

**Feedback on Progress Implementing**  
**A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09**  
**Division of Development and Alumni Relations**  
**Mid-Term Progress Report**  
**Spring 2007**

Both the 2004-09 diversity strategic plan and the current update show that the Division of Development and Alumni Relations (the Division) takes the University *Framework* very seriously. The update's structure, executive summary, and accountability grid, present the Division's efforts in a clear and concise fashion, outlining accomplishments and progress, as well as frankly noting shortcomings. The Division demonstrates determination to fulfill several of the goals outlined in its grid and has made considerable progress in many areas. Overall, the Division is commended for its organization, support of leadership, and clear expectations.

The Division's Mid-term accomplishments under Challenge 7 are laudable and their approach may be used as a model for other units in the University. The standing diversity committee has a defined mission, a well-organized agenda, and clear lines of accountability. The Division's thoughtful and thorough embrace of the *Framework* is commended.

*Response: The Diversity Committee recognizes our Division's leadership and the support that has made our ability to make progress and meet many of the Frameworks goals. With the Division providing diversity incentive funds in excess of \$50,000 during the Framework time period, we have been able to implement actions that might never have been possible: paid diversity interns, brown bag lunches, and diversity training sessions, etc.*

As stated above, the accountability grid clearly delineates shortcomings, especially with regard to Challenges 4 and 6. While the Division has reported success with representation of women (white) in staff positions grade 26 and above, the Division falls short in the other aspects of recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, especially with regard to racial/ethnic diversity. Diversity also falls short in the top administrative tier, with all of the top leadership positions being held by white males. The Division is encouraged to place utmost priority on this area. As the interface of the University to donors and alumni, it behooves the Division to be representative of the population with whom its staff engages on a regular basis. It is hoped that the Division's demonstrated self-examination and acceptance of *Framework* ideals will lead to similar successes in these areas.

*Response: Compiling a diverse candidate pool is always in our best interest. To ensure there is diversity within our candidate pool, it has been determined that DDAR HR has access to diversity information of applicants who bid on jobs. Due to this issue, DDAR HR has put a process in place to maximize our diversity candidate pool. When a search committee reviews the resumes for an open position and determines qualified candidates or a "short list" of applicants they want to interview, the search committee is encouraged to contact DDAR HR before finalizing first line interviews. DDAR HR will look at the "short list" to determine if there is diversity. Additionally, if there is not diversity on the short list, DDAR HR can refer qualified candidates from the applicant pool who could add diversity. The search committee is not required to interview the applicant but they should at least consider them. Since January 2007, two diverse candidates were offered positions in DDAR but declined the job offer.*

*The Diversity Committee is committed to leading the Division in a direction that will support a much more diverse workforce. In our efforts we find that we not only face the same obstacles as our colleagues around the University (e.g. geographic location, salaries, etc.), but we face the unique obstacle of the nature that is development and alumni relations. Unfortunately, we have a very small pool of professionals to pull from nationally with less than 10% of advancement professionals (alumni relations, governmental relations, university relations and development) on the national level coming from diverse backgrounds. The development field, where the preponderance of our Division's employees work, has an even smaller percentage of diversity nationally. In an attempt to try and develop our own professional workforce, the Division has created two internships that hire two diversity interns from the Penn State student body per semester. This internship program is managed by the Diversity Committee, and the diversity interns ultimately report to the*

***Committee. In addition, the Alumni Association Program Development Team has created an internship that hires a diverse student each semester. Our short term goal is to retain the interns for full-time employment after graduation, yet our long term goal is more realistic. It is our hope and goal that the interns will consider Development and Alumni Relations should their careers refocus on working in academia.***

Finally, the accountability grid shows that some initiatives did not move forward. The Division may benefit from developing a more purposeful approach, developing measures and examining best practices to help determine which initiatives should be given priority.

***Response: The accountability grid is a very useful tool to help the Diversity Committee and the Division keep track of our priorities and allow us to achieve some of our initiatives to meet the Frameworks goals. As a committee we review each year what is most realistic regarding what we can and cannot take action on in that particular year. As we move into the second phase of the Framework timeframe, we will continue to discuss ways in which we can focus on our initiatives, meet our goals, and bring closure to all our incentives.***

### **Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ The report would have been strengthened by using the executive summary portion for Challenge 1 to highlight the numerous accomplishments and ongoing efforts detailed in the accountability grid rather than focusing on the diversity definition, which does not differ substantially from the definition reported in the 2004-09 diversity strategic plan.
- ❖ The distribution of the Division's diversity plan to all division managers is commendable.
- ❖ Disseminating information about diversity initiatives to alumni volunteers through the Alumni Volunteer Update and the Diversity Newswire and regularly auditing the content of materials to ensure they reflect or exceed the actual proportion of underrepresented populations at the University are important practices carried out by the Division.
- ❖ Using both Launchpad and the Diversity Newswire to promote diversity to employees is notable.
- ❖ Potential best practices: senior management's considerable support in meeting this Challenge (e.g., involvement in appointing members of the diversity committee, devoting one quarterly meeting per year to diversity) and the use of many communication formats to disseminate information. Data to support the efficacy of these efforts are still needed.

***Response: We intentionally use our strategic plan as a basis for our mid-progress report as a means to show that we not only understood the Framework, but that we had made some progress in regards to meeting the goals. We will focus on highlighting our successes more for the final report to be submitted in 2009. As a general practice, we request that all staff participants complete a survey after they complete Division-wide diversity training. We will incorporate feedback from DDAR employees and share the results of our community satisfaction survey with the 2009 Framework team.***

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

- ❖ Targeting diverse alumni who have lost touch with the University after graduation through programs such as the Black Alumni Reunions is noteworthy and could be further expanded.
- ❖ The Division utilizes the broad categories "Affirmative Action," "Valuing Differences," "Managing Diversity," and "Leveraging Diversity," which demonstrate an excellent understanding about how the efforts of this unit translate into a broader context.
- ❖ Ensuring that a welcoming climate for diverse groups is created for annual events and programs is commendable.
- ❖ A plan to implement Division-wide focus groups deserves priority.
- ❖ Overall, the incorporation of a spirit of diversity into many programs and venues demonstrates the Division's resourcefulness and is a potential best practice; however, the Division is encouraged to step up its efforts in areas identified in the accountability grid, as some initiatives appear to be overdue for implementation.

### **Representation (Access and Success)**

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

- ❖ Scholarships have been the primary focus of the Division under Challenge 3. The update would be strengthened by including the brochure “Diversity Efforts at Penn State” (<http://www.psu.edu/ur/diversity/DiversBro.pdf>) in an appendix, which more clearly explains the integral role scholarship funding plays in the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body.
- ❖ The Division’s multi-pronged approach to this Challenge is a model for other units.
- ❖ Targeted fund-raising efforts to benefit students from diverse racial/ethnic groups are commendable.
- ❖ FastStart, a mentorship triad which assigns a faculty or staff and an alumni mentor to each targeted student, is a potential best practice. Including retention data could establish it as a best practice.

*Response: Over the next two years of the Framework the coordinator for FastStart will work with Educational Equities, Diversity Analysts to run analysis on the numbers and corroborate the success of the program. We will publish those findings as a part of our committee’s initiatives.*

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

- ❖ More information is needed to assess the contribution of paid internship opportunities and work study programs to workforce diversity.
- ❖ The Division is commended for the significant percentage staff who are women (white), particularly in positions grade 26 and above. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the number of staff positions held by persons from diverse racial/ethnic groups.
- ❖ While training managers regarding the value of diversity and reviewing their hiring practices may be very helpful, absent a comprehensive plan, systemic change is unlikely to occur.

*Response: We will assess our success and failures of our work study and internship programs, but may not have answers for some time (e.g. did this encourage someone from a diverse background to stay or even go away and come back to DDAR at Penn State?). We are cognizant of the challenges in the hiring and retaining of a racial/ethnic diverse staff, and we continue to try and find ways, in addition to the diversity internship and work study programs already implemented, to diversify our staff. However, it is the biggest challenge we face. There are continuous efforts made toward educating our current staff and strengthening our candidate pool. At our November 19, 2007, Division-wide meeting we have planned Diversity training to help staff understand affirmative actions, what the Framework is trying to address and the importance of participating in the climate survey which we will conduct in the spring 2008.*

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ The Division did not address this Challenge. The Division is encouraged to explore how its mission might relate to this Challenge.

*Response: In the future we will put more emphasis on our co-curricular programs such as B&W Society, Lion Ambassadors, and FastStart. Our past efforts which were not listed in our accountability grid will be included in the grid in the future as a means to see how we can duplicate past successful efforts such as:*

- *Alumni Association contributed \$300,000 to education study abroad scholarships [2005];*
- *Centre County chapter sponsors yearly welcome ceremony for international students with the support of the Alumni Association;*
- *Kevin Barron and Deborah Marron from the Alumni Association traveled with President Spanier and Eva Pell, Dean of the Graduate School to a Beijing reception for Chinese alumni;*
- *Musical theatre tours (not international since 2002 but going to Asia in 2009);*
- *Taste of Penn State events are held each fall and spring with student leaders of diverse student organizations, administrators, and staff to meet with Alumni Council members to discuss ways to collaborate to enhance diversity events. Lion Ambassadors coordinated the event in fall 2006 and leadership training activities were added;*

- *FastStart hosts a Networking Etiquette Training Reception each fall and supports Career Services Steppin' Up Career Planning Conference for Multicultural Students with staff and student Advisory Board time to coordinate FastStart students;*
- *Blue and White Society co-hosted a fun activity with the FastStart Student Advisory Board to engage their members and FastStart students in a collaborative activity during the end of year functions for both groups;*
- *Student leader reception at beginning of semester (including diverse student groups);*
- *Supporting the "We Are ... Penn State" civility campaign.*

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ Including interview questions designed to assess a candidate's commitment to diversity and including issues of diversity in exit interviews will positively impact both this Challenge and Challenge 4.
- ❖ The Division falls very short with regard to the racial/ethnic diversity in administrative and executive leadership positions. The Division itself states, "Greater diversity will generate a broader range of involvement from our alumni as we seek to strengthen the University," thus it is hoped that this area receives much greater attention in the future.
- ❖ Diversity on the Alumni Council is commendable, with 15% of volunteers from diverse racial/ethnic groups and 40% female.
- ❖ The accountability grid clearly delineates problem areas under this Challenge, but the Division does not appear to have gained traction on how to address these problems.

*Response: As part of the interview process some units within the Division have begun to ask the candidates about their commitment to diversity. As a committee, we will work with our Division's Human Resources department to ensure that all units incorporate the commitment to diversity question into their interview priorities. We will also make an effort to work with our HR team to collect any exit interviews that are currently being conducted to assess any potential issues that former diverse employees may have faced. We will also encourage all units not already doing so to begin conducting exit interviews of all departing staff. We are currently developing a community climate survey to be administered to the DDAR Division employees in spring 2008. Hiring and retaining a racial/ethnic diverse staff is a high priority for our committee.*

*This past year one of our Asian-Pacific American alumni, David C. Han '88, '05g, began serving as the Alumni Association President. The Alumni Association supports alumni interest groups such as: LBGt groups, African American Alumni groups (AAAO of Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia), Hispanic/Latino and Asian-Pacific American Alumni Interest Groups, etc. The Alumni Association is meeting with organizers of the Black Alumni Reunion to help ensure the success of their event held every two years, the next one being held during the spring semester 2008. The PSAA is a proud sponsor of the annual American Indian Pow Wow. The Alumni Achievement Awards, which recognize the success of alumni 35 years of age and younger, have been consistently awarded to a diverse group of alumni: [http://www.alumni.psu.edu/awards/individual/achievement\\_rec2001.htm](http://www.alumni.psu.edu/awards/individual/achievement_rec2001.htm). Finally, the Alumni Council reflects a higher degree of diversity than the student population which is a goal of exec board and council and this mix is purposefully managed.*

*Hiring and retaining a diverse staff remains a high priority for the Division and despite the challenges, we remain optimistic that we will find ways to ensure that all is being done to support initiatives to address this challenge.*

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

- ❖ Formation of a standing committee on diversity with a well-defined mission and list of objectives, a well-defined agenda, and clear lines of accountability have led to many accomplishments in this area and is a model to be followed throughout the University.

*Response: While we are grateful for the positive feedback we received from the Framework team that reviewed our mid-progress report, we remain diligent and committed to doing an even better job as the Division's Diversity Committee as we head into the second phase of the Framework to Foster Diversity 2004-09.*