

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

Penn State Harrisburg has been proactive in its efforts to pursue diversity on its campus. Various diversity initiatives for faculty, staff, and students are outlined in the update, and the College is commended for providing clear metrics for these programs as well as benchmarks for future diversity goals. However, planned action steps based on assessment results are largely missing from the update. For example, two-, four-, and five-year retention and graduation rates are reported, but there is no indication if the rates reported represent goals that were met.

RESPONSE: As noted under Challenge 3, section 2, the stated goal of the college is to, “achieve a retention rate for underrepresented groups at or above the University’s average minority retention rate.” Retention rates for the Penn State Harrisburg Fall 2004 through Fall 2009 minority student cohort are comparable to minority retention at University Park and exceed minority retention at University College.

The review team acknowledges the successful strides made in recruitment of faculty, staff and students from diverse racial/ethnic groups and recommends increased efforts toward retention of these populations. In addition, the team encourages the College to include other diverse persons in its recruitment and retention efforts, including those who are financially challenged, LGBT, veterans, returning adults, and part-time, as well as persons with disabilities. ***RESPONSE: The Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State Harrisburg 2010-2015 defines diversity as follows:***

The college continues to define diversity in its broadest sense: “The strength and resilience of a living community is a reflection of its diversity. The exclusion or removal of any group or individual from the community disrupts the dynamic interrelationships essential to the community, diminishing its integrity and well-being. Only communities rich in diversity are able to respond to a changing environment.” College diversity initiatives are comprehensive and directed toward inclusion and acceptance of underrepresented groups within the college community including gender, international, ethnic, and racial groups, individuals with disabilities, military veterans, returning adult students, and persons of all sexual orientations.

Overall, the College offers various avenues for students to engage in a diverse learning environment, however, the team encourages increased efforts in providing mentoring, leadership, and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Although the College’s goal of creating and distributing an annual report on its progress towards diversity goals was not met during the review period, the team looks forward to this reporting in the 2010-15 planning cycle.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ The review team recommends that the College broaden its definition of diversity and expand its reporting of underrepresented/underserved populations accordingly. ***RESPONSE: See above.***
- ❖ The College is commended for exceeding its cultural/arts programming goal and encouraged to further assess these programs to ascertain why certain events were better attended than others.
- ❖ The increase in traffic to the college diversity Web site is notable.
- ❖ Potential best practice: Inclusion of campus events on community-based Web sites and public radio stations.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Regularly held faculty, staff, and student diversity forums are positive additions to campus efforts in creating a welcoming climate. How are topics chosen? The review team suggests consideration of programs geared toward persons with disabilities, adult learners, veterans, and LGBT persons. ***RESPONSE: All of the college’s programs and services are open to all members of the college***

community. Additionally, special programming is provided for and by persons in each of the categories mentioned above. In the past year, the College has hosted nearly fifty programs designed to increase understanding and awareness regarding students of color, LGBTQ students, veterans, adult learners and international students.

- ❖ The College is commended for the results of its 2008 NSSE, particularly the data indicating that 79% of seniors rated their overall experiences as good or excellent. However, the data are not disaggregated, so the satisfaction level of diverse students is unknown. Efforts to obtain meaningful, disaggregated student satisfaction data are strongly encouraged. **RESPONSE:** *This instrument is administered nationally by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. NSSE institutional data reports are standardized to compare freshman and senior student responses. These reports do not disaggregate data to show minority response. NSSE is administered every three years. In the off years, the college administers the Noel/Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory and participates in the Office of Student Affairs satisfaction survey, which enables the college to identify the responses of underrepresented students.*
- ❖ Best Practice: Use of 2003 climate assessment data to aid in future planning and achievement of diversity goals.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The College is commended for increasing its enrollment of undergraduate and graduate underrepresented/underserved students. What plans are in place to continue this upward trend? **RESPONSE:** *The Penn State Harrisburg Admissions Office works closely with the college's Multicultural Recruitment and Community Affairs Office to develop specialized recruitment activities focused at underrepresented/underserved students. This collaborative effort will continue.*
- ❖ Additional information is needed regarding the Milton S. Hershey School's senior student college transition program. The program is not coordinated by Penn State Harrisburg; what is its contribution to diversity efforts at Harrisburg? **RESPONSE:** *This program, now inactive, was designed to assist a local high school in addressing what they saw as one of their most important diversity challenges. MSH took the lessons learned from their experiences at Penn State Harrisburg and developed their own on-campus program.*
- ❖ Potential best practice: Implementation of a minimum of one summer outreach program for the high school to college transition of underrepresented/underserved students. Does the College plan to explore means of expanding these programs?

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The College is commended for its success in meeting and/or exceeding its goals for recruitment of faculty and staff from diverse racial/ethnic groups. Has assessment been conducted to identify factors that contributed to success? For example, was the diversity composition of search committees augmented? **RESPONSE:** *Search committees are diverse.*
- ❖ Were applicant pools expanded? Were diversity-related activities included in position announcements? Does the College plan to track retention of these employees? **RESPONSE:** *Applicant pools were expanded and diversity-related activities were included in the job announcement.*
- ❖ The update acknowledges that the goal of increasing participation by women and underrepresented/underserved faculty and staff in "The Penn State Leader" and "Mastering Supervision" was not met. Has the College assessed why this goal was not met (funding, lack of interest, uncooperative supervisors, etc.)? The review team encourages the College to expand these efforts to include diversity-related programs or topics that have been identified in the College's climate survey/assessment and to consider more professional development opportunities for staff. **RESPONSE:** *The time commitment required for Mastering Supervision contributes to the low participation rate.*
- ❖ The goal of having at least one college representative participating on each University-level diversity-related commission/council is laudable. The review team recommends caution against over-extending the

same core group of people, and suggests implementation of a means to prevent committee service fatigue among diverse faculty, staff, and students. **RESPONSE:** *No individual is being asked to serve on multiple committees.*

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The College's goal of having each of its five academic schools offer a minimum of one international study tour course per year is notable; it is particularly impressive that four of the five schools offered such a course during the 2004-09 planning cycle. The review team suggests follow-up with international study participants to evaluate the impact of educational experiences abroad. **RESPONSE:** *During 2008-2009, a faculty committee (one faculty member from each of the five academic school and the lead faculty designer of the Undergraduate Certificate in Global Studies) was established to develop the college's international strategic plan. The committee has recommended a pre/ post assessment of global competence for student participation in international study tour courses. The recommendation is under consideration.*
- ❖ The team encourages the College to identify opportunities for faculty to increase international/intercultural participation through partnerships with other universities. **RESPONSE:** *In Spring 2010, Penn State Harrisburg began conversations with the Nitte Educational Trust and its affiliated institutions in Southern India with a focus on business and engineering programs. Representatives from the Nitte group visited the college and representatives from the college's schools of Business Administration and Science, Engineering, and Technology visited southern India. The College is also working on a letter of intent with Kyonggi University in Seoul for a 1+3 program (First year at Kyonggi University, three years at Penn State Harrisburg). Penn State Harrisburg has participated in these initiatives in consultation with the Office of Global Programs*
- ❖ Adding select diversity courses to the University's E-Learning Cooperative is a positive step. Are efforts in place to measure student participation in these courses?
- ❖ The goal of publishing an annual report of scholarly contributions in the study of diversity was not met; what next steps are planned toward achievement of this goal?
- ❖ It is unclear how the B.S. in Criminal Justice, offered now in partnership with World Campus, contributes to college diversity goals. **RESPONSE:** *The Criminal Justice curriculum provides students with the opportunity and assistance to acquire knowledge of the roles of policing, courts, laws, and corrections as they relate to both the adult and juvenile justice system. Students also gain knowledge of the history, concepts, and critical issues related to the role of gender and race/ethnicity in the criminal justice system, victimology, and ethics in criminal justice.*

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Efforts to create a database of women and community leaders from diverse racial/ethnic groups are commendable. How will these data be used? **RESPONSE:** *The data are being used to recruit individuals to college advisory boards.*
- ❖ The update notes that women and underrepresented/underserved persons account for 25% of the College's Board of Advisors. How will this level of representation be increased? **RESPONSE:** *As board vacancies occur, women and individuals from underrepresented/underserved groups are nominated to fill some vacancies.*

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The goal of presenting periodic updates of diversity planning and progress at various meetings and forums is noteworthy; however, the review team encourages the College to be more proactive in order to affect organizational change. Beyond planning, purposeful action steps are necessary. **RESPONSE:** *As a part of yearly strategic planning updates, all units of the College are required to report on progress toward diversity goals.*