

**Feedback on the Diversity Strategic Plan**  
*A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-2009*  
**Research and Graduate School including the Applied Research Laboratory**

The Applied Research Laboratory (ARL) is acknowledged for its inclusive diversity definition and statements of mission, vision and main goals. Also, the Laboratory is commended for their use of outcome measures and strategic indicators. Together, these metrics will enhance the impressive progress that ARL is making to strengthen its commitment to diversity across the entire organization. The Review Team encourages the leadership of the Research and Graduate School (RGS) to consider adopting similar metrics within the parameters of all units. There are many potential synergies to be found in closer collaboration on diversity issues between RGS and ARL. The integration of ARL in the Diversity Council is a good start and one that will unite many diversity best practices of both RGS and ARL into one unified effort. The lack of adequate metrics provided by RGS to assess proposed initiatives make it difficult for the review team to provide an effective assessment.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

***Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity***

- ❖ A link will be developed on the RGS website to encourage the sharing of diversity issues among units.
- ❖ The director of OGEE will continue providing leadership in working with students, faculty and staff to foster an understanding “for the need for a diverse community of thought and understanding.”
- ❖ The 2004-2009 Diversity Plan for RGS was distributed to all office/unit directors for discussion and implementation, as appropriate. There is an expectation from the Vice President and Dean that the diversity plan be discussed in staff meetings and that supervisors discuss diversity in evaluations.
- ❖ The review team commends ARL for offering metrics designed to improve the effectiveness of communicating ARL’s commitment to diversity.

***Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate***

- ❖ The Diversity Council will be provided with an opportunity to respond to diversity concerns emanating from the 2004 Faculty/Staff Survey.
- ❖ The merger of the CYFC with SSRI offers promise for the development of a diversity work group. This merger has the potential to broaden the outreach of the research offices and bring other units such as the Africana Research Center into a productive collaboration.
- ❖ ARL’s goal of providing an inclusive working and learning environment is commendable. The set of metrics and strategic indicators identified to assess this goal is a potential best practice.

**Representation (Access and Success)**

***Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body***

- ❖ Using many of the same strategies from the 1998-2003 plan, ARL offers such outcome measures as benchmark evaluation and exit interviews to assess their recruitment and retention efforts.
- ❖ The Graduate School identified three major goals for 2004-2009 and notes that the OGEE director’s “top two responsibilities include the recruitment of underrepresented students and the design of programs to retain students through graduation.” Strategies for attaining these goals are provided, however no metrics are offered.

***Response: the McNair Program has been moved to the Graduate School, effective July 1, 2004. Greater interface will occur between this outstanding program designed to groom undergraduate students for graduate school, and other efforts in the OGEE e.g. Summer Research Opportunities Program. The OGEE will strive to recruit at least 10 McNair scholars for the Bunton Waller assistantship program.***

- ❖ Many of the Research Offices’ diversity initiatives build on successful and existing consortia, institutes and partnerships with HBCUs.

***Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce***

- ❖ The review team applauds ARL's identified strategies that build on the earlier plan and provide measures and indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of enhancing recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.
- ❖ The Research Offices offerings of in-house diversity education awareness programs and the examples of projects and activities at the University Press, PSIE and RTTO are potential best practices.

**Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ Enriching education by integrating multicultural curriculum content is an ARL goal. The curricula are offered in collaboration with CE, DE, the College of Engineering, and external defense agencies. Several implementation strategies are offered in conjunction with measures and metrics.
- ❖ The IAH is presented as a program that will expand curricular integration of diversity topics. The Worldwide University Network (WUN) is a new consortial arrangement that will promote international exchange opportunities for Penn State students and faculty with 15 universities in five countries, thus further enhancing already strong international collaborations.

**Institutional Viability and Vitality**

***Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management***

- ❖ The RGS emphasize their on-going commitment to collaborate with the colleges on multiple fronts in promoting diversity across all research and graduate units of the University. The Graduate School notes they have an opportunity to search for a director position and will seek to identify candidates from underrepresented groups.

***Response: The Graduate School has recently hired an African American male to serve as Director of the Fellowships and Awards Office.***

- ❖ Several RGS senior staff members have attended HRDC programs and workshops on leadership, management and supervision. The units are commended for encouraging a strong attendance at these programs and the annual Women's Leadership Conference.
- ❖ Outcome measures with linked strategies would lend greater credibility to the Research and Graduate School's plan for diversifying their leadership.
- ❖ ARL presents a laudable series of strategies and metrics related to the goal of establishing a leadership team reflecting the diversity of society.

***Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals***

- ❖ The response to this section implies that little else needs to be accomplished in the way of organizational change beyond attention to coordination of efforts within Research Office units, the expectation that RGS leadership will support the University's diversity goals, and the recruitment of more minority students, staff and faculty. This response is disappointingly simplistic in its lack of attention to addressing such concerns as long-term planning, resource re-allocation, organizational realignment and accountability for achieving diversity goals in RGS. The Review Team strongly urges the Vice President and Dean to consider strategies for coordinating and developing the metrics for assessing the organizational changes necessary to support the achievement of diversity goals.
- ❖ ARL proposes continuing strategies adapted from their previous plan and proposes several new ones to meet the goal of initiating "systems and structures to assure vital and visible support for diversity." The emphasis on maintenance of pre-existing funding and identifying new funding streams to support ARL diversity initiatives is commendable.