Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009
Enrollment Management and Administration

Enrollment Management and Administration (EMA) is poised to make a significant contribution towards Penn State's diversity goals by increasing the enrollment, retention, and graduation of undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds, especially those among diverse racial/ethnic groups. As it should, diversifying the undergraduate student population takes center stage in the EMA diversity strategic plan. However, this priority has come at the expense of planning that would advance diversity in the staff and leadership ranks of EMA. Deficiencies in these areas are also observed in EMA's final report on its implementation of the 1998-2003 *Framework.*

EMA acknowledges in its strategic plan that its efforts towards staff have been less focused, and it makes some provision for improvement. However, EMA does not include a comprehensive set of concrete goals that consistently incorporate performance indicators. Even in the student area, which uses data extensively, other than "onward and upward," it is difficult to know where EMA plans to go. Another shortcoming of the plan is the absence of the Registrar's Office. As a major unit within EMA, its resources should be garnered to support EMA's diversity efforts, especially in its development and administration of eLion, which students use extensively and could convey important diversity messages and training across the University. Additionally, little was found in the plan that was specific to LGBT equity or individuals with disabilities.

Finally, EMA's diversity strategic plan contains large sections that essentially report on past progress or program descriptions (cf., p. 4). EMA should emphasize planning throughout the document and only refer to previous success and program description as a basis for inaugurating new plans. Also, EMA does not employ the specific Challenges of the 2004-2009 *Framework* to organize its goals. Instead, EMA uses the four dimensions of diversity to contextualize the Challenges in the 2004-2009 *Framework*, but EMA's diversity goals are not always appropriately placed within the four dimensions. To organize its own comments effectively, the review team provides feedback on EMA goals per the 2004-2009 *Framework* Challenges regardless of where they occur in the EMA plan.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity
- ❖ EMA's new definition of diversity now includes staff, which is a significant improvement over the definition contained in the final report on the 1998-2003 *Framework*. Plans exist to integrate the definition into the overall operation of EMA, especially as it relates to communicating the value of diversity to prospective students in EMA's presentations at school programs, college fairs, and other outreach activities. These plans are laudable, and EMA is encouraged to establish viable assessment strategies to evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts.
- ❖ The "learning organization model" to empower staff in disseminating diversity messages sounds intriguing, but more information on this initiative should be included.
  RESPONSE: The learning organization model, initiated in spring 2004 in Undergraduate Admissions, follows a course format and has been developed to help build core knowledge of the University and prepare EMA staff to better answer "Why Penn State" for prospective students and their parents. Through an assortment of group learning activities, participants broaden their understanding of Penn State's academic colleges, campus system, and student life opportunities. The mission and strategic goals of EMA, including the importance of and commitment to diversity, will be an integral component of the learning activities.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate
❖ EMA plans to establish a diversity advisory committee. The description of this goal includes the charge to the committee, which is useful in establishing initial priorities. EMA's committee is encouraged to develop a concrete set of action plans with specific performance indicators.
RESPONSE: EMA staff have an interest and desire to learn more about the diversity of their colleagues and how to create a better working relationship among people with different backgrounds. To address these stated challenges, EMA will develop and formalize a Diversity Advisory Committee that will provide an on-going opportunity for staff and new hires to participate in frequent programs/information sessions. This committee will be responsible for developing action plans (as indicated on page 2-3 in EMA's Framework to Foster Diversity) and taking a periodic pulse check to see how the staff are utilizing the programming in their daily work. It would also be a conduit for staff proposals of new diversity initiatives that continue to address our ever-changing needs within the work place.
❖ EMA mentions the climate surveys in the plan that helped EMA identify its diversity challenges. Specific rationale and information on these challenges and anticipated action plans should be included.
RESPONSE: The climate surveys distributed to staff identified a need for "on-going workshops to help improve office climate." In an office where students' needs and customer service is first and foremost in its daily activities, the survey indicated that staff felt more attention needed to be placed on the internal office climate. Staff pointed to the hiring practices of the division recommending better use of the Diversity Talent Bank for resumes from underrepresented populations (Asians, Hispanics, etc.) for external searches. A large amount of staff are native Pennsylvanians who may not have had the opportunity to learn first-hand about other cultures. This was noted as a challenge that should be addressed within EMA.

Representation (Access and Success)
Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
❖ This Challenge, which is at the heart of EMA's mission, contains extensive reporting on past endeavors and program descriptions. Two primary difficulties were found under this Challenge: (1) the failure of EMA to identify many plans for future initiatives,
RESPONSE: Implicit in the description of past successful initiatives and programs is the continuation of those programs. An extensive list is provided in the EMA 2004-2009 Framework and will not be replicated here. However, it is important to note that the success of those initiatives is due in large part to support provided by the regional recruiters and the Community Recruitment Centers. Relocation of the Philadelphia Community Recruitment Center to central Philadelphia provides better service to high school students and is yet another example of how EMA is moving forward. EMA has been a critical participant in a two-year Adult Data Partnership project, providing partial funding for a research analyst in the Center for Adult Learner Services and expertise in data management, data analysis, and research. This partnership includes Continuing Education and has provided important insights regarding the enrollment behaviors of adult students, critical information for the development of policies and practices aimed at better serving adults.
and (2) the lack of concrete performance indicators for goals.
RESPONSE: Assessing the success of EMA's efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented students has been addressed as part of the response to the review of the 1998-2003 Framework and can be found there.
One of EMA's plans is to continue to address recruitment declines among adult learners in conjunction with the Center for Adult Learner Services, the Commission for Adult Learners, and Continuing Education. EMA is commended for including adult learners in its diversity planning and for seeking out collaborations with other offices and the Commission. Again, more specifics are needed to flesh out this plan.
❖ The plan to restructure the Bunton-Waller scholarship *is* reasonably explicit. Many at the University are concerned that this restructuring will hinder Penn State's ability to attract high-achieving African American and Hispanic/Latino students. What is the rationale for this change, and how does the change fit into an overall plan to optimize diversity funds?

RESPONSE: In July 2003, the Supreme Court handed down an opinion dealing with the use of affirmative action in college admissions. Penn State and all schools undertook an immediate review of the implications of this ruling on their own institutional policies and practices. It was broadly held that the court rulings would also apply to the awarding of student aid. This ruling was the rationale for changes introduced in the Bunton-Waller Scholarship and Penn State Opportunity Grant programs. The revisions made to the program simply broadened the pool of eligible students making financial need the dominant selection criteria with academic merit a secondary criteria. The focus on the financial needs of those in the pool who are most economically disadvantaged is believed to offer the greater enhancement to our recruitment goals. As of this report, it is not yet known whether this change will prove to be a deterrent to Penn State's ability to achieve a diverse student body. Penn State's ability to attract high-achieving underrepresented students does not rest with this single student aid program. This program only compliments the efforts of all Penn State administrative and academic units' recruitment efforts that serve to attract a broad diversity of students to the University. This program is but one tool. A greater issue at play in the successful recruitment of a diverse student body lies in an inadequately funded federal, state, and institutional student aid program; one that would effectively serve to balance rising costs such that Penn State remains affordable for ALL students.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

❖ No coordinated strategy for recruiting and retaining a diverse staff is identified in the plan; the ideas presented are scattered throughout the plan (cf., pp 2, 3, 6, and 7). Also, some discussion about staff focuses on current and past activities. Thus, EMA's plan, as evidenced by the content provided, seems to foster the status quo rather than to offer strategies for the future.

RESPONSE: EMA will continue to actively seek to diversify its workforce at every level by advertising vacancies as widely as possible using resources already available through the Office of Human Resources. We will seek qualified applicants from the Diversity Talent Bank for external searches. Search committees within EMA will continue to be encouraged to identify qualified candidates who will further diversify the workforce.

Through the Diversity Advisory Committee (goals outlined on page 2), EMA will monitor and address all diversity climate concerns.

EMA staff will be encouraged to:
- *Celebrate community*
- *Take a stand against hate*
- *Attend professional development opportunities*

Participation in and taking leadership roles on the Staff Advisory Committee, Administrative Fellows Program, Adult Learner Commission, Leadership Management Institute, and the Commission for Women have helped EMA staff broaden their awareness of diversity issues. Such participation will continue to be encouraged.

Education and Scholarship

Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies

❖ Although EMA indicates that this Challenge is outside its purview, the unit is encouraged to consider how it can support the University's curriculum goals. For example, Admissions staff could focus on Penn State's GI designated courses during presentations to potential students. Also, eLion modules could be developed that focus on diversity in the curriculum.

RESPONSE: EMA is not formally charged with curricular responsibilities. Courses, majors, and degree programs are the responsibility of the University Faculty Senate and the academic colleges. EMA has responsibilities related to the dissemination of the curriculum to all students. This information broadcast is conducted in many ways including: information presented in the undergraduate admissions application, student-centered documents such as academic transcripts and advising documents like the degree audit, graduation checkout procedures, the Web Degree Program Summary, and the Web Schedule of Courses. In addition, there are multiple references to all aspects of the curriculum through various printed and

Web-delivered documents from all of the operational components of the division. Of special note, the Web Schedule of Courses application enables a search of courses that fulfill specific general education requirements and intercultural/international competency requirements.

Along with the Division of Undergraduate Studies, Undergraduate Education, Information Technology Services, and the Office of the Bursar, Enrollment Management and Administration has taken a leadership position with the development and implementation of the Penn State eLion system. This system delivers a wide array of academic support and advising services to students, advisers, and faculty. The delivered services are integrated and intentionally not bounded by traditional organizational structure. There is an open approach that provides for collaborative development. EMA embraces this approach and continues to provide new services to eLion within our purview. We continue to work closely with the academic advising community to provide services to students and their advisers regarding curricular issues.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

❖ As was true for Challenge 4, the review team could find little that focused on future goals to diversify EMA's leadership. EMA indicates that only one appointment has been made at the senior administrative level in the past ten years. As evidenced by what is offered, EMA should develop new and innovative approaches to address this Challenge.

RESPONSE: Over time, EMA has experienced stability in top leadership and managerial level positions. EMA continually encourages preparation of mid-level managers to be ready for advancement through Penn State's Excellence in Leadership and Management training programs. Whenever vacant positions are posted externally, EMA will request qualified applicants be forwarded from the Diversity Talent Bank maintained by Human Resources. EMA also notes University policy/practice that limits posting of vacant positions first to internal University employees; a factor that automatically limits the opportunity to solicit underrepresented qualified candidates for a given position. That is, access to the Diversity Talent Bank (that includes only external job applicants) can only be tapped if a search is permitted to go external to the University.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals

❖ The review team could find no plans for coordinating organizational change under dimension four of the plan, Institutional Viability and Vitality. Challenge 7 might provide a better context than Challenge 3 to discuss necessary reallocations to optimize institutional support for scholarships that go to diverse students.

❖ EMA's final report on the 1998-2003 *Framework* indicates that the Division has a flat organizational structure. The review team recommends that EMA consider innovative approaches to diversifying the organization. For example, EMA could consider investing its work teams with increased decision-making authority as a way to augment diversity within EMA's organizational hierarchy.