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

It is clear throughout this reporting cycle that University Relations has a solid commitment to fostering diversity across the University, particularly in print. University Relations is commended for the important and central role it plays in providing a diverse view of Penn State in its publications.

However, there has been consistent disregard for the need to achieve progress across all Challenges of the *Framework* through internal as well as outward facing initiatives. In the 2004 and 2007 feedback, suggestions were made to encourage progress in many areas related to diversity initiatives that impact the Unit, beyond focus on printed materials. Overall, it appears that almost no progress has been made since the 2004 strategic plan was put in place, and the feedback provided on the 2004-09 strategic plan and 2007 mid-term update have been largely overlooked. In particular, the update does not address how University Relations is living diversity; only how the Unit is informing others. The review team notes and appreciates the Unit's acknowledgement of its lack of success in implementing the 2004-09 plan and the resulting lack of progress.

Several Challenges describe substantive accomplishments the Unit has achieved, yet information about the initiatives that resulted in these accomplishments or their impact was not included for review. In preparing updates, University Relations should review the assessment questions published in *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State*, and dig deeply into the organization and its records to provide metrics and additional information for a thorough response to all of the Challenges. Examining the best practices of other academic support units may help to enhance reporting in upcoming iterations. The addition of action items and assessment criteria to each Challenge would be useful as the Unit moves forward in achieving diversity goals. The size of print used for this document may preclude those with sight impairments in reading the 2004-09 final update.

## Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations
*Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity*
 ❖ The Unit's definition of diversity could not be located in this document. Penn State has not yet adopted a formal definition of diversity for use across the University community. The Unit is encouraged to develop a diversity definition reflecting a broad and inclusive statement of diversity.
 ❖ There has been consistent disregard for feedback provided on the 2004-09 strategic plan and 2007 mid-term update on elements of diversity as they apply to the Unit. No specific information is included about how the office is living diversity; the report only includes how the Unit is informing others.
 ❖ University Relations continues to focus on an outward perspective of diversity, specifically, inclusivity in publications prepared by the Unit.
 ❖ How is University Relations' commitment to diversity communicated to employees within the Unit?
 ❖ University Relations acknowledges a shortfall in not forming a standing internal diversity committee. Even with a major change in the writing group, attention to internal practices regarding diversity is essential. The review team strongly recommends that consideration of this concern is reflected and, as promised, implemented in the in the 2010-15 strategic planning cycle.
 ❖ It is commendable that University Relations has integrated diversity news items into the main Newswire bringing diversity to a wider audience. Moreover, adding tags to facilitate the search process is positive. Data would be helpful to indicate the volume of diversity news items in the Newswire as compared to the previous Diversity Newswire to ensure attention to diversity is not diminished.

*Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate*
 ❖ It is noteworthy that University Relations has established baseline climate data from the 2008 Faculty/Staff survey with a plan to track this data over time.
 ❖ Again, no specific information is included about how University Relations is living diversity; the report only includes how the Unit is informing others. There has been consistent disregard for feedback provided in the 2004-09 strategic plan and 2007 mid-term update.

- ❖ How is University Relations' commitment to diversity communicated to employees within the Unit?
- ❖ Feedback from the mid-term report stressed that it is important to represent more than race/ethnicity and gender in publications. The narrative paragraph in this update indicates University Relations will be working on this concern. The review team strongly suggests University Relations broaden diversity initiatives to be more inclusive. Information regarding areas such as models and depictions for the Adult Learner campaign, representation of accessibility and individuals with disabilities, the LGBT community, and other aspects of diversity beyond race/ethnicity and gender is necessary.
- ❖ It is positive that University Relations supports diversity of thought through the scheduling of free speech zones on campus. Assisting with the scheduling of free speech zones ensures accessibility for people with disabilities, but otherwise it is unclear how this activity ensures that diversity initiatives are supported.

## Representation (Access and Success)
### Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body
- ❖ University Marketing and Advertising's Teen campaign shows expanded facets of the campus life; however, no information can be found regarding the inclusion of other images of diversity beyond race/ethnicity and gender.
- ❖ It is commendable that staff members serve as mentors for students in the FastStart program. No description of the benefits to University Relations from participating in the FastStart program is provided. Including these descriptions would be helpful.

### Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce
- ❖ This Challenge is missing in the 2004-09 final update.
- ❖ The number of professional development opportunities and how these programs have contributed to the development of specific diversity-related initiatives are requested.

## Education and Scholarship
### Challenge 5: Developing a Curriculum That Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies
- ❖ The update does not indicate whether the strategic marketing plans and campaigns actively support diversity-related courses and international/intercultural curriculum as was suggested in the 2004 feedback document and reiterated in the 2007 midterm feedback.
- ❖ Measurements to demonstrate the success of the marketing programs would be useful for future campaigns for the clients that are served. For example, what has been the result of the program with Agricultural Sciences? Increased women students? More diversity of students enrolled in the program?

## Institutional Viability and Vitality
### Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management
- ❖ No information was provided regarding efforts that are in place to retain the female directors and to increase the diversity of Unit leadership beyond gender.
- ❖ No information was provided relative to efforts that are in place for recruiting a diverse leadership and management team should a position open.

### Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals
- ❖ The response to Challenge Seven provides only a forward looking statement indicating that this Challenge will be addressed in the 2010-15 strategic plan. Information on what has occurred over the past five years or since the mid-term report is necessary. For example, has any progress been made in establishing meaningful links with underrepresented groups as a means of building new connections and reestablishing personal connections that were lost when the Philadelphia office closed, as reported in the 2007 midterm report?
- ❖ Prior work related to this Challenge is not reported in the 2004-09 update even though the Unit reported the information was included in the 2004-09 final update document.