

FINANCE & BUSINESS FRAMEWORK FOR DIVERSITY 2004-09

INTRODUCTION

Finance and Business is an integral part of the University and as such plays a significant role in the University's efforts to create a climate for its community of students, faculty and staff to live, learn and work in an environment that fosters diversity.

Strategically, Finance & Business has elevated the implementation of its diversity goals to the highest levels within the organization. Diversity goals and activities represent one of the five key initiatives contained in the Finance and Business Strategic Plan 2002-2005. Accountability for the goals of this initiative is the responsibility of each unit head. A senior member of the Finance & Business staff leads the diversity team and reports to the Senior Vice President, quarterly, on progress, impediments, and the need for resources.

A committee, representative of the units within Finance and Business as well as staff categories, including technical service, meets monthly to initiate and direct activities that support the strategic initiative. The diversity team members provide feedback to their home units and channel comments, concerns and ideas to the team for consideration and implementation.

Funding is provided to initiate and maintain activities, which support the accomplishment of the initiative. In the 1998-2003 planning cycle, Finance & Business provided funding for these representative activities:

- Initiated a diversity internship program intended to be the benchmark of its type. Since its inception in 2002, nine minority interns have worked with Finance & Business professionals, resulting in four new hires upon completion of the internship.
- Developed a WEB site as a diversity tool and resource for Finance & Business employees.
- Provided funding, through the use of facilities and direct subsidies for tuition, for the Community Diversity Group's initiative to bring diversity training to the retail/service providers in the State College area.
- Required and funded mandatory additional professional development hours related to diversity/climate issues for all new hires.

- Established a new, permanent management position within the University Purchasing Office to direct efforts to increase the participation and dollar volume of minority and women-owned vendors in University purchases.

These efforts, initiated during the 1998-2003 planning cycle, will provide the foundation for Finance & Business activities that will support *The Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State, 2004-2009*. Activities to support the seven challenges in 2004-2009 will include:

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

Finance and Business considers diversity to be an integral part of its mission and has developed the following definition for diversity:

Diversity - means developing our resources and capabilities, heightening the sensitivity of and providing a welcoming workplace for everyone; increasing the presence and providing professional development for underrepresented people throughout the organization; utilizing the unique and wonderful variances of all people; enabling all employees to contribute to their fullest potential; and being among the centers of excellence within the University community.

Below are activities Finance and Business will employ to develop an even more shared and inclusive understanding of diversity:

- Finance and Business will refine its definition of diversity with the emphasis on the importance of diversifying the workforce and providing an inclusive, welcoming environment.
- University-wide and Finance & Business specific diversity initiatives will be communicated in a clear and consistent manner to all staff. This will be accomplished through the Finance & Business Web site, regular staff meetings, the Finance & Business staff newsletter, incorporated into the annual spring retreat agenda and Finance & Business unit head meetings.
- Administer a survey every 3 years to assess progress on diversity/climate issues. The survey will assess the understanding and commitment to diversity and identify opportunities for improvements. Results will be communicated to all staff through the diversity WEB site, all unit newsletters, Finance & Business unit head meetings and unit staff meetings.
- Actively support *The Penn State Principles* and the University's nondiscrimination policy.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

The Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has given diversity initiatives a top priority within the organization. He has routinely met with diverse staff members to hear their concerns and suggestions. The Diversity Committee continues to be led by a senior staff member and has broad cross unit representation. Multiple diversity/climate surveys have been undertaken to gather information regarding current attitudes of the workforce in order to create diversity initiatives and training programs to meet the goal.

Below are Finance and Business's proposals to create a more welcoming campus climate:

- Utilize the Office of Physical Plant's statement on intolerance and process for dealing with intolerance across Finance & Business.
- Specifically address the uncomfortable climate for LGBT employees in Finance & Business. The Senior Vice President will meet annually with a group of LGBT employees similar to the women and underrepresented minority employee annual meetings. Using information gathered in these meetings as well as results from the various climate and satisfaction surveys, Finance and Business will determine appropriate training and other activities to improve the environment within Finance & Business for LGBT employees.
- Address perceptions that gender/race may play a larger role in the selection process than qualifications.
- Continue to fund mandatory diversity training for all new hires. Provide professional development opportunities in diversity for all Finance & Business staff.
- Track staff development hours by unit. Establish standards and minimum hours per year devoted to diversity/climate issues for each employee.

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

Even though Finance and Business is not directly involved in the recruitment of a diverse student body, the unit employs 2,000 to 2,500 student employees each year. Work opportunities not only help students with their finances, but also offer them another connection, another resource of support within the University community. Research has shown that students who work for at least a few hours per week tend to be more satisfied with their college experience, which contributes to their retention at the University.

Below are areas of improvement proposed by Finance and Business:

- Provide diversity/climate training opportunities for all student employees.
- Collect statistical information on student employees working within Finance & Business including race/gender and other demographics.
- Assess student employee level of satisfaction with their work environment and relationships and the impact of their working experience on their college career.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Through the Diversity Internship Program, the Professional Entry Program (PEP), and various departments' participation in targeted recruitment strategies, Finance and Business strives to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.

Below are additional strategies proposed to continue Finance and Business's goal of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce:

- Continue to sponsor and fund the Diversity Internship Program within Finance & Business. Move the management of this program from the diversity committee to the Office of Human Resources establishing the diversity internship as an institutional program of the University.
- Support the Dual Career Placement Program. Finding employment for a "trailing" spouse/partner is an important factor in providing a welcoming environment for new employees. Utilize current assessment tools to measure the success rate of this initiative within Finance & Business.
- Further promote the Professional Entry Program (PEP) as a method to diversify the workforce within Finance & Business and the University.
- Require a diverse applicant pool for all management positions within Finance & Business. Utilize the resources of the University-wide *Diversity Talent Bank*, the OHR diversity Web site, two new contracted diversity recruitment Web sites: LATPRO.com, JobCircle.com and continued attendance at diversity orientated job fairs. Create an assessment tool to track progress and accountability.
- Initiate and fund a mentoring program for minority new hires within F&B.
- Continue to support the Community Diversity Group's efforts to provide diversity awareness training for the retail/service sector in the greater State College area.

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

This challenge does not apply to Finance & Business.

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

Finance and Business recognizes the importance of a diversified leadership/management team. Finance and Business's participation in the University's Administrative Fellows Program helps foster leadership and management skills among underrepresented minorities and women.

Below are other ways in which Finance and Business proposes to continue to diversify its leadership and management staff:

- Create a standard process/criteria to ensure that there is a diverse representation on committees, strategic teams and project groups within Finance & Business. Provide opportunities for diverse appointments to University-wide commissions, advisory committees & task forces.
- Identify *inside/outside* the organization opportunities to fill potential vacancies. For inside candidates, develop specific and tailored leadership and professional development programs to ensure that a diverse candidate pool is available when positions open.
- Continue to support the Administrative Fellows Program.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals

The diversity initiative of Finance and Business is a long-term commitment to achieve the goals of the University. The Senior Vice President for Finance and Business has charged every unit head to be an active participant in the process and holds each unit head accountable for positive results. A senior member of the Finance and Business staff provides the leadership and day-to-day direction for the diversity initiative.

Other proposals to meet this challenge include:

- Review the current mission statement and strategic plan for Finance & Business to ensure there is the proper emphasis on the University objectives for diversity. Communicate to all Finance & Business staff any changes and the commitment to the plan from the Senior Vice President.

- Commitment to diversity and attainment of diversity goals becomes an integral success factor within Finance & Business. All unit heads will be evaluated on progress in diversifying the workforce and providing leadership opportunities within their units.
- The Senior Vice President reviews annually the funding requests for current and future diversity initiatives. The diversity committee annually makes recommendations to the Senior Vice President on the priorities and status of all programs.
- Strengthen the diversity representative system within Finance & Business and require that there is a representative from each unit.