

Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009
Finance and Business

Finance and Business (F&B) continues to demonstrate in its latest Diversity Strategic Plan a philosophical and practical commitment to diversity. Funding is provided to initiate and maintain activities that are committed to diversity awareness and training. A senior member of the F&B staff continues to lead the unit diversity team, reporting to the senior vice president. Given the unique challenge F&B faces of overseeing a variety of administrative units throughout the University and the sheer size of the unit, some thought may be given to creating a multicultural and/or diversity coordination position within the unit.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ It is positive that F&B will refine its definition of diversity within this cycle, with emphasis being placed on inclusiveness of its definition.
- ❖ Communicating University-wide and unit-specific diversity initiatives to all staff members is given priority. This information will be disseminated through a variety of venues including the F&B Web site, regular staff meetings, unit newsletter, spring retreat agenda item, and part of the agenda during F&B unit head meetings.
- ❖ The unit will administer a survey every three years to assess progress on diversity/climate issues. It is important for the unit to use this survey as a vehicle to measure progress and appropriately focus its diversity efforts. Sharing of the results of this survey with respondents will be critical.
RESPONSE: Finance & Business will continue to share survey information and require that all units share and make easily available survey results to every employee. The survey results will be used to determine individual unit strategic plans and the overall F&B strategic plan.
- ❖ Actively supporting *The Penn State Principles* and the University's nondiscrimination policy is commendable. Details on how the unit plans to proactively support these principles and the nondiscrimination policy would be helpful.
RESPONSE: The entire 04-09 Framework is intended to proactively support the Penn State Principles and non-discrimination policy.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ F&B plans on utilizing the Office of Physical Plant's statement on intolerance and process for dealing with intolerance. It would be helpful to provide this statement and the process used.
RESPONSE: The final statement will be provided in the 04-09 Framework update.
- ❖ It is unclear what proactive steps the Office of Physical Plant is undertaking to make University Park a safer campus for all employees, such as lighting improvements, etc.
RESPONSE: While this statement is not part of the draft 04-09 Framework, it will be clarified in the 04-09 Framework update..
- ❖ It is unclear what steps F&B is undertaking to ensure that the vendors it contracts with are aligned with *The Penn State Principles*.
RESPONSE: There is a statement on all University purchase orders, in the terms and conditions, which require each vendor to follow the Sullivan Principles. Reference is also made to the Sullivan Principles WEB site.
- ❖ F&B recognizes an uncomfortable environment for its employees who identify as LGBT. The senior vice president meets separately with two different underrepresented groups: women and employees of color. While meeting with these two groups individually is commendable, it is recommended that all underrepresented groups have the opportunity to meet with the senior vice president. F&B may want to seek the assistance of the Commission on LGBT Equity in addressing LGBT climate issues. Likewise, the unit may want to seek the assistance of the LGBT Student Resource Center pertaining to climate issues affecting its student employees.
RESPONSE: As stated in the 04-09 Framework, this issue will be addressed.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ With the unit providing part-time employment to almost 2,500 students annually, the unit plans to provide diversity/climate training opportunities. It is recommended that student employees receive the same diversity training/sensitivity opportunities that regular new hires receive. \
- RESPONSE: Similar training for all student employees may not be achievable given the enormous amount of employees and the rapid turnover. However, diversity topics and expectations will be incorporated into orientation sessions for new student employees.***
- ❖ Statistical information on student employees working within F&B, including race/gender and other demographics, would be helpful in establishing a baseline and developing measurable goals.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ F&B will continue to utilize programs such as the Diversity Internship Program and the Professional Entry Program as means to assist in recruiting a diverse workforce. It would be useful to further explain how the unit plans to promote and evaluate the effectiveness of the Professional Entry Program.
- RESPONSE: The PEP brochure will be placed on the F&B diversity WEB site. It will be promoted in the F&B newsletter. The unit heads will be encouraged to mention this program at their staff meetings.***
- ❖ F&B will require a diverse applicant pool for all positions utilizing the resources of the University-wide Diversity Talent Bank and the Office of Human Resources diversity Web site. In addition, F&B has acquired the services of two new diversity recruitment Web sites: LATPRO.com and JobCircle.com. It may be helpful for the unit to define its meaning of a diverse applicant pool.
- RESPONSE: The definition will be provided.***
- ❖ While the unit is applauded for continuing to support the Community Diversity Group's efforts in the greater State College area, it is unclear whether similar community diversity initiatives will be supported at other Penn State locations.
- RESPONSE: The focus of this program is the Centre Region. See 98-03 response on same topic.***
- ❖ While the plan offers specifics on recruitment, it only vaguely addresses retention strategies.
- RESPONSE: All of F&B's climate initiatives are intended to help retain employees from under represented groups.***

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ Not applicable.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ F&B will continue its participation in the Administrative Fellows Program as a way to foster leadership and management skills among women and staff of color. Details on participation and effectiveness would be helpful.
- RESPONSE: This will be included in the 04-09 Framework update.***
- ❖ While it is commendable to provide opportunities for diverse appointments to University-wide commissions, advisory committees and task forces, few specifics are offered as to how these opportunities will be provided.
- RESPONSE: Units heads are responsible to the Senior Vice President to nominate staff for various University committees and task forces. Release time is granted unless there is a significant overriding condition. Finance and Business also supports non-University initiatives for staff (Leadership Centre County, for example) with tuition and release time.***
- ❖ The plan to implement specific and tailored leadership and development programs to assist in ensuring that a diverse candidate pool is available is commendable; however, more specific information should be provided.
- RESPONSE: This information will be included in the 04-09 Framework update.***

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ It is commendable that F&B plans to continue the practice of the senior vice president holding each unit head accountable for positive diversity results.
- ❖ It is positive that a senior member of F&B will continue to provide leadership and day-to-day direction for the diversity initiative. As noted in the 98-03 feedback, it would be helpful to include information about whether this function is part of a single position or rotates among members of the F&B senior leadership team.
RESPONSE: See response to same inquiry in 98-03 Framework update.
- ❖ The unit is encouraged to review the current mission statement and strategic plan annually rather than only in relation to planning cycle review.
RESPONSE: This will be considered by the diversity initiative team and reported in the 04-09 Framework update.
- ❖ Continued commitment to provide funding for diversity initiatives is commended.