

**Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
Research and Graduate School
Spring 2010**

The Graduate School continues to be sensitive to culturally based differences, values, and perceptions through its implementation of diversity-oriented meetings, programs, workshops, and discussions; managing funding programs that promote inclusion of people of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and supporting diversity-related professional development. The Graduate Enrollment staff continue to work with international advisers from the University Office of Global Programs to maintain a helping and supportive relationship with students of diverse backgrounds. Diversity in the workforce is supported. The Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) management supports employee participation on several of Penn State's commissions, boards, and councils that foster diversity. Family-friendly work schedules are promoted. Employees of all ranks have the support of management to coordinate special programs and activities to create an awareness of diversity and celebrate differences such as Hispanic Heritage month.

The review team acknowledges that the Research and Graduate School (RGS) is a large and complex unit. The update reflects that size and complexity. Reporting devoted to the Electro-Optics Center (EOC) is severely limited. Finally, there is an overall tendency in the update to report on initiatives aimed at *all* populations of faculty, staff, and students, rather than those specifically designed to target underrepresented/underserved populations. ***RESPONSE: We have incorporated the concept of standardized reports into the 2010-2015 Framework that may be used in all of our units – OVPR, ARL & EOC & the Graduate School. This will ensure that all reporting is consistent and comprehensive. We will look to incorporate targeted initiatives into our future Framework.***

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ It is positive that the diversity statement encourages the presence of, and specifically identifies underrepresented groups for, faculty, staff, students, and external customers, such as companies and clients. It is unclear, however, whether or not the definition includes all of the units comprised by the Research and Graduate School. Please clarify. ***RESPONSE: Yes, the diversity statement is intended to include all of our units.***
- ❖ The review team encourages continued development of a robust and easily accessible RGS Web site devoted to diversity. As of this writing, the site address reported (www.research.psu.edu/diversity) is not active. The ARL diversity Web site (arl.psu.edu/diversity) provides limited information, but it is easily accessible. It does not appear that the EOC maintains a diversity Web site. ***RESPONSE: Our OVPR website was reconstructed this past spring and the RGS diversity page was moved. We will be developing a main webpage for OVPR and then incorporating links on our core websites (OVPR, ARL, GS) to unit specific sites. We will continue to audit the viability of the website links and monitor usage.***
- ❖ The team commends the Office of Graduate Educational Equity in their efforts to align their notion of diversity with the mission of the Graduate School and the University, and to extend their goal of recruiting and retaining graduate students in dimensions beyond race and gender.
- ❖ The team supports the placement of the McNair Scholars Program in the Graduate School.
- ❖ Inclusion of data related to the annual survey of the Office for Research Protections is appreciated.
- ❖ How is diversity information disseminated to students? Does RGS rely exclusively on the colleges? ***RESPONSE: The students are enrolled in their respective colleges. They receive support and enforcements from their direct departments. The Graduate School provides information to students through the Graduate school website, in addition to workshops and programs. The Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs also provides additional support to all graduate students. The Dean schedules “Coffee with the Dean” several times during the year in order to address concerns and answer questions.***
- ❖ To whom does the ARL Diversity Committee report? Has the committee’s work been assessed? ***RESPONSE: The committee was established by the Director and lead by the Assistant to the Director***

for Information and Diversity Programs. The director and department heads assesses the committee's work regularly.

- ❖ Potential best practice: ARL's Lunch and Learn series.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The team appreciates the demographic and faculty/staff survey response data included in the update. However, it appears that only positive results are discussed in the report, whereas the appendices reveal negative results, as well. The unit is encouraged to follow through on concerns raised in the survey. ***RESPONSE: These issues will be addressed in the 2010-2015 Framework***
- ❖ Has the unit implemented an overall climate survey? Such a survey might serve to expose some of the weaker areas, for example, EOC and ARL, which have very limited representation among underrepresented/underserved populations.
- ❖ Posting information about how to appeal unfair management practices is a positive step.
- ❖ The unit is commended for appointing two employees as Sexual Harassment Resource Contacts. Please clarify how this impacts underrepresented/underserved populations in particular.
- ❖ Potential best practice: Fast Start Mentoring Program for ARL first year underrepresented students.
- ❖ Potential best practice: The ARL's Veterans Day Luncheon.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The team supports the development of recruitment videos designed to welcome international and underrepresented graduate students, especially the target audiences of students from India, China, and Latin America. Please clarify the population defined as "underrepresented graduate students." ***RESPONSE: "Underrepresented graduate students" include students of various racial/ethnic backgrounds, ages, ancestries, veteran statuses, colors, countries and cultures, genders, disabilities, religions, and sexual orientations.***
- ❖ The unit is commended for its successful use of the Summer Research Opportunities Program.
- ❖ The continuing commitment of Graduate Enrollment Services to maintaining an international network of representatives to review and discuss admissions-related issues, cultural and educational systems, and a fair and equitable admissions process is commendable.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The ARL is commended for expanding its advertising campaign to include use of the Internet and a variety of new recruitment venues, and for seeking faculty and staff appointments on Penn State's commissions for equity and other diversity-related groups.
- ❖ The review team appreciates the metrics provided for employees seeking advanced degrees.
- ❖ The HR-88 program and Vacation Donation Program are listed among strategies for retention of faculty and staff from underrepresented groups; these programs are aimed at all University faculty and staff; please clarify how RGS use of these programs benefit underrepresented groups specifically. ***RESPONSE: These programs specifically benefit women, particularly when returning to the workforce after their maternity leave.***
- ❖ The workforce in ARL and EOC is comprised overwhelmingly of white males (78% and 79% respectively, according to January 1, 2009 – July 31, 2009 demographic data). ARL, in particular, hires frequently. What is being done to counter this trend? ***RESPONSE: Additional focus has been incorporated into the 2010-2015 Framework.***

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ Though RGS, ARL, and EOC are not directly involved in curriculum development, the units are commended for their effective involvement in various partnerships and collaborations.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ The diversity profile at administrative and executive levels is impressive. However, there are no people of color in EOC, and very few in ARL. What steps are being taken by leadership to rectify this situation? It is important to consider the racial/ethnic and gender balance of each individual unit, not simply RGS as a whole. ***RESPONSE: Additional focus has been incorporated into the 2010-2015 Framework.***

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The Graduate School is commended for its promotion of the senior director of the Office of Graduate Educational Equity (OGEEP) to the new assistant dean; the team recommends caution, however, regarding the increased purview of this new position. It is critical to ensure that diversity-related responsibilities are not diminished as a result.
- ❖ A comprehensive review of the graduate application process resulted in new and/or redesigned processes intended to increase the diversity of the graduate student body. This is a positive step.
- ❖ It is commendable that ARL's Business Operations Office has forged a relationship with the Penn State Manager for Supplier Diversity to ensure that minority, women-owned, veteran-owned, and HUBzone businesses have full opportunities to compete for ARL business. The team appreciates the data supporting contract awards to women, minority owned, and veteran-owned businesses.