

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

The Lehigh Valley campus has undergone major changes within the 2004-09 reporting period. The Campus separated from Berks in the 2005 reorganization and moved to a much larger facility during the summer of 2009. Separation from Berks required the Campus to redefine its efforts from the previous report; the Campus was encouraged at that time to have a plan in place by 2008. In effect, the mid-term progress report was essentially Lehigh Valley's first report regarding diversity.

Gains have been made in forming a separate diversity committee and an Enrollment Management Team. However, there has been little to no progress made in measuring and assessing the diversity efforts outlined in the report. Few specifics have been included regarding any effort to recruit and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff beyond previous reports. The stress of a move to a new campus may have hampered efforts in writing the report; it lacks metrics, strategic indicators, and prioritization—suggesting commitment, but lacking intentionality.

**Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations**

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

- ❖ The split of the Wellness Committee with the Diversity Committee is applauded. The Campus' definition of diversity would be enriched by explicit definitions of the targeted groups.
- ❖ Reference to the 2004-09 plan having been scrapped in 2005 is unclear.
- ❖ Diversity information is distributed in multiple venues; the diversity website concept in particular is commendable, but needs to be developed further. The list of contacts for groups is excellent, but diversity activities are linked to the general activities calendar.
- ❖ The site uses the 2007 update as the 2004-09 plan, suggesting that a new plan was not crafted. This reference is unclear. Clarification is needed regarding the diversity plan; specifically, does a separate plan exist, or is the diversity plan only embedded in the general strategic plan?
- ❖ It is admirable to include faculty and staff in the feedback process during the strategic planning process.
- ❖ Efforts made with the New Student Orientation, Cultural Events series, and the First Year Experience are all positive. More details would be helpful; for example, were these efforts assessed formally beyond attendance, and if so, what were the results?
- ❖ Measures of success lack detail. In particular, are the "reflections" from cultural event participants anecdotal or systematic? Are the student satisfaction surveys focused on diversity in some part? Intentionality is important.
- ❖ The report states that acts of intolerance are logged should they occur, but there is no indication of raw numbers or frequency. Are logged acts reported to the Affirmative Action Office? Supporting data would strengthen reporting

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

- ❖ It is commendable that awareness of campus climate is considered a priority for all departments.
- ❖ The report indicates that the Office of Student Affairs, bearing primary responsibility for addressing concerns related to diversity, "actively seeks feedback and discussion about diversity issues." How is this accomplished?
- ❖ The review team acknowledges that plans are underway to implement a faculty/staff climate survey in 2010. The Campus' 2007 mid-term progress update indicated that a baseline survey was to be completed in 2008, but there is no mention of that survey in the current update. Was that survey implemented, and if so, what were the results?
- ❖ It is commendable that faculty and staff have shown more excitement and interest in diversity programming. Has this increased engagement been assessed in any way?
- ❖ It appears that many, if not most, campus processes are decentralized. Who coordinates these operations? How is accountability ensured?

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

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

- ❖ It is commendable that the Enrollment Management Team, created in fall 2009, meets weekly to “discuss issues of recruiting and retaining a diverse student body.”
- ❖ Most of the reported actions targeted towards recruitment and retention do not specifically focus on diverse students. Is there a plan in place that specifically addresses recruitment and retention of underrepresented students?
- ❖ The number of scholarships awarded has increased along with the number of students receiving financial aid. Do aid and scholarships fit into a larger plan to attract diverse students to Lehigh Valley? If so, how?
- ❖ The percentage of non-white students (22.6%) at Lehigh Valley is highly commendable. The report does not describe how this was accomplished, or how campus leadership intends to continue this upward trend.
- ❖ A Diversity Ombudsperson was identified as a goal in the 2007 mid-term progress update. Has this position been established?

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

- ❖ The Campus encourages search committees to consider diverse applicants, but no details are given regarding how (or if) diversity of applicant pools is attained.
- ❖ The Web has been used as a recruiting tool for applicants in general. Has this practice increased the number of diverse applicants and/or hires? Does the campus conduct external searches for staff vacancies?
- ❖ The creation of a mentoring program is an excellent tool for faculty retention. Is there a similar program in place for retention of staff?

### **Education and Scholarship**

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

- ❖ The Civic Engagement minor, the OLEAD program, and collaboration with the University of Turabo are all good efforts to support multiculturalism. Details regarding enrollments in these programs would be helpful. What strategic indicators are in place to gauge success?
- ❖ Diversity has been integrated into the curricula in multiple settings. Data indicating the number of participants in international and multicultural events would be helpful.
- ❖ Building units addressing diversity into the First Year Experience courses is a positive step.
- ❖ International travel and study opportunities for honors students are impressive; similar opportunities for underrepresented students would be commendable.

### **Institutional Viability and Vitality**

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

- ❖ Campus leaders are involved with diversity efforts through multiple internal groups. Are they involved in the community as well?
- ❖ Search committees are “encouraged” to review resumes from the Diversity Applicant Pool, and to identify candidates showing evidence of diverse backgrounds, but no information is given regarding the attempt to create diverse applicant pools.
- ❖ The report states that Lehigh Valley attracted a “variety” of candidates for its DAA position. How diverse was the applicant pool, and were underrepresented candidates interviewed?

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

- ❖ It is commendable that diversity is one of the Campus’ eight guiding principles.
- ❖ Future departmental reorganizations are planned to ensure the achievement of diversity goals. Have any such reorganizations been implemented in the past five years?
- ❖ Use of the Progress Matrix is a transparent way to inform the Campus of progress towards diversity goals.
- ❖ The acquisition of the new campus building has the potential to help the Lehigh Valley campus to potentially increase and meet diversity goals. Will this occur intentionally?