

**Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
University Outreach
Spring 2010**

Outreach has a critical role at Penn State, not only for its collaborative work with academic units across the University, but it also has extensive sub-units that impact a wide range of endeavors. Outreach has adopted a thoughtful Diversity Value Statement, which it communicates widely to its sub-units, but Outreach should add some components to the statement that provide a better understanding of specific diversity constituents, particularly in its use of the term “underrepresented,” which is not defined uniformly across Penn State. For example, Outreach inherently serves as a support unit for adult learners, and these students are clearly included in the Unit’s diversity programming. But discussion of other diversity constituents and programming directed towards them are less robust, especially regarding the recruitment and retention of students from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Also, the review team noticed other areas in the update where more detail would have been helpful. For example, despite the emphasis on adult learners in the update, it was not clear what role the Commission for Adult Learners plays in Outreach. Further, it is commendable that Outreach encourages its staff to serve on various commissions, but no data are reported to break down how many staff actually participate, and it is unclear how their experience is utilized within Outreach. Overall, the update could be improved by focusing more detail on how diversity initiatives are implemented and assessed along with some specifics about individual sub-unit programming rather than reporting everything in the aggregate for all of Outreach.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The review team recommends that the definition of diversity be strengthened by including reference to underrepresented/underserved groups by name.
- ❖ The emphasis on adult learners is admirable, but discussion of other underserved groups is weak and should be included.
- ❖ It was unclear how Outreach has distributed information to students about the University’s diversity initiatives, specifically, what mechanisms exist to emphasize that diversity communication is a priority.
- ❖ It is unfortunate that the leadership program on exploring the dimensions of people and power was not implemented.
- ❖ The Outreach Diversity Council is a significant component in fostering diversity in Outreach. Information about how Outreach identifies advocates to serve on the Committee would be helpful.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Results of the climate surveys would be more informative if they were disaggregated by gender, race, sexual orientation, etc. so that the climate for these and other diverse populations could be better understood in the context of University Outreach.
- ❖ Outreach should assess climate for students.
- ❖ The climate survey results shown in Appendix E show quite negative responses among woman, those from diverse racial/ethnic groups, or LGBT individuals. The update does not adequately address how Outreach responded to these results.
- ❖ The IECF is positive. This program could potentially be a best practice if more data about how the program is implemented and assessed were included in the update.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The focus on adult students is commended, but efforts for students from diverse racial/ethnic groups are inadequate.
- ❖ The update acknowledges the lack of diversity among World Campus students without mentioning any endeavors undertaken during the review period to address this issue. The fact that race/ethnicity data are unknown for a large number of students is puzzling. How does Outreach intend to solve this problem?

- ❖ Details on how this Challenge is implemented for students from diverse racial/ethnic groups within each sub-unit within Outreach should be included in the update.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The review team commends Outreach for their focus on the recruitment of employees from underrepresented/underserved groups and takes special note of the almost doubling of the percent of the Outreach workforce that identifies among this population. However, data reported on the diversity of Outreach's workforce were inconsistent, and disaggregated data would communicate a stronger approach to this Challenge.
- ❖ It is unfortunate that more effort was not allocated to retention in 2004-09. As such, positive results from retention initiatives during the 2010-15 review period will help Outreach take a major step forward.
- ❖ Requiring Hire Power training for all staff on interview teams is a noteworthy way to explore the breath of diversity strengths among applicants.
- ❖ More information on how funds allocated for recruiting diverse hires were actually used and which methods of recruiting were particularly effective would be very helpful.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The list of courses that include some international or multicultural content is impressive. Some assessment of student learning outcomes regarding multicultural education would strengthen the assertion that these courses support the diversity goals of the University.
- ❖ The Thematic Initiative Fund appears to be effective. Providing data and information on more than two examples might present ideas that other sub-units could benefit.
- ❖ This section could be strengthened by providing more detail and data under the "measures of success" section.
- ❖ The passing reference to the impact of PSPB programming is an example of the gaps that exist when endeavors by Outreach's sub-units are not given appropriate attention in the update. More disaggregation of the data is suggested.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The lack of any racial/ethnic diversity among the leadership team needs attention. The racial/ethnic diversity among the members of the Outreach Advisory Board is a positive first step.
- ❖ The comment under question 6 about more employees apparently self-identifying as being diverse in ESSIC is curious. How employees are self-identifying and whether the root of the apparent increase in the percent of diverse employees in Outreach is due to this factor need to be clarified.
- ❖ Encouragement for commission participation is laudable. Information about active and past members would be helpful. The Commission for Adult Learners should have been included with the other commissions.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The Outreach Diversity Council is clearly a high-impact endeavor, as is the focus on adult learners. The potential of the intranet is clear, though outcomes will be needed to assess its effect.
- ❖ The review team commends the organization for the practice of having each employee participate in at least 8 hours of diversity-related professional development each year. More details on topics covered would be helpful.
- ❖ A focus on the recruitment or retention of students from diverse racial/ethnic groups is one of the most urgent needs for Outreach. Hopefully, for the next reporting period, substantial evidence will exist that much progress has occurred.