research by Penn State faculty examining various aspects of the experiences of African Americans. In the future the seminar may provide comparable structure and visibility to research initiatives in African American Studies to efforts underway at institutions such as Harvard, Duke, and the University of Maryland.

As new specialized locales for research and teaching about traditionally underrepresented groups expands, it is also important that linkages with traditional departments and research institutes be strengthened. Such linkages will maximize the overall impact of the "new scholarship" on curricula and research. In a similar vein, the expanding number of partnerships with international institutions should be seen as an opportunity to infuse existing curricula with more of an international orientation.

Implementing the dimensions of a multicultural curriculum described above at locations other than University Park constitutes a particularly difficult challenge.

The action plan to promote the goal of creating a multicultural curriculum is indicated in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: Institute curricula and research initiatives that provide students with the skills and orientation to function effectively in multicultural workplaces and social environments

UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE / EDUCATIONAL EQUITY / UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

- Develop framework to assess student learning outcomes associated with the Diversity Skills and International Competencies Requirement
- Establish a working committee to develop strategies for establishing programs in fields like Asian American, Disability, Hispanic/Latino American, and Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Studies

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION / EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Develop a plan for providing fiscal and consultative support to assist faculty in designing courses satisfying the Diversity Skills and International Competencies Requirement

COLLEGE DEANS (UP)/VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

- Implement strategies for developing and introducing programs and curricular offerings on multicultural issues (with Department Heads)
- Explore opportunities to establish intercollege research programs focusing on multicultural issues
- Develop an inventory of college-based diversity-related research initiatives

DEANS (NON-UP COLLEGES)

- Develop a plan to support multicultural curriculum development efforts

DEPARTMENT HEADS

- Implement strategies for developing and introducing programs and curricular offerings on multicultural issues (with College Deans and VP for Research)

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

- Continue aggressive acquisition of resource materials focused on underrepresented populations and work closely with academic units in curriculum transformation efforts

DEAN OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Provide guidance to colleges, departments, and the University Faculty Senate in effective utilization of international partnerships to foster enhanced international perspectives in curricula

DIVERSIFYING UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Goal: Develop a diverse management team at all levels of the organization

The development of a diverse and multicultural management team is closely related, indeed vital, to the recruitment and retention of a diverse and multicultural workforce. Penn State's commitment to diversity must be visible in its most public face, that of the senior managers and leaders of the University. The charge to colleges, units, and departments to recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff rings hollow if not modeled in the leadership and management of the University.

Progress in placing African Americans into important leadership positions has been fairly impressive. However, in recent years several African American employees have assumed executive-level positions at other institutions following unsuccessful efforts to advance at Penn State. While some progress has also been made in the representation of women in managerial positions, it still lags behind the overall representation of women in the workforce. In addition, other historically underrepresented groups are virtually absent from the managerial ranks at all levels of the organization.

Women and some minorities are also not currently represented proportionately in positions where promotion to higher level managerial positions is likely. Moreover, there is underrepresentation in venues that provide visibility, understanding of university-wide issues, and opportunities to display management potential, such as university-wide committees and task forces and high-level search committees. Short-term efforts to address these issues do not require massive dislocations. As an example, in appointing important committees, if administrators use some appointments as a professional development vehicle, then employees' overall productivity, as well as managerial potential, will be enhanced.

The principal mechanism used to address these problems has been the Administrative Fellows Program, initially recommended by the Commission for Women. This program provides an opportunity to enhance the administrative talents and qualifications of women and minorities by involving them in mentorship experiences with top-level administrators. While a number of past participants have moved into higher-level positions as a consequence of participation in the program, only three Fellows are named each year. There is a need to develop a program of shorter duration that reaches further down into the organization and involves more employees. Such a program could include three-month job rotations, providing opportunities to learn the functions of various areas of the University. There is also a need for a structured program that provides interested employees with an opportunity to gain insights from women and minorities who have been successful in moving into higher level positions.

As a result of the circumstances described above, short- and intermediate-term efforts to diversify middle- and upper-level management positions will continue to rely extensively on external hires. However, all institutions must strike a delicate balance between infusing new blood into the organization and providing promotion opportunities for insiders with specific institutional knowledge. This places a special responsibility on search committees for middle- and upper-level administrative positions. These search committees must not only be broadly

representative, but also knowledgeable of the University's diversity objectives. Demonstrated ability to manage diversity should become a standard qualification expected of both internal and external candidates for leadership positions at all levels. There is also a need to scrutinize the interview process carefully to ensure that external candidates have the opportunity to engage diverse populations and acquire a sense of the community's social fabric.

In the longer term, efforts to diversify Penn State's management team will be heavily influenced by the new Leadership and Management Curriculum and the continuing implementation of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) practices. To the extent that CQI implementation leads to flattened management structures, fewer traditional management opportunities will be available. However, as more team-oriented decision-making structures are introduced, there will be a need for different types of leadership and management skills. It is imperative that women, minorities, and other traditionally underrepresented populations have equal access to the vehicles by which these skills are acquired.

The action plan associated with the goal of developing a diverse leadership team is summarized in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: Develop a diverse management team at all levels of the organization

EXECUTIVES

- Require demonstrated skills in managing diversity as a standard qualification for all leadership positions
- Ensure diverse representation on search committees and provide complete information about expectations regarding candidates' skills in managing diversity

CENTER FOR QUALITY AND PLANNING

- Monitor diversity leadership implications of increased use of team decision-making strategies

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Explore the feasibility of a variant of the Administrative Fellows Program targeted at middle-level opportunities; Report on resource implications
- Monitor participation in the Leadership and Management Curriculum to ensure equitable participation by women and minorities

COORDINATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE TO SUPPORT OUR DIVERSITY GOALS

Goal: Institute the necessary organizational realignments, systems of accountability, resource mobilization and allocation strategies, and long-term planning strategies necessary to ensure realization of the University's diversity goals

Successful implementation of the action plans in the preceding sections requires a solid fiscal resource base and an effective institutional infrastructure. Making funds available to support diversity initiatives is an especially difficult challenge in an environment in which inadequate levels of public support have become the norm. Nevertheless, creative strategies must be developed to ensure that critical needs do not go unmet due to resource limitations. Significant additional expenditures will be legally mandated in some areas, such as compliance with ADA regulations. In addition, the current assessment of desegregation outcomes is likely to result in additional mandated programs.

At present, many units rely excessively on grants from the Equal Opportunity Planning Committee (EOPC) to fund diversity initiatives. Originally, EOPC funds were meant to serve as "start-up" funds or "seed money," with units taking over full fiscal responsibility for programs after a reasonable period of time. However, this type of transfer of fiscal responsibility has rarely occurred, with the result that funding of new programs has been increasingly stifled. In response to this problem, increasingly stringent criteria have been applied to renewal requests, including detailed assessments of program outcomes. Further, units have been encouraged to collaborate where possible to implement the most effective designs for specific types of programs.

In addition to these incremental process improvements, the members of the EOPC recently re-examined the mission and efficacy of the existing strategy of awarding EOPC funds to determine if a more effective approach can be designed. These deliberations resulted in the decision to reorient EOPC funding so as to address the ongoing desegregation mandate from the U.S. Department of Education. The bulk of funding will be directed toward innovative programs to enhance recruitment and retention of undergraduate students, as well as those designed to increase the likelihood of college attendance on the part of current elementary and secondary students. This latter category will be designated "Community Development." Funds will still be available to assist in the implementation of programs aimed at multicultural education, faculty development, and establishing equity for women, persons with disabilities, lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons, and adult learners.

Refinement of the EOPC award process alone will be insufficient to meet the fiscal requirements to transform Penn State into a multicultural institution. Since large sums of new monies are unlikely to become available through internal sources, it is imperative that strategies be developed to ensure that all existing resources contribute to the realization of the University's diversity objectives. The upcoming capital campaign provides an excellent long-term opportunity to expand the resources available to support diversity initiatives. There are various projects that would be attractive to potential donors including scholarships and fellowships, endowed chairs, and endowed lectureships. The various alumni interest groups constitute a natural base for initiating solicitations to support diversity projects.

Resources alone cannot guarantee optimal outcomes. There is also a need to ensure that the infrastructure supporting diversity initiatives is organized appropriately and is functioning in an efficient manner. Since the early 1990s, coordination of diversity efforts has been centered around the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity. At the same time a number of critical units are housed in other administrative areas including Academic Assistance Programs; Affirmative Action and Diversity Education; the Center for Minority Graduate Opportunities and Faculty Development; Minority Admissions and Community Affairs; the College Directors of Minority Programs; and several offices located in Student Affairs. This organizational pattern reflects an effort to strike a balance between centralized activities where collaboration and efficiency is maximized, and decentralized activities that require critical functional areas to assume direct responsibility for ensuring equitable delivery of services to all constituents.

There is a need to assess the efficacy of the existing configuration of offices and current reporting relationships. While benchmarking with peer institutions can provide some insights, one of the principal problems we face is that units serving underrepresented groups within larger organizational structures often have few resources at their disposal. In such cases the critical decision is whether to focus on improving the delivery of services within those organizations or relocate those offices within a structure that affords a higher priority to diversity initiatives. Such decisions are most appropriately made on a case-by-case basis because the leadership commitment to diversity initiatives varies significantly across units.

Any reorganization proposals should assign the highest priority to improving the alignment between academic and academic support initiatives. From this vantage point, there is a need for a more formal linkage between Educational Equity, the University Faculty Senate, and individual faculty with interests in promoting the University's diversity objectives. There is also a need for better alignment between co-curricular educational programming and in-class explorations of diversity topics.

Reorganization proposals should also focus on the delivery of diversity-related programming. The Commission for Women, the Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity, and the Commission on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equity, advisory bodies comprised of volunteers and supported through Educational Equity, have increasingly taken on ongoing educational and advocacy activities. In many cases this is the result of the failure of line organizations to initiate appropriate diversity-relating programming and other activities. While the activities undertaken by advisory bodies certainly broaden involvement in efforts to make Penn State a multicultural institution, they tend to have relatively limited involvement with, and impact on, the formal academic mission of the University or on strategic decisions that affect the long term future of the institution.

A variety of major changes have been announced recently including the reorganization of the Commonwealth Educational System (CES), the merger with the Dickinson School of Law, and the merger between The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the Geisinger Group. A number of smaller but significant changes have occurred as well including the revision of summer enrollment protocols. In several cases there are potential impacts. As an example, how will diversity efforts be coordinated in the new colleges that have been recreated as part of the CES reorganization? Do the changes in summer enrollment protocols offer an opportunity to increase minority enrollments? It is imperative that planning for major changes assigns a greater weight to the assessment of diversity impacts. In a similar vein, there is a need to establish formal

expectations for strategic planning units in reporting on diversity initiatives in the annual updates of their strategic plans. The action plan to address these issues is indicated in the following text.

ACTION PLAN

Goal: Institute the necessary organizational realignments, systems of accountability, resource mobilization and allocation strategies, and long-term planning strategies necessary to ensure realization of the University's diversity goals

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

- Re-examine the EOPC mission and assess the existing awards process; Introduce modifications as appropriate
- Coordinate review of current organizational arrangements involving offices providing services to underrepresented groups including benchmarking with peer institutions
- Establish Faculty Diversity Advisory Committee (in collaboration with the University Faculty Senate)
- Develop recommendations for reducing reliance on volunteer organizations to provide critical services to underrepresented groups

EXECUTIVES

- Provide detailed assessments of diversity initiatives in annual Strategic Plan updates
- Prioritize diversity initiatives in capital campaign solicitations

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a detailed plan to solicit funds to support university-wide diversity initiatives

EDUCATIONAL EQUITY / DEANS OF NON-UP COLLEGES

- Develop plans to ensure coordination of diversity initiatives system-wide

A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998–2003

CONCLUSION

One of the goals articulated in the guidelines for developing strategic plans for the period 1998–2003 mandates the University

"To foster a caring University community that provides leadership for constructive participation in a diverse, multicultural world."

In clarifying the intent of this goal, four critical observations are offered:

1. The single most important key to opening the doors wider to all people is to create an environment in which everyone feels welcome. This expresses our commitment to access and underscores the values of basic human respect and freedom, and supports Penn State's role in the global society.
2. Academic quality and commitment to community will be achieved through the inclusion of information and knowledge from the full spectrum of our collective human experience and through recruitment and retention efforts that continue to expand the participation of minorities and women.
3. Penn State's educational programs and extracurricular activities will promote the development of multicultural understanding and cross-cultural competence.
4. Penn State's working environment will value civility and acceptance of increased cultural diversity and sensitivity.

This vision simply reiterates that a prerequisite for Penn State to strengthen its leadership role in an increasingly global community is the complete integration of diversity enhancement efforts into all of the University's core activities. The goals and action plans outlined in this document are designed to meet the challenges of transforming Penn State into a truly multicultural institution. It now becomes the responsibility of all of our constituencies to operationalize the plans set forth herein.