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# Diversity

UPDATE



AND  
DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN  
FOR 2004-09

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS  
FEBRUARY 2004

PENNSTATE



## Background

The need for an understanding and acceptance of diversity within the University has never been more critical than it is today. Equal access to higher education for all citizens of the Commonwealth is essential for Pennsylvania's future success, and appreciation and acceptance of other cultures will be central to any individual's success in the coming decades.

University Relations is one of the smaller budget units within Penn State, but we feel that we play a critical and central role in communicating the University's commitment to diversity and helping to recruit a more diverse student body.

Since the 2001 Diversity Update, the Office of University Relations has instituted a number of new programs and initiatives aimed at better communicating the need for diversity at Penn State and demonstrating diversity's priority within the institution.

We have worked diligently to make diversity a priority and to highlight diversity through our advertising (television, radio, billboards, and the Internet), student recruitment brochures, Web-based communications, and media relations efforts.

The following report attempts to address the specific steps taken within University Relations to respond to the challenges articulated in *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 1998–2003*, then lays out the office's strategies for the 2004–09 period.

### ► Challenge 1. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

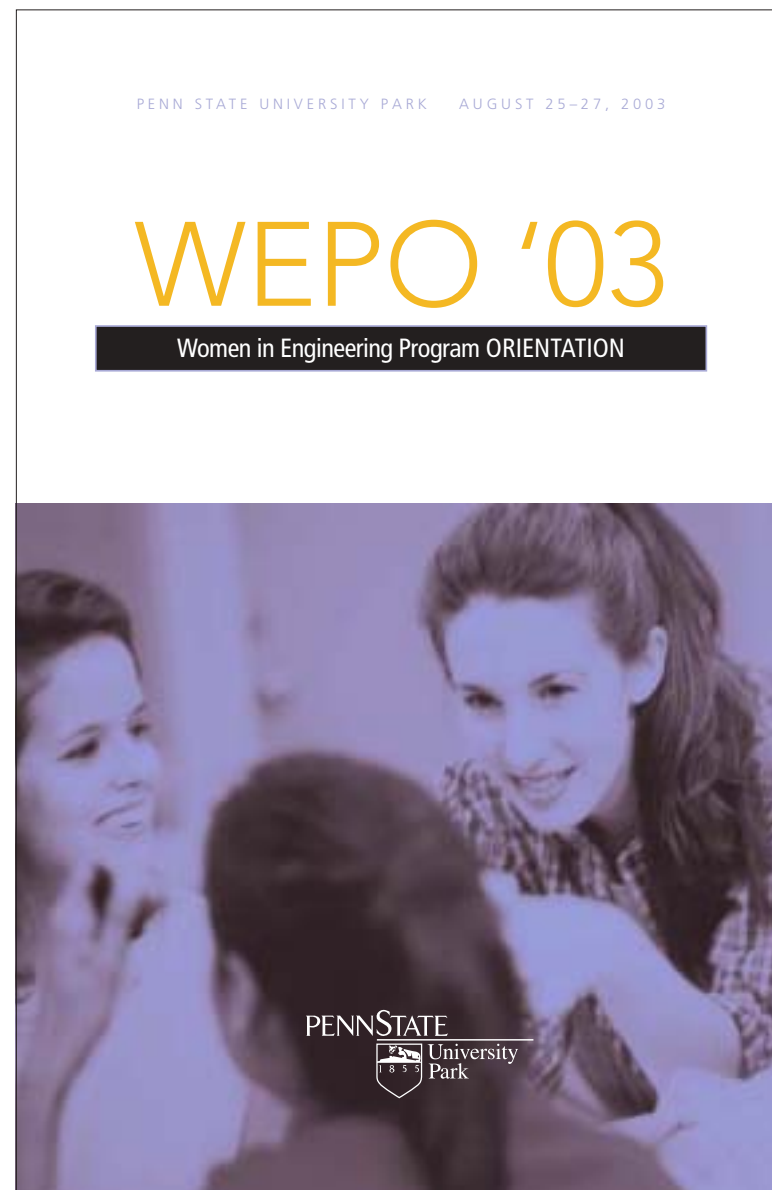
Within University Relations, diversity is defined as an awareness of and appreciation for different cultures, ethnicities, sexual preferences, and perspectives. We strive to make diversity a concept that is valued by everyone within the unit. We place an emphasis on presenting diverse images within our many communications vehicles, and have been particularly diligent in ensuring that the University's advertising reflects a diverse and vibrant student body.



A still from the University Relations diversity video that is shown to all incoming first-year students.

We stress the importance of inclusiveness in staff meetings, and have had unit-wide meetings devoted solely to the subject of diversity. Since the last Diversity Update in 2001, we have established a diversity committee to look at diversity issues within University Relations as well as within our communications across the University. We have also established a small committee, including a representative from the Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity, to advise on the content for the Diversity Newswire, developed three years ago in the Department of Public Information.

It is difficult to know with precision what has been the single most important component in developing a shared and inclusive understanding of diversity, but establishing it as a specific topic for staff meetings provided an opportunity for the vice president to ensure the entire staff was aware of diversity's priority within University Relations.



The "Women in Engineering Program Orientation" brochure highlights the College of Engineering's program designed to encourage female students to choose engineering as a field of study and to support those female students throughout their academic careers.

### ► **Challenge 2. Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate**

The unit's leadership demonstrates visible support for diversity by making it a top priority to portray diversity in publications, advertisements, Newswire (with 152,000 subscriptions), and *Intercom* stories, and through issues management. We also seek out candidates with diverse backgrounds and perspectives when hiring.

The unit identifies climate issues through participation on the Campus Environment Team and via feedback from the President's Council and Academic Leadership Council, as well as e-mail correspondence received by the President.

The Department of Public Information staff carefully follows diversity issues through subscriptions to publications such as *Black Issues in Higher Education* and *Hispanic Issues in Higher Education*, as well as other media targeted to minority issues and populations. The staff works with reporters and editors at minority-oriented publications to help promote statewide and national visibility for student, faculty, and staff accomplishments.

In terms of responding to climate issues, the Office of University Relations is responsible for all public comments and communications

strategies on behalf of the University. In one recent situation, the president of the College Republicans posted racist, homophobic, and anti-Catholic photos/captions on his Web page. The assistant vice president for University Relations immediately issued a statement denouncing the page, calling for its removal and demanding an apology to the University community. This was followed up with two more public statements denouncing the site and the lack of an apology from the responsible person. University Relations then created links on the University Web page to information on the issue and the University's strong denunciation of intolerance and support for diversity. Newswire stories were created and a special edition of the Diversity Newswire was put out. In addition, a number of e-mails to the President's account ([president@psu.edu](mailto:president@psu.edu)) related to this issue required careful and thoughtful responses that would illustrate the University's continuing support of diversity and the community's rejection of hateful activities.

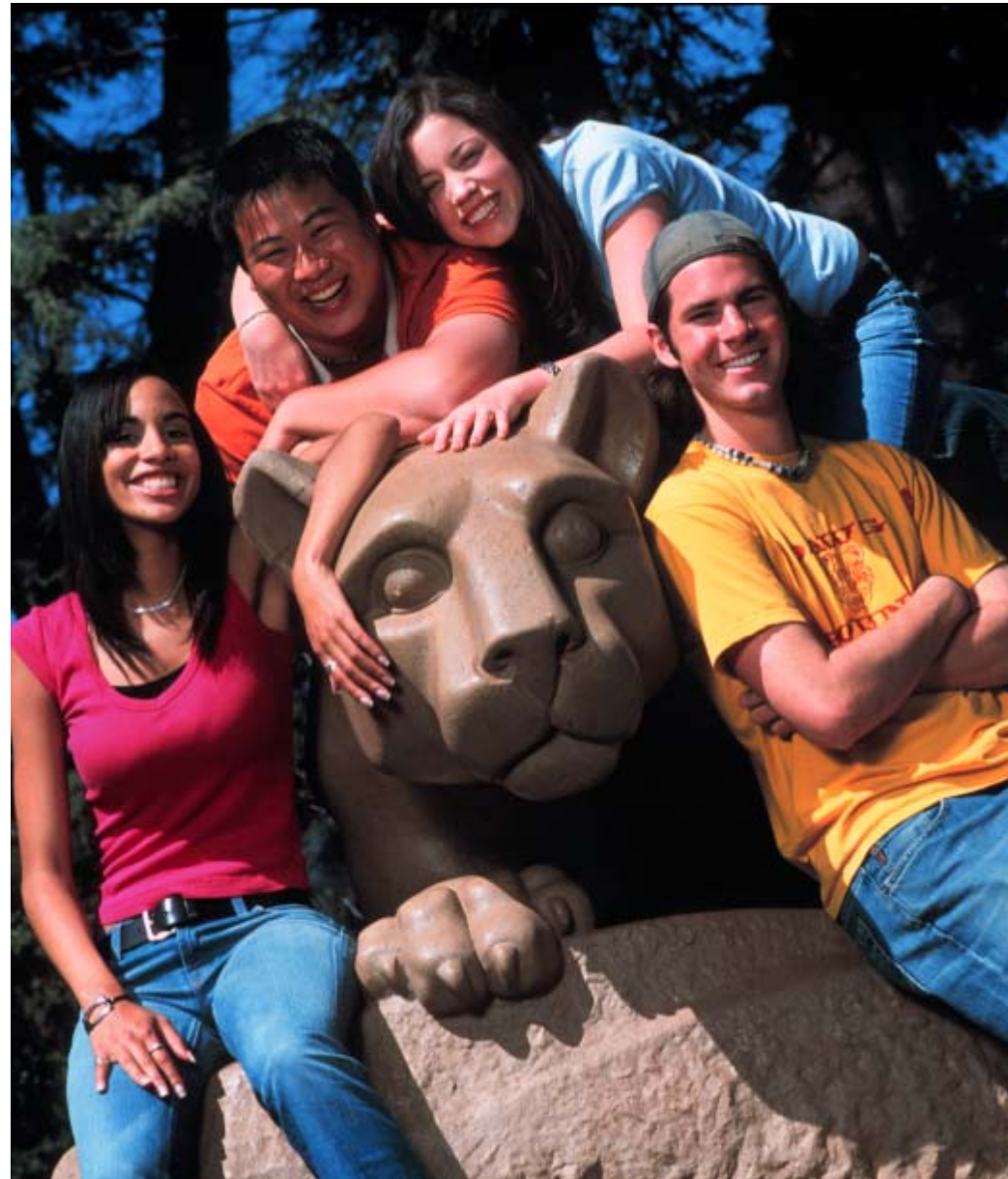
To enhance the overall climate, we have worked hard to ensure the visualization of diversity at Penn State. The creation of the Diversity Newswire is a good example. Created in 2001, it produced eight editions that year, followed by twenty-

three in 2002. In 2003, twenty-six editions featured 170 diversity-related stories.

By emphasizing diversity in all the University's communications, we feel we have had success in establishing the importance diversity plays in the Penn State experience. We have also taken steps to keep faculty abreast of the changing demographics of both the state and the nation that clearly point to a more multiracial future. These demographic changes will have an important effect on a number of University functions.

We provide a broad range of accommodations for persons with disabilities at commencement and other ceremonies upon request. Such services include real-time captioning or sign-language interpreters for the hearing impaired, and wheelchair ramps and/or lifts for those with limited mobility. These services have a positive impact on not only persons with disabilities, but also the thousands of guests who see how we make an effort to make a once-in-a-lifetime event special for everyone.

Our office also coordinates and schedules structured opportunities for free speech by a variety of campus groups.



A major component of Penn State's recruitment efforts is the campaign to attract teens to the University. Images used in those materials show a diverse group of students, to illustrate that differences are accepted and appreciated as part of everyday life at Penn State.

► **Challenge 3. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body**

University Relations plays a central role in developing advertisements and recruitment material for students. We have placed a particular emphasis on portraying diversity in these efforts.

With respect to our marketing campaign to recruit undergraduates, diversity was portrayed and emphasized in the following ways:

**A. Professional Casting for the Teen Campaign (two separate sessions)**

**TV COMMERCIAL**

Twelve "models" (one Hispanic, one Asian, two African American)

**THREE POSTCARDS**

- Version A4 models (two minorities)
- Version B4 models (two minorities)
- Version C5 models (two minorities)

**"GO AHEAD" WEB SITE POST CARD (IT'S YOUR TIME)**

Seven models (three minorities)

**HIGH SCHOOL POSTER**

Eight models (four minorities)

**BILLBOARDS**

Four models (two minorities)

**SPECIALTY PAPER**

Eight models (four minorities)

**INDIVIDUAL AD SERIES**

Eight individual ads (five feature minorities)

**B. Development of Radio Spots (for the teen campaign)**

One generic and one urban aimed specifically at an African American audience.

The radio spots were tested with Philadelphia African American high school students at the Philadelphia recruitment center and played on urban stations.

**C. "Go Ahead" Web sites (Penn State, Pittsburgh regional, Penn State Abington)**

The Web sites created for the campaign were very diverse in their portrayal of students. The three-minute video (broken into two buttons on the site) features an African American student as a "tour guide."

**D. Ads Targeting African Americans**

- Ads for Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education (Educational Equity)
- Ad for YMCA Black Achievers Program (Educational Equity)
- Ads promoting the Office of Educational Equity (*State College* magazine, *Town & Gown* magazine, and the *Urban Connection* magazine in Harrisburg)
- Ad promoting diversity to Penn State alums (*Penn Stater* magazine)

- Three ads for NAACP program (Penn State Shenango)
- Three ads developed for *Black Opinion* magazine (Penn State McKeesport)
- Four ads developed for Greater Pittsburgh Black Business directory (regional ads)
- Ads for *Onyx Woman* magazine, African American newspapers, multicultural ad, Urban League ad (Penn State McKeesport)
- High school athlete recruitment ads showing African American student

**E. Ads Targeting Hispanics**

- Four different image ads (Penn State Berks)
- Ad recruiting Hispanic students for Educational Equity (*Hispanic Outlook* magazine)

**F. Update “Report Hate” Posters**

The Marketing Department within University Relations did an update on the “Report Hate” poster for Educational Equity that was originally developed several years ago.

**G. African American newspapers**

We routinely purchase advertising in the *New Pittsburgh Courier* and *Philadelphia Tribune* at our campuses’ and other departments’ request.

**H. Demographic Trends**

University Relations compiled extensive projections pertaining to diverse populations nationally and within Pennsylvania. These were used at the President’s presentation to the Faculty Senate and for a mailing to Pennsylvania opinion leaders. The President’s presentation also was mailed nationally to other higher education leaders, trustees, donors, and Pennsylvania legislators. We have received a number of requests from across Pennsylvania for additional copies.

**I. Employment**

As part of our marketing effort, we employ an African American student on an hourly basis and seek her opinions and counsel regarding promotional materials for the teen campaign and how to make them more relevant to the African American community.



**Recruitment**

We have also worked to ensure that all Penn State recruitment brochures (and other printed material) feature diversity, as shown in some of the examples on these pages.

University Relations also produces an annual tabloid insert for the *Philadelphia Tribune* designed to give African Americans in Philadelphia a sense of Penn State’s diversity commitment.

We believe the teen marketing campaign has been highly successful because of its clear effort to show diversity as an accepted and integral part of the Penn State experience.

## What makes Penn State a great university for Hispanic students?

- High Hispanic Graduation Rate
- Solid Support System
- Seven Hispanic Student Organizations
- Strong Precollege and Academic Programs
- Diverse University System
- Leadership and Networking Opportunities
- Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month
- Opportunities for Cultural Expression

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PENN STATE Making Life Better®

Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its workforce.

► **Challenge 4. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce**

The Office of University Relations has had remarkably little staff turnover during the past few years. Since this presents few opportunities for hiring, we have established internships and wage-payroll openings that have allowed us to bring in women and minorities to work within the unit for semester assignments as well as specific project assignments.

With respect to staff retention, we have paid close attention to opportunities to provide job flexibility. We have also encouraged and supported efforts to pursue educational opportunities. An African American female manager was thus able to complete her Ph.D.

We have been particularly successful in providing opportunities for women. Of the four managers in Public Information, three are women and two represent minority groups. The assistant director in the Department of University Publications is a woman, as are the director of the Department of Marketing and Advertising, the director of Campus and Community Affairs, the manager of University Advertising, and the manager of Research.

Providing a civil work environment has been a successful strategy in worker retention.

► **Challenge 5. Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies**

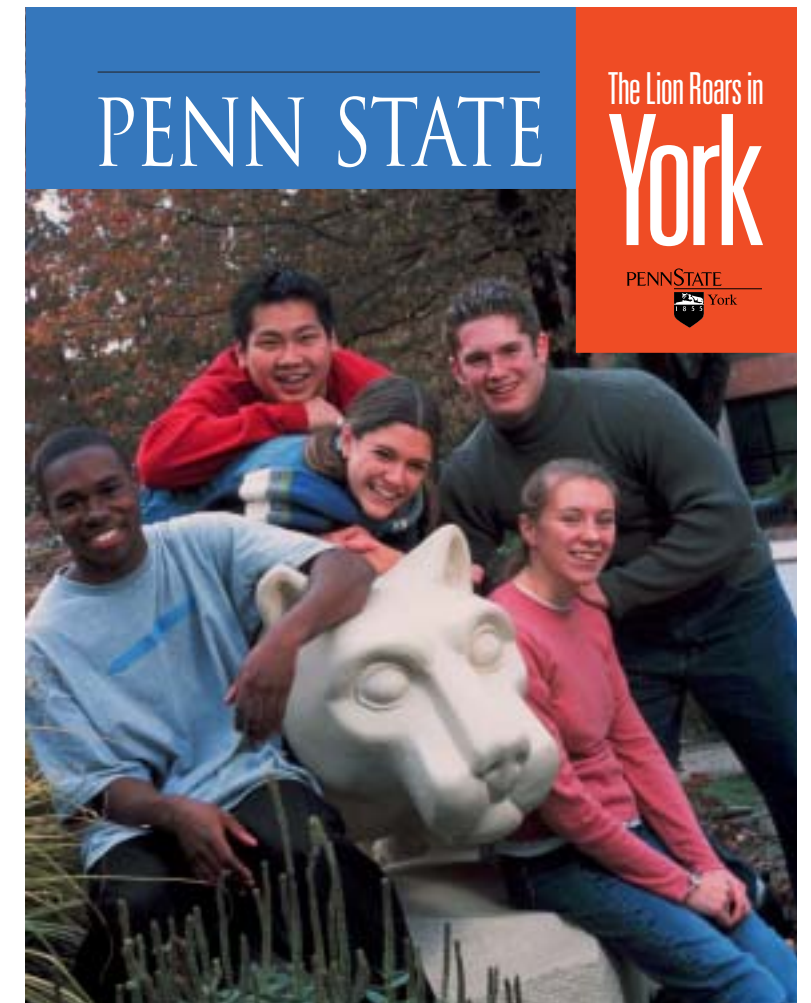
This challenge does not apply to our unit.

► **Challenge 6. Diversifying University Leadership and Management**

The Office of University Relations supports the professional development of all employees and is committed to providing opportunities for those who wish to further their education. All minority members of our staff have been provided with professional development opportunities. These have included national and regional conferences, in-house educational offerings through Human Resources, and programs such as Leadership Centre County.

► **Challenge 7. Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals**

To better meet our diversity goals, we have created two internal diversity committees—one to look at the broader diversity picture, and one to specifically advise on items for the Diversity Newswire and *Intercom*. We have also created internship opportunities and wage-payroll positions to provide entry-level experience to underrepresented students.



Showing the diversity of students at all Penn State locations is a goal of University Relations, particularly in its recruitment materials. Students are models for the photographs in the recruitment materials for their campuses.

We will continue to look for additional opportunities to advance diversity objectives within the units that University Relations comprises.



University Relations materials put the best foot of Penn State's diversity initiative forward by helping diversity-focused units such as the Paul Robeson Cultural Center communicate their mission in a clear way.

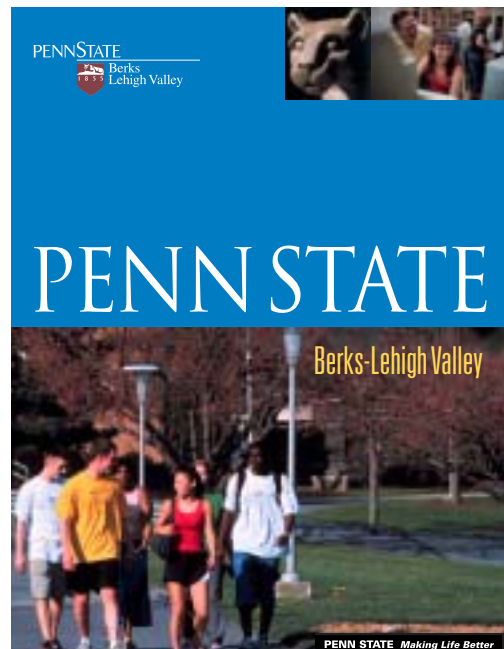
## Office of University Relations

### Strategic Plan to Foster Diversity 2004–09

Looking forward over the next five-year time frame, the Office of University Relations hopes to build on past successes while creating new initiatives and efforts to expand the visibility of diversity within the unit and across the whole University.

Each challenge articulated in the *Framework to Foster Diversity* contains areas for improvement. University Relations anticipates addressing those areas that are applicable to the unit in the manner outlined here.

All materials produced by University Relations include the spirit of an environment that welcomes and celebrates diversity. Materials for all Penn State locations present diversity in that real-life context.



#### ► Challenge 1. Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

Developing and communicating consistent descriptions of Penn State’s diversity objectives and initiatives will be a top priority for University Relations over the next five-year period. We intend to facilitate input from all constituent groups within the unit to be certain all perspectives are heard and considered.

As part of this effort, we plan to hold meetings focused on the topic of diversity with all University Relations staff members, with the intention of having all unit members understand the critical role diversity plays at Penn State and help them keep it a priority in their work.

We also intend to expand the role of the diversity committee, making it more visible and engaged and broadening its participation.

#### ► Challenge 2. Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

The energy and creativity of the University Relations staff are often focused on diversity issues, since the unit exists to promote the institution’s broad goals, and diversity has been (and will clearly continue to be) a strategic imperative for the University administration.

In the coming year, we plan to place a major emphasis on the promotion of the faculty/staff survey being developed to assess the climate at Penn State. We plan to seek input from University Relations staff on what needs to be done to better foster diversity within the unit. We also intend to emphasize diversity as a criterion in search processes.

We anticipate increasing the number of diversity stories that appear on the Newswire, in *Intercom*, and on the Web as a means of keeping the topic of diversity before all Penn State employees.

#### ► Challenge 3. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

We intend to continue our aggressive efforts to portray diversity in all University publications, advertisements, and other recruitment vehicles.

Our goal for the coming years is to develop greater linkages with the African American communities in the Commonwealth’s major metropolitan areas so we can better understand the misperceptions that exist about Penn State and more quickly address concerns within those communities.

It is our intention to continue to target student recruitment advertising

specifically at the African American audience.

We also intend to work with focus groups of minority students to help develop better strategies for communicating with minority audiences.

#### ► Challenge 4. Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

The few searches that have been undertaken with University Relations over the past three years have been for positions at grade 21 or lower, which precludes a search beyond the Centre Region. The demography of the Centre Region makes the challenge of recruiting a diverse pool of candidates extremely difficult. Nevertheless, when positions open, we intend to work closely with Human Resources to find all opportunities to seek out diverse candidates for the openings.

We intend to continue to provide internships and wage-payroll opportunities to open the door for underrepresented students at Penn State to participate in the University Relations office and gain personal work experience, while also helping to expose our staff to more diverse perspectives.

We will continue to provide job flexibility, professional development training, and educational opportuni-

ties for all staff as part of our effort at retaining our workforce.

Most important, each director within University Relations will be expected to encourage awareness of diversity within their units and to account for those efforts in their annual reviews.



Diversity Newswire is produced by public information and frequently sent to nearly 1,300 email addresses. Penn State Live also features diversity stories.

► **Challenge 5. Developing a Curriculum that Fosters Intercultural and International Competencies**

This challenge does not apply to our unit.

► **Challenge 6. Diversifying University Leadership and Management**

There is no question that diverse leadership teams allow the institution to take advantage of a broader range of perspectives, insights, and approaches, and are thus extraordinarily important to the University's success.

The Office of University Relations will continue to support all efforts to open leadership positions to underrepresented candidates. Similarly, we will support the professional development of all employees as a means to provide opportunities for advancement through the system. Our goal is to be certain we have provided all possible opportunities for the success of underrepresented staff.

A top priority for University Relations will be to ensure that all internal committees include underrepresented groups to bring a broader perspective to all committee deliberations.

We plan to continue to emphasize the need for diversity in public state-

ments issued by the office on behalf of Penn State. We will respond aggressively to any situations that question or threaten the civility of the campus and the pursuit of a more diverse environment.

► **Challenge 7. Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals**

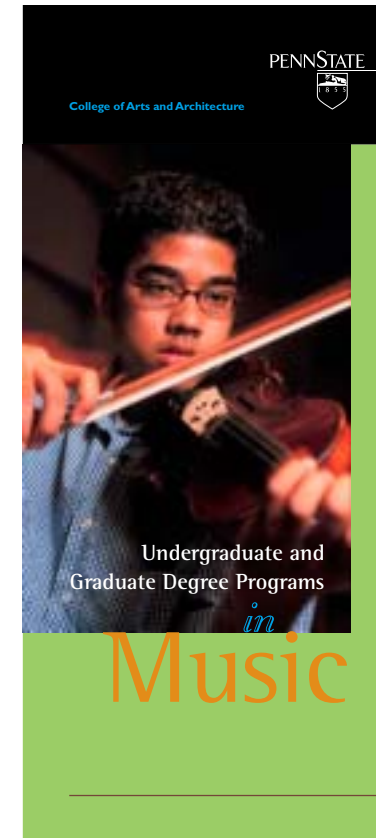
Making diversity a part of the Penn State culture is a top goal for the Office of University Relations in the coming five-year period. We will continue to emphasize diversity in our:

- advertising and marketing efforts;
- Web pages;
- publications;
- public statements;
- hiring practices.

We will also promote greater visibility for and awareness of the Diversity Newswire.

We intend to develop meaningful linkages with underrepresented communities to help Penn State strengthen its recruiting and crisis management capabilities.

We will stress diversity as a priority in staff meetings and strive to find new ways to highlight Penn State's strong commitment to cultivating a diverse educational environment.



University Relations carries out its goal of showcasing the diversity of Penn State's student body by the choices of images on covers of brochures, such as this one from the College of Arts and Architecture. Showing real students in action is an important element for University Publications in creating printed material for units throughout the University.

**Conclusion**

Over the past five years, diversity has played a central role in the work of all the departments that University Relations comprises. It is our goal to build on that and bring even greater awareness and acceptance of diversity to the many constituencies that make up the Penn State family. A diverse and welcoming campus climate is a primary goal of the University, and University Relations is committed to use all means necessary to make Penn State's commitment known and appreciated.