

A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2004-09

FINAL UPDATE



Office of University Relations
November 2009



A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2004–09

FINAL UPDATE



This final update to *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2004–09* has been prepared by the committee (*see page 5*) charged with developing the 2010–15 *Framework* for University Relations. Three issues affect the efficacy of this report. First, no member of the current committee was directly involved in developing the previous plan or updates. Second, the previous plan and updates were focused on reporting the unit's diversity activities rather than setting specific goals. Updates essentially reiterated established diversity practices. Third, the previous plan, updates, and feedback reports were compiled and/or submitted in sequences that made it difficult for the committee to follow. For this final update to the 2004–09 *Framework*, the committee is providing a general overview of diversity in University Relations. We hope it provides reasonable closure to the previous cycle of diversity planning, and sets the stage for the next cycle.

For some assessment of the unit's internal diversity condition we considered these results taken from the *2008 Faculty/Staff Survey*. Some indicators are positive:

- The Office of University Relations reported favorable results, above the University-wide average in regard to the workplace climate as welcoming for employees from underrepresented groups (81% of respondents in University Relations, as compared to 73% University-wide¹).
- The Office of University Relations reported favorable results, above the University-wide average as related to diversity in the following four areas²:
 1. The workplace climate is welcoming for employees from underrepresented groups.
 2. The department actively supports the development of a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity.
 3. The department provides visible leadership to foster diversity.
 4. Acceptance of diversity in the workplace has improved (on my campus) in the past three years.

While other indicators point to areas to be addressed:

- The Office of University Relations reported results below the University-wide average in regard to proactively addressing diversity issues as related to religious beliefs (42%) and physical or mental disabilities (43%)³.
- The Office of University Relations also reported attendance below the University-wide average at diversity-related programs at Penn State⁴.

¹2008 Faculty/Staff Survey Results for the office of the Vice President for University Relations Figure 1, page 16
²2008 Faculty/Staff Survey Results for the office of the Vice President for University Relations Figure 9, page 29
³2008 Faculty/Staff Survey Results for the office of the Vice President for University Relations Figure 11, page 32
⁴2008 Faculty/Staff Survey Results for the office of the Vice President for University Relations Figure 13, page 34

For the 2010–15 *Framework*, the unit will utilize the 2012 Faculty Staff Survey as a strategic performance indicator.

On a daily basis, all six departments (*see page 5*) in University Relations continue to demonstrate the unit’s commitment to diversity through the products and services we produce for other units or the institution as a whole. Race, gender, and ethnicity continue to be the facets we use most often to exemplify diversity in our videos, print materials, photo databases, and other communications. As we move forward with our diversity planning during the 2010–15 cycle, we will set our sights on lesser-represented diverse groups and opportunities to take part in diversity training and education.

A consequential shortfall from the previous cycle of diversity planning is the unit’s neglect in forming a standing internal diversity committee. Thus, University Relations has been less focused on internal diversity goals and actions. This too, is something that the unit will address in the next cycle of diversity planning.

Finally, we conclude with the following updates on current diversity practices and activities:

⊗ Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

—In Public Information, the Diversity Newswire has been phased out in favor of featuring diversity-related stories as an integral part of the existing Newswire. This ensures a greater audience for diversity-related stories while reducing the overlap in subscribers. Diversity-related Newswire stories are searchable by a series of tags that facilitate easy access to these stories.



—Diversity always is represented in the photos, videos, and marketing materials we develop, and is a key consideration in the development of campaigns and other University-wide initiatives generated out of University Relations.

—University Marketing and Advertising has expanded representation of diversity in University-wide projects to include sexual orientation. The update to the diversity video for FTCAP, sponsored by Educational Equity, includes images of LGBT+ publications and a rainbow flag. LGBT+ students also participated in the video.



⊗ Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

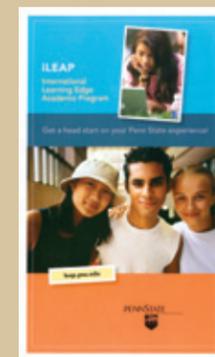
—It is standing operating procedure for University Publications to include images of underrepresented groups in the materials they develop to attract students to campuses at Penn State. Concepts such as “Do you see yourself in this picture?” or “Do you see yourself going to school here?” are primary considerations when painting a picture of life at Penn State.

—University Marketing and Advertising has very carefully selected a cast of diverse students for its Teen Campaign—a University-wide marketing initiative aimed at college-bound high school students. The imagery is all about what it’s like to be on campus.

—At major events such as commencements, Campus and Community Affairs continues to provide a range of services, including real-time captioning and sign language in addition to special needs for wheelchair access by participants and guests. They also monitor events that are scheduled for the free-speech zones on campus to ensure that handicap accessibility is not compromised.

—University Relations continues to monitor campus climate through active participation on the Campus Environment Team.

⊗ Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body



—University Marketing and Advertising’s Teen Campaign is especially notable for portraying the diversity of life on campus at a major university, addressing many facets of diversity including lifestyle choices, dress, and personal interests, in addition to race, ethnicity, and gender. This has been carried through in the materials produced for the campaign by University Publications. As a result, University Relations was able to provide several key images to the Office of Educational Equity for use in a *Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State 2010–15*.

—Staff in University Marketing and Advertising are mentoring minority students through the FastStart program.

⊗ Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum that Fosters United States and International Cultural Competencies



—Support for this challenge comes through the work University Relations does with departments and colleges. By developing strategic marketing plans and campaigns that include attention to diversity, we provide support for college programs and initiatives that reach out to a broader demographic. In 2006, we completed a repositioning campaign for the College of Agricultural Sciences that has been tremendously successful in promoting the college’s cutting-edge teaching and research. At present, we also are working with the Colleges of Arts and Architecture and Engineering to assess their marketing positions.

⊗ Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

—Although the Office of University Relations is a small unit, three of our six directors are females and our assistant vice president is a female. Of our 50 staff, 32 (64%) are women and 4 (8%) are minorities. Diversification in the unit continues to be a challenge due to the stability of the workforce, with little turnover and the collapsing of some positions (as they became vacant) due to budget constraints. Our most recent hire in University Relations (10/26/09) was a minority.

⊗ Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

—Our challenge in this area is to make a concerted effort to establish meaningful links with underrepresented groups on campus and in the community. This will be addressed in specific action items in the unit’s 2010–15 *Framework*.

*Committee responsible for drafting the final update to the 2004–09 plan and the 2010–15 plan:

Barb Ettaro, Campus and Community Affairs
Reidar Jensen, Public Information
Karen Magnuson, University Publications (Chair)
Mike McGrail, Internet Communications
Dave Pacchioli, Research Communications
Clair Poletti, University Marketing and Advertising
Joan Scholton, University Publications
Patty Taverno, Public Information

**The Office of the Vice President for University Relations comprises six departments:

Department of Campus and Community Affairs
Department of Internet Communications
Department of Public Information
Department of Research Communications
Department of University Marketing and Advertising
Department of University Publications

