

**Penn State Outreach
Strategic Plan for Diversity
2004-2009**

The mission of Penn State Outreach is to increase access to Penn State's educational resources through linking the expertise of faculty in the University with the needs and interests of external constituents. The interface of Outreach with the spectrum of Penn State's external constituents opens the organization up to a broad and inclusive perspective on diversity. Outreach's audiences are youth and adult; male and female; local, national, and international; rural and urban; location-bound and mobile; racially, ethnically, culturally, and socio-economically diverse; differently-abled; and with diverse sexual orientations. This experience reinforces that there are many kinds of differences that characterize human lives, both for Outreach customers/clients/students and in the University workplace, an understanding that is reflected in the core values and strategic goals of the organization as well as the wide variety of programs offered through Outreach and the wide variety of learners they involve.

Among its stated core values, Outreach seeks to be an organization that . . .

Is committed to diversity and the unique potential that diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and viewpoints bring to our work and learning experience.

Creates a humane environment in the workplace and in the classroom, treats all faculty, staff, students, and customers with dignity and respect, and is sensitive to the need for balance between work life and personal lives.

A commitment to diversity is further embraced within Outreach's strategic goals that include:

Enhance Outreach's environment for work and learning in support of the contributions of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

To advance these core values and this strategic goal and to address the challenges identified within Penn State's *Framework to Foster Diversity*, the Outreach Diversity Strategic Plan for 2004-09 gives special priority to initiatives targeted to 1) enhancing the climate for diversity within Outreach; 2) recruiting and retaining adult learners; 3) recruiting and retaining diverse faculty/staff; and 4) enhancing leadership for diversity. The plan also includes continuation of efforts to serve diverse audiences and provide programming with multicultural content that currently are an important part of Outreach. These initiatives and activities include Continuing Education, World Campus, Penn State Public Broadcasting, and central Outreach support units in partnership with Cooperative Extension where appropriate; however, Cooperative Extension is included in the plan for the College of Agricultural Sciences.

CAMPUS CLIMATE AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

(These two challenges are highly inter-related and therefore are addressed together in this plan.)

The 2002 Outreach Diversity Climate Survey, which included Continuing Education, World Campus, Public Broadcasting, and central Outreach support units, spoke to both of these challenges. The survey indicated that, overall, there is a positive climate for diverse groups within Outreach and that commitment to diversity issues is widespread. Most staff are satisfied with the climate for diversity, feel that it is comfortable for underrepresented groups, and see fostering diversity as an important priority within the organization.

The survey also suggested that there could be greater awareness and supportive behavior related to diversity issues. Open-ended questions about barriers to creating a positive climate for diversity within Outreach and proposed efforts to enhance the climate for diversity suggested the need to clarify and promote an inclusive definition of diversity, to help staff and faculty understand what is acceptable and appropriate behavior in the workplace, to prepare managers and supervisors to lead proactively on diversity issues, and, more generally, to continue to communicate and educate broadly through a wide variety of forums.

Based on this assessment, Outreach has identified the following actions in response to Challenges 1 and 2 of the *Framework to Foster Diversity*.

1. **Charge the Outreach Diversity Council to expand leadership and strengthen accountability for diversity initiatives within the organization.** This represents a transition from the former Diversity Action Team within Outreach, to elevate the role of the group to focus, stimulate, and assess Outreach initiatives to foster a welcoming work and learning environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds; promote inclusivity in serving students, customers, and clients; and enhance diversity among Outreach faculty and staff. A copy of the charge for the Outreach Diversity Council may be found in Appendix A.

This transition was completed in spring 2004. The Council will meet twice a year with the Vice President for Outreach to report progress and identify issues related to diversity within the Outreach organization.

Responsibility: Vice President for Outreach supported by the Director of Planning and Administration.

2. **Articulate and communicate a definition of diversity for Outreach.** Despite the implicit definition of diversity expressed by Outreach's mission of access, staff feel a need for a clearer understanding of what diversity means, particularly

in the workplace. As a priority for 2004, Outreach will develop a definition of diversity for the organization and communicate it to staff and faculty.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council.

3. **Prepare directors, managers, and supervisors through dedicated training to provide leadership for diversity and to respond to diversity issues.** To establish clear and common expectations for Outreach's leadership regarding their responsibility to promote and support diversity within the organization, Outreach will work with the Affirmative Action Office to provide training for all staff at the director and manager level and all other staff with supervisory responsibilities. An initial round of training will be held in 2004; additional opportunities will be made available as time goes on to reach all staff who move into these positions.

Responsibility: Director of Outreach Human Resources.

4. **Provide a variety of program opportunities for all staff and faculty to increase awareness of diversity issues, foster community, and encourage involvement.** This is an ongoing commitment to continue and expand programming for employees that fosters diversity, including sessions at the annual Outreach Professional Development Conference, programs offered by the Outreach Diversity Council, and other professional development opportunities.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council, Director of Outreach Human Resources, and Director of Planning and Administration.

5. **Continue and expand organizational communications that underscore the importance of diversity for Outreach.** Ongoing communication from the Vice President and other Outreach leadership on diversity matters will be continued. New communication initiatives include the expansion of diversity information on the Outreach intranet and progress reports to all employees at regular intervals.

Responsibility: Vice President for Outreach, Associate Vice Presidents for Outreach, and Director of Planning and Administration.

6. **Conduct a diversity climate survey at regular intervals.** Outreach has made a commitment to conduct a diversity climate survey approximately every three years to monitor the climate for diversity within the organization and identify related initiatives on an ongoing basis. A survey was conducted in 2002; it is anticipated future surveys will follow in fall 2005 and 2008.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council.

Performance Measures:

Trend data collected through the Outreach diversity survey, including the percent of Outreach employees who indicate they are satisfied with the climate for diversity.

Inclusion of support for diversity in Staff Developmental Action Plans (SRDP data).

Log of initiative-related activities/program evaluation results.

REPRESENTATION (ACCESS AND SUCCESS)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

Outreach is involved in addressing this challenge through its special commitment to serve adult part-time learners through continuing and distance education programs. World Campus and Continuing Education at University Park are major units within Outreach that recruit adult students to Penn State credit programs and require related strategies to attract and retain adult learners including program flexibility and availability of appropriate student services and financial aid. Outreach further contributes in the spirit of the challenge by supporting diversity in the University's extended informal learning community through a wide range of programs (including non-credit and public broadcasting programs) that serve specialized targeted audiences or the public at-large.

7. **Enhance the role of continuing education in increasing the number of adult learners at Penn State.** In keeping with its leadership and advocacy roles for adult learners at Penn State, Outreach will be responsive to the recommendations forthcoming this spring from the Task Force on Continuing Education to enhance the role of continuing education University-wide in attracting and retaining adult learners to Penn State. It is anticipated that the recommendations may involve organizational restructuring, policy enhancements, and programming and student services initiatives.

Responsibility: Outreach leadership as appropriate to the recommendations.

8. **Establish scholarship funds for adult part-time learners.** Financial aid limitations can be a significant barrier to enrollment in higher education for the adult part-time learner. Establishing scholarship funds for adult part-time students is a development priority for Outreach, with the goal of raising \$1 million in Trustee Scholarship funds over the next four years for World Campus students.

Responsibility: Director of Outreach Development.

9. **Develop a diversity framework for the World Campus.** Online learning communities are open to all aspects of diversity -- geographic, life experience, gender, race, age, and culture among others. Penn State World Campus currently attracts a minority student population slightly higher than the case among adult

learners generally, but lower than traditional university campuses. World Campus has established international market plans for the long-term and has entered into partnerships that encourage a more diverse student body (e.g., participation in eArmyU, an agreement with the Organization of American States to promote enrollment in World Campus programs from Latin America, and promotion of World Campus programs on the website of the American Distance Education Consortium which reaches students and faculty/staff at historically black and Hispanic land-grant institutions and Native American tribal colleges). However, during the start-up phase for World Campus, the primary focus has been on growing enrollments within the overall target audience of adult part-time learners. As these initial goals are reached, it is time to begin focusing more specifically on a balanced set of curricula, financial aid and other support services, and recruiting efforts that will enhance the diversity of audiences served, including understanding better the dimensions and impact of diversity in the on-line learning environment for adult students, establishing baseline data (relevant data are not currently uniformly available), and identifying goals and supporting strategies.

Responsibility: Executive Director of Continuing and Distance Education

10. **Optimize program content, marketing, and delivery for diverse audiences.** This represents the ongoing effort within Outreach to provide barrier-free access to offerings including geographical and physical accessibility, accommodation of diverse learning styles, responsiveness to age-related special needs, and bias-free language in published materials. The status of these efforts will be assessed and related initiatives developed and implemented as needed.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council

Performance measures:

Trend data on adult learner enrollments.

Trend data on World Campus enrollments.

Establishment of World Campus scholarship funds.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

Outreach has made significant progress in the representation of women among senior staff positions; in fall 2003, 52 percent of grade 26 and above staff employees were women compared to 21 percent in fall 1997. Progress also has been made in the representation of racial/ethnic minorities across all staff levels; from fall 1997 to fall 2003, there was a 66 percent increase in minority Outreach staff. However, the percentage of staff from underrepresented groups remains small—5.5 percent of Outreach employees in staff positions in 2003. Among the three-dozen non-tenure track

faculty currently employed by Outreach, 42 percent are women and none are racial/ethnic minorities. (It should be noted that 24 percent of the respondents to the 2002 Outreach Diversity Climate survey considered themselves a member of an underrepresented group based on sexual orientation, ethnicity/race, religion, gender, or physical or mental ability.)

Increasing faculty and staff from underrepresented groups is a priority for Outreach. Tracking of search data begun in FY03 shows that the pool of qualified applicants from underrepresented groups must be increased as an important step in recruiting diverse faculty and staff, particularly in those searches that are advertised regionally and nationally. In the past two years, an average of approximately 6 percent of applicants for Outreach positions were racial/ethnic minorities, disabled or handicapped, and members of these groups represented an average of 5 percent of candidates selected for interviews, leading ultimately to an average of 4 percent of the Outreach hires made in each of the years. We want to see increases at all of these stages.

Outreach already has in place affirmative action search procedures including a specific charge to search committees regarding diversity of candidate pools, advertising in appropriate venues, and networking within professional circles. In addition to continuing these procedures, Outreach will implement the following actions to support greater diversity in hiring.

11. **Strengthen all vacancy position descriptions to communicate Penn State's and Outreach's commitment to diversity and to include job-appropriate diversity-related factors among stated position qualifications. Include in job interview protocols assessment of the diversity-related qualifications.** Including language, as appropriate to a position, indicating a desire to work with a multi-cultural customer base and support for diversity as important job qualifications, reinforces the value of diversity for the organization and conveys a welcoming climate for diversity to job applicants.

Responsibility: Director of Outreach Human Resources working with units.

12. **Establish a recruitment fund to support the hiring of diverse staff and faculty.** This fund will be modeled after similar programs at Penn State that provide matching funds in support of diverse hires. As an incentive to units to expand their searches for qualified diverse candidates, Outreach will contribute centrally a portion of the salary for newly hired individuals who contribute to the diversity of the Outreach workforce; these matching funds will be reduced over time for a given position to assure their ongoing availability across units. This funding has been put in place for FY05.

Responsibility: Outreach Executive Team working with the Director of Finance, Facilities, and Technology and the Director of Planning and Administration.

13. **Explore the creation of an Outreach internship program for diverse Penn State students and/or in partnership with other institutions of higher education with diverse student bodies to provide experiences that may attract participants to future employment opportunities in Outreach.** “Grow your own” internship programs appear to be a promising avenue for recruiting diverse staff. As a first step toward potentially creating such a program for Outreach, we want to learn from the experiences of others at Penn State including their return on investment in such programs, and also explore possibilities for partnering with other institutions, such as historically black colleges and universities, to provide internship experiences for students in fields related to work in Outreach. This exploratory work will take place during 2004-05, and if a decision is made to move forward, implementation will occur the following year.

Responsibility: Outreach Executive Team working with the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Planning and Administration.

14. **When openings for Outreach faculty positions occur, reiterate and reinforce the importance of a strong commitment to diversity in the search process through special attention to the composition of search committees, communication by the appropriate Outreach executive with the chair, and access to resources to support an aggressive search. Closely monitor diversity of applicants, candidates, and hires in faculty searches.** Recruiting faculty of color among the approximately three dozen non-tenure track positions within Outreach is a special priority. Every search opportunity will be used to address this priority through strategies that emphasize expanding the diversity of qualified individuals in applicant pools.

Responsibility: Executive Director of Continuing and Distance Education.

15. **Establish a retention program for staff and faculty from underrepresented groups.** While professional development and other forms of career and workplace support are provided for all employees, Outreach currently does not have a focused retention program for individuals from underrepresented groups. Mentoring and networking opportunities will be developed and implemented to support Outreach employees from underrepresented groups.

Responsibility: Director of Outreach Human Resources working with the Outreach Diversity Council and Outreach units.

Performance measures;

Trend data for searches—number of diverse applicants, candidates, offers, and hires for faculty and staff.

Trend data on employees—number/percent women and members of underrepresented groups on Outreach faculty and staff.

Assessment of specific initiatives, including implementation and outcome data.

EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP

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

Outreach does not contribute directly to addressing this challenge but is supportive of college curricular efforts in this area through the delivery of general education and other relevant courses via continuing and distance education. In addition, the broad portfolio of programs delivered through all Outreach units to the extended University learning community includes significant multicultural content reflecting the organization's role in support of academic interests across the university and interface with a wide variety of external audiences. Outreach is committed to continuing to work with its academic partners to provide programming that is reflective of and responsive to the diversity of our society.

16. **Review the Outreach program portfolio to identify opportunities and issues related to multicultural programming.** As many Outreach program offerings change from year to year, it is important to understand trends and challenges related to the inclusion of multicultural content within the Outreach portfolio. Outreach program offerings with diversity-related content will be monitored to inform the efforts of program development and delivery units in this area.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council working with Outreach units.

17. **Explore dedicating a portion of the Outreach Program Innovation Fund to diversity-related programming.** While much of Outreach's diversity-related programs are driven by academic partners, dedicated funding can serve as an incentive for development of programs in this area and also encourage the development of programming for underserved audiences. The Program Innovation Fund is currently being restructured; diversity will be considered as a potential criterion in the allocation of some of this funding.

Responsibility: Outreach Executive Team.

18. **Collect assessment data on Outreach diversity-related educational programs to determine effectiveness, including information on audiences served and measures of program outcomes, to guide the ongoing investment of resources in this area.**

Responsibility: Director of Planning and Administration working with Outreach program delivery units.

Performance measures:

Reviews of diversity-related programs.
 Development of new diversity-related programs.
 Program assessment data.

INSTITUTIONAL VIABILITY AND VITALITY

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

Many of the concerns under this challenge have already been addressed in Outreach's response to the other challenges within the Framework to Foster Diversity. These include recruitment and retention initiatives including a special focus on positions for which regional and national searches are conducted (many of these are leadership positions), providing training for directors, managers, and supervisors, and enhancing the leadership role of the Outreach Diversity Council. The challenge is also addressed by ongoing efforts within Outreach to provide leadership and professional development opportunities for women and members of underrepresented groups.

19. **Continue to provide encouragement and support for professional development opportunities for diverse staff members, including the Outreach Internship Program, participation in University leadership and management development programs, and participation on University committees and commissions.** Outreach has used all of these avenues in the past to provide leadership development opportunities for diverse staff and will continue to do so. In addition, the Vice President for Outreach will serve a mentor for the Administrative Fellows Program in 2005-06.

Responsibility: Outreach Executive Team working with unit leadership.

20. **For all administrative searches (staff grade 24 and above with managerial duties and all administrative appointments), require demonstrated skills in managing diversity as a position qualification. Include leadership for diversity as a factor in annual performance reviews for administrators.** Demonstrated commitment from the leadership of Outreach is essential for meeting the challenges of the Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State. This expectation will be clearly stated in position descriptions and individuals in leadership positions will be held accountable through the annual performance review process.

Responsibility: Vice President for Outreach and the Outreach Executive Team.

21. **Work with the chairs of all search committees for administrative positions (staff grade 24 with managerial duties and above and all administrative appointments) to assure a strong commitment to diversity in the search process and access to networks that promote diversity in the pool of qualified**

applicants. An aggressive approach that clearly and closely sets expectations for administrative search committees and works with committee chairs and members to identify diverse applicant pools can help to bring qualified diverse candidates forward for leadership positions. For all administrative position searches, an appropriate member of the Executive Team will meet with the search committee chair to discuss expectations and identify strategies for developing a diverse pool of candidates.

Responsibility: Executive Team members

22. **Consider diversity as an important factor for the membership of external advisory groups for Outreach.** Outreach looks to individuals beyond the University for advice and relationship building to better connect Penn State with community and statewide educational needs. External advisory groups for Outreach must include diverse perspectives in order to fulfill these roles effectively.

Responsibility: Outreach Executive Team

Performance measures:

Implementation data for initiatives: Percent of position descriptions that include demonstrated skills in managing diversity and percent of administrative searches which are discussed with a member of the Executive Team.

Trend data on participation of members of underrepresented groups in Outreach leadership positions.

Trend data on participation of members of underrepresented groups in leadership development activities.

Outreach advisory board membership.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

Outreach's diversity initiatives are coordinated through the Vice President's Office by the Director of Planning and Administration with a direct reporting line to the Vice President for Outreach. This coordination includes the Outreach Executive Team, the Vice President's Council, the Outreach Diversity Council, and others in the organization in efforts to foster diversity goal. Outreach's organizational commitment to diversity also includes financial investment including program development funds (from the Program Innovation Fund and the Outreach Partnership Fund) in support of programs with multicultural content or that reach under-served audiences, support for training for faculty and staff, development priority for adult learner scholarships, and the creation of an incentive fund to promote diversity in hiring. At the individual level, staff are held accountable through the Staff Review and Development Plan (SRDP) process (inclusion

of Support for Diversity in the Developmental Action Plan will be monitored beginning in the 2004-05 performance review period). At the organizational level, accountability will be addressed through an annual assessment of progress in fostering diversity within Outreach. Under this challenge, Outreach also is very interested in networking with others at Penn State to share best practices and participate in collaborative efforts to build support for diversity.

23. **Prepare an annual update on diversity within Outreach and share with all staff.** This progress report will include the performance measures identified in this plan and recommend refinements to the Outreach Diversity Strategic Plan as appropriate.

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council working with the Director of Planning and Administration.

24. **Network with others throughout the university to share best practices and pursue collaborative efforts to foster diversity.**

Responsibility: Outreach Diversity Council.

Performance measures:

Decrease in the percent of Outreach staff who respond “don’t know” to items on the Outreach diversity climate survey.

Updated September 2004

Table of Appendices

Appendix A Outreach Diversity Council Charge, Membership, Structure, and Meetings