

**Feedback on Final Update on Progress Implementing
A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09
Penn State Berks
Spring 2010**

Penn State Berks (PSB) has prepared a thoughtful response to the assessment questions in its update. In response to feedback in 2007, PSB clarified its definition of diversity to recognize differences and the contributions of all Campus constituents. The inclusive membership of the Diversity Committee and the visible commitment of the Chancellor, top administrators, and academic divisions to diversity are commendable. The Campus' movement to an enrollment management model that integrates recruitment and retention efforts is a best practice in higher education. Widely disseminating ads for open positions and proactively seeking to increase the diversity of candidate pools for faculty, staff, and administrative positions are commendable.

The update could have been strengthened by more narrative and use of performance indicators. An introduction would have been helpful. A lack of data throughout limits a realistic assessment of progress. In many cases, initiatives were listed as "complete" or "not complete" with no additional information. The two documents, Berks Update 2004-09 and Berks Challenge Questions 2010-15, were not always consistent. In some instances, initiatives were referred to in the Berks Challenge Questions 2010-15, but not mentioned in the update. Future reporting would be strengthened by the inclusion of metrics demonstrating how strategic goals will be accomplished and by the identification of key people responsible for implementing these goals.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Assessing outcomes for PSB's signature programs, such as Unity Day and International Orientation, would be helpful in determining their effectiveness.
- ❖ PSB has an inclusive understanding of diversity. It uses a variety of communication media (Web, listservs, posters, programs, announcements) to disseminate information to all Campus constituents.
- ❖ The broad and inclusive membership of the Diversity Committee, the existence of diversity subcommittees in the academic divisions, and the involvement of the Multicultural/International Office in promoting diversity Campus-wide are noteworthy.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The 2007 mid-point report to the 2004-09 Framework stated, "We have a better understanding for climate issues for our students but not for our staff and faculty." It is therefore surprising that no faculty and staff climate survey was conducted between 2004 and 2009. PSB plans to review the 2008 Faculty/Staff Survey results with respect to faculty satisfaction. A similar review of staff opinions is advised.
- ❖ PSB assesses the ASPIRE and New Student Orientation programs to determine their effectiveness in promoting diversity. PSB is also encouraged to assess its cultural programs and activities to determine their effectiveness in contributing to a welcoming Campus climate. As indicated in the 2007 feedback, such a coordinated approach to assessment is a potential best practice.
- ❖ While there is a diversity page on the PSB Web site, it is currently only available from the "About Us" page. More prominent display may lead to greater access.
- ❖ What was learned from the Diversity Forums conducted to gauge classroom climate for underrepresented students? What actions have been taken as a result of those forums?
- ❖ More information about the multicultural mentors and early alert system would be helpful.
- ❖ Visible support for diversity by the Chancellor, Chief Student Affairs Officer, and faculty sets the tone for a welcoming Campus climate.
- ❖ Using NSSE, the Zero Tolerance for Hate Network, the Student Satisfaction Survey, and the New Student Orientation Survey to identify climate issues, and training faculty to facilitate productive discussions are excellent ways of promoting a welcoming Campus climate.
- ❖ A well-thought-out and holistic process is in place to respond to Campus incidents of intolerance.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ PSB should consider how the successes of the new enrollment management model, the summer bridge program, and early intervention efforts with the Latino community may be extended to other underrepresented groups.
- ❖ Since the mid-point report, a professional has been hired to work with adult learners. It would be interesting to learn what new efforts to address the needs of adult learners are now underway.
- ❖ PSB is encouraged to assess the impact of programs bringing middle and high school students to Campus.
- ❖ PSB is commended for expanding the Berks Retention Council into an Enrollment Management Council that includes recruitment.
- ❖ The commitment to hire an admissions counselor with bilingual skills is commendable.
- ❖ The Disability Expo planned for spring 2010 is a potential best practice.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ As was the case in the 2007 mid-point review, employee retention efforts still rely mostly on faculty mentoring. More strategic focus on retention is recommended.
- ❖ PSB is to be commended for its wide dissemination of ads for faculty and staff vacancies, its proactive attempts to increase the diversity of candidate pools, and the requirement of diversity training for search committee members. What metrics are used to evaluate these efforts?
- ❖ Diversity forums are mentioned as a retention strategy for faculty and staff from underrepresented groups. How has the impact of the forums been evaluated?
- ❖ More information about the *Woven in Words* project would be useful.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The action items in initiative 5.D are listed as “Completed.” More details would be helpful.
- ❖ PSB is commended for conducting an “Internationalization” Committee Survey. Results would be useful information to provide in this update. Direct measurement of the success of such initiatives is recommended.
- ❖ PSB’s efforts to internationalize course offerings are commendable.
- ❖ PSB is making excellent progress in offering embedded study abroad, international internship experiences and service learning opportunities. The establishment of an international travel fund, the appreciable percentage of faculty taking students or teaching abroad, and the interest of faculty in the Fulbright Scholar Program are all commendable.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ No initiatives are included in the 2004-09 strategic plan update under Challenge 6.
- ❖ PSB has made significant progress since 2001 in diversifying leadership and management in terms of gender as evidenced by the current composition of its Administrative Council.
- ❖ PSB is to be commended for supporting the appointment of an underrepresented faculty member to a senior administrative position, for widely advertising leadership positions to increase the diversity of applicant pools, and for requiring diversity training for committee members. The review team encourages PSB to continue using these strategies.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ No initiatives are included in the 2004-09 strategic plan update under Challenge 7.
- ❖ An active Diversity Committee with subcommittees in Academic Divisions, a Multicultural and International Coordinator, a bilingual Admissions Counselor, and the commitment of financial resources to diversity initiatives all point to an evolving organizational culture that supports diversity.
- ❖ Incorporating diversity in the Campus’s strategic plan and ensuring accountability through the Staff Review and Development (SRDP) process firmly integrates diversity into PSB’s organizational culture and is a potential best practice.