

PENNSTATE



Update

on Progress of
*A Framework to
Foster Diversity*
within the Office of
University Relations



December 2006

BACKGROUND

While University Relations is among the smallest budget units at Penn State, it plays a very large role in communicating the institution's commitment to diversity, and in helping to foster a campus environment that welcomes diversity and understands its critical role in the success of the University.

Since the publication of the *2004–09 Diversity Strategic Plan*, University Relations has been successful in continuing its efforts to promote diversity-related issues across the University and throughout the Commonwealth. Whether through television and print advertising, videos, Newswire stories, recruitment publications, speeches, events, or Web-based material, diversity has played a central role in all that the office has done.

This update is designed to highlight the steps that University Relations has been taking to respond to the challenges articulated in *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004–09*.



Strategic Plan to Foster Diversity 2004–09

In developing the *Diversity Strategic Plan for 2004–09*, University Relations attempted to look at all the things that it could do to include diversity within its communications, while developing new means to foster diversity at Penn State and better reflect the importance and value of diversity within the day-to-day operations of the departments within University Relations.

While some of the challenges that the *Framework* asks units to address do not apply to a small office such as University Relations as specifically as they do an academic college, the following summary attempts to look at each challenge presented in the *Framework* and list the efforts that University Relations has undertaken to meet those needs.

CHALLENGE 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

In the 2004–09 plan, University Relations listed its primary objective under this challenge as “developing and communicating consistent descriptions of Penn State’s diversity objectives and initiatives.” This objective has been accomplished through a number of means, both within the unit itself as well as in the work that is done for University-wide and external constituents.

We continue to widely promote diversity issues, minority faculty, student activities, and all aspects of University life related to diversity through our Penn State Diversity Newswire and our Penn State Live news Web site.



Stories are written and distributed on the Diversity Newswire and many of these same stories are distributed to hundreds of thousands of other Penn State Newswire subscribers and Penn State Live visitors.

During 2005, 46 Penn State Diversity Newswires were distributed with a total of 234 diversity-related stories.

As of September 1, 2006, we had distributed 34 Diversity Newswires during the current calendar year with a total of 158 stories.

CHALLENGE 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

Responding to campus climate issues is an important function of the Office of University Relations. We consistently monitor campus climate through participation on the Campus Environment Team via feedback from President's Council and the Academic Leadership Council, and correspondence to the President. During the past year, a number of important diversity issues the office was required to address had a major impact on campus climate. Among them: the lawsuit by Jennifer Harris against women's basketball coach Rene Portland; several CATA bus incidents involving altercations between drivers and minority students; the suicide in a campus apartment of the brother of an African American student; the murder of a black student in Ferguson Township; efforts by the College Republicans to stage "catch an illegal immigrant day"; conservative Christian ministers who verbally assaulted LGBT students; controversy over the artwork of a

That is a total of 80 Diversity Newswires in fewer than two years and 392 diversity-related stories during that period.

Internally, we have held staff meetings devoted solely to the topic of diversity and have tried to inspire the staff to extend the message of diversity into their activities across the community. A good example of this occurred when the assistant director of University Marketing incorporated diversity issues into Program Days for Leadership Centre County. (She is chair of the Program Committee.)

Jewish student that was perceived to be anti-Palestinian; lawsuits challenging the University's nondiscrimination and tolerance policies; concerns by women's groups over a statement made by Joe Paterno during an Orange Bowl press conference that seemed to make light of rape; and Muslim students concerned by an appearance by Salmon Rushdie, to name but a few of the issues that have come up since the 2004 report.

University Relations played a central role in trying to diffuse concerns on campus and throughout the community regarding each of the public issues.

More proactively, the assistant manager for video within Public Information has produced several projects in the past eighteen months that have focused on diversity aspects of the University. These include a video about the 1946 Penn State football team's decision not to play the



University of Miami, a segregated school that would not permit the Lions to bring along their African American players.

You can watch that video at this site:
http://x02.ur.psu.edu/video/the_game_that_wasnt_miami.html

He also produced another video for our Penn State Live news Web site that details how the Nittany Lion football team broke the color barrier at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas in 1947.

That video can be viewed at this site:
http://x02.ur.psu.edu/video/the_cotton_bowl.html



Calvin Waller, the first African American graduate of Penn State, is the subject of yet another video prepared by the office in 2005.

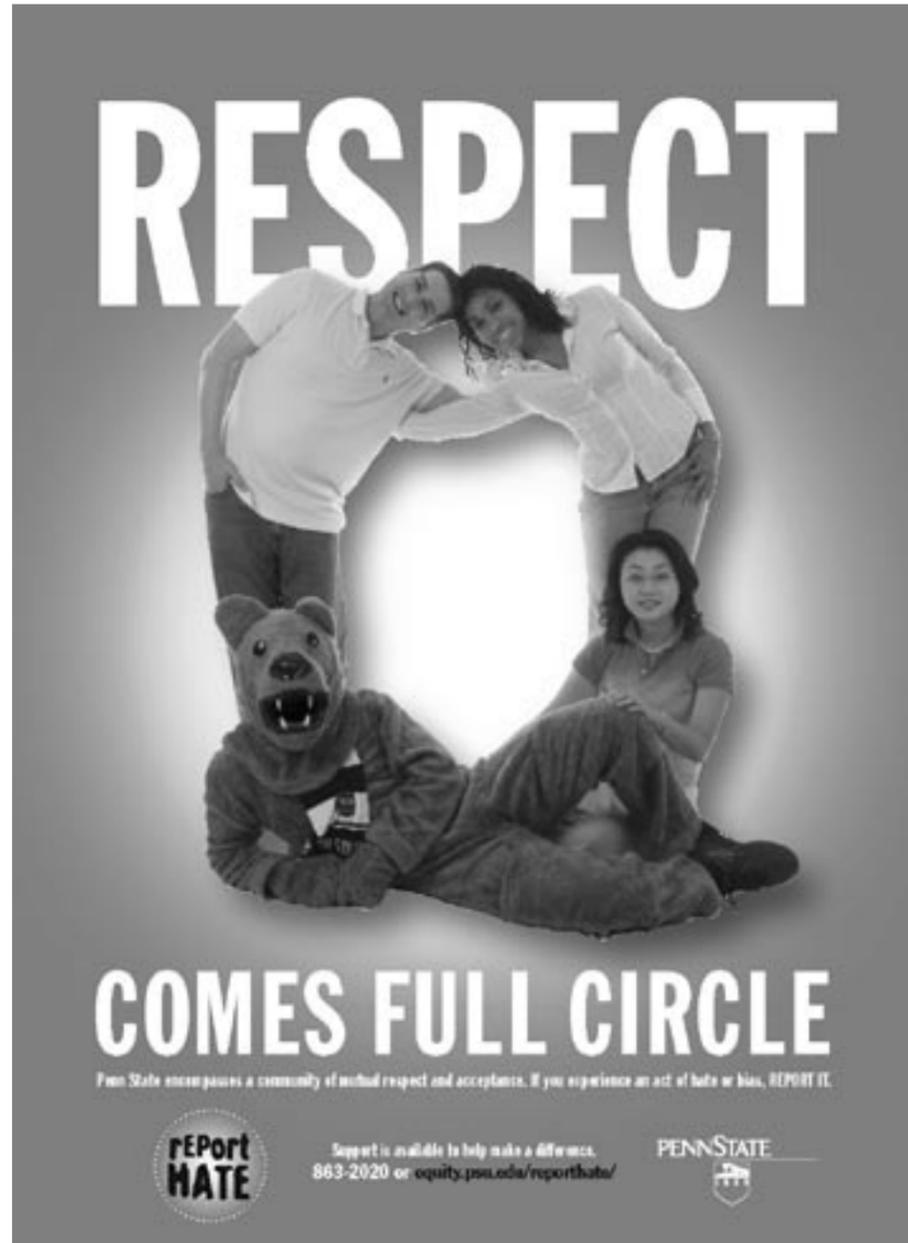
That video can be viewed at this site:
http://x02.ur.psu.edu/video/video_qtss/Calvin_H_Waller.mp4.html

In addition to the Calvin Waller video, the office prepared an article about Calvin Waller for the *Beaver Stadium Pictorial* magazine.



In concert with the University's Sesquicentennial, University Relations installed a historical marker commemorating Martin Luther King's 1965 visit to Penn State and included diversity in the various materials produced and distributed for the Sesquicentennial: a video, posters, special Web pages, magazine articles, Penn State Live stories, PowerPoint shows, etc.

University Publications works with most University units to ensure that diversity is included in all publications. In addition to numerous diversity-themed publications,



the department was actively involved in developing material for the Educational Equity Office's "Respect Comes Full

Circle" campaign, which was designed to promote civility and respect among all faculty, staff, and students.

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

Since the report of 2004, University Relations has continued its aggressive efforts to portray diversity in all Penn State publications, advertisements, and other recruitment vehicles.

As in past years, the cast in the 2006–07 Teen Campaign, a University Marketing initiative, is diverse. Close to half of the cast appearing across all the materials are non-Caucasian. Images from the marketing effort are portrayed on pages within this document, as are images from other Penn State publications that were designed by University Publications.

University Relations works with many colleges and units to assist in incorporating

diversity as a key element in recruitment material. A good example is a major marketing initiative with the College of Agricultural Sciences. As part of the project, University Marketing has been heavily involved in the casting of a diverse group of students who appear in the photos and videos used to promote the college to prospective high school students.

The goal articulated in 2004 that has not been fully realized is an aspiration to develop greater linkages with African American communities in the Commonwealth's major metropolitan areas. In the past, advertisements (both print and radio) have been specifically developed and



targeted to inner-city minority youth, but the elimination (because of budget considerations) of our Philadelphia area director has limited our success in establishing contacts in this area of work, and additional work needs to be done to strengthen personal contacts within those communities.

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

The three main efforts that were identified in the 2004 report were an intention to provide internships and wage-payroll opportunities to open the door for women and minorities within the office; to provide job flexibility, professional development training, and educational opportunities for all staff; and to hold each director within University Relations accountable for encouraging awareness of diversity within their units.

We have succeeded in expanding the diversity of the office (e.g., African American female intern for a year, white female intern, and Asian female wage-payroll into a newly created position) and have also been able to take additional steps to support recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce at Penn State.

In 2007, the Office of University Relations will be hosting an Administrative Fellow for the first time. This will provide an important opportunity to have an under-represented individual involved with the office for a year, playing a strong role in highly visible initiatives.

Working with the Office of Human Resources, University Marketing developed a proposal to secure funding for a special marketing initiative to attract minority employees to Penn State. The plan is being implemented by OHR. As part of the project, the department oversaw photography for use in employee recruitment and at career fairs. In addition, University Marketing is providing advice and review on a new microsite focused on the recruitment of employees to the University and featuring videos that specifically focus on attributes important to prospective minority employees. (The microsite was one of the initiatives outlined in the funding proposal.)

Over the past two years two of the graphic design staff from University Publications participated in Vocational Mentoring Day by mentoring four students. The day is designed to bring students with disabilities into the workplace where they learn firsthand about a career to promote their employment through job shadowing, mentoring, and career exploration activities.

Also within University Marketing, the director of the department and the marketing research manager mentor minority students through the FastStart program sponsored by the Alumni Association. The director mentors two students and the research manager one.

**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**

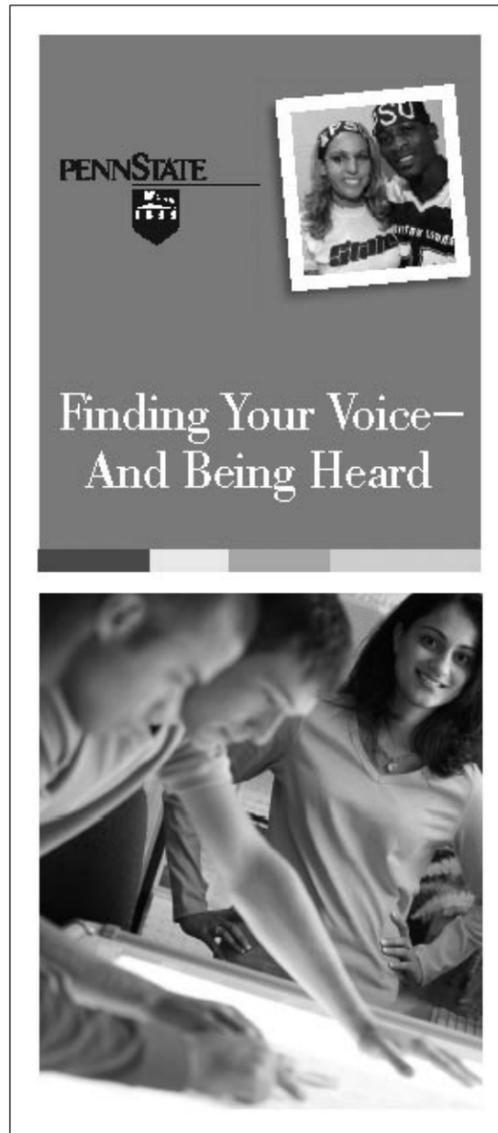
As mentioned earlier, University Relations will host an Administrative Fellow in 2007. This program has been highly successful in providing women and minorities with opportunities to strengthen their administrative talents and qualifications, thus opening doors to greater diversity within the University's leadership and management.

With a low turnover in employees, University Relations does not have the hiring opportunities of many larger units at Penn State, but we have recently been able to promote two female managers and an African American male, and will continue to look for opportunities to increase the diversity of leadership within the unit.

In the 2004 report, we indicated our desire to support the professional development of all employees within University Relations, and indeed, the entire staff has had the opportunity to participate in professional development exercises.

The employee recruitment campaign that we have helped design for Human Resources should also prove effective in bringing a greater diversity of applicants to management positions.

As we indicated in the 2004 report, in public statements issued by University Relations on behalf of Penn State, we plan to continue to emphasize the need for diversity. We have responded aggressively to situations that have challenged the University's commitment to a more diverse environment and will continue to do so to ensure a climate that is welcoming to all employees and students.





**CHALLENGE 7:
Coordinating Organizational Change to Support our Diversity Goals**

In the 2004 plan we committed to emphasizing diversity in our advertising and marketing efforts, Web pages, publications, and public statements. We believe that we have had success in each of these areas, as reflected by the images reproduced on many of the pages of this report.

Success in hiring a more diverse workforce remains somewhat problematic, given the sparse turnover, loss of positions due to budget cuts, and the challenge of the local demographic for staff-level positions. But we will continue to pursue all means available to diversify search pools if openings do occur, and to work with Human Resources and other Penn State resources to reach out to more diverse candidates.

Over the past three years we have had strong success with the Diversity Newswire (which currently has 890 subscribers), and will continue to promote it as a source of news about Penn State's diverse climate.

The challenge in this area that we have yet to accomplish is in establishing more meaningful links with underrepresented communities. With the loss of our Philadelphia area University Relations office (due to budget cutbacks) we have lost our prime contact to the African American community in Philadelphia, and we need to find a way to reestablish a personal connection there, as well as in other communities across Pennsylvania.



CONCLUSION

Diversity plays a central role in the work of all the departments that compose University Relations. While we always have room for improvement, we feel that we have made substantial progress in meeting the goals that were articulated in 2004. We are committed to continuing our efforts to advance the cause of diversity within our unit and across the University.

PENN STATE *Making Life Better*

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Produced by the Penn State Department of University Publications U.Ed. URL 07-08