

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

Penn State New Kensington's final update for *A Framework to Foster Diversity at Penn State: 2004-09* demonstrates an effective and balanced approach that appears to permeate through most campus stakeholder groups. Keeping diversity expenses connected to a comprehensive campus budget with an increase in funding for specific diversity initiatives is noteworthy. Diversity programs such as the *Safe Zone Program*, *Wheel of Respect*, *Global Initiatives* (i.e., an annual international program that focuses on specific countries), and emphasis on faculty and staff being recognized in their faculty reviews and staff evaluations for participation in diversity programming are commendable. Initiatives that enrich the environment for the adult learner community demonstrate a breadth of diversity initiatives. Additionally, the development of a campus diversity team is laudable.

Strong results for hiring diverse faculty and staff are notable. The review team cautions against setting higher workload expectations for these individuals under "other duties as assigned" in comparison to faculty and staff who are not among underrepresented/underserved groups as the increased time commitment may take time away from their primary role. The update is very sound tactically. Increased emphasis could be placed on refining strategic partnerships, such as enhancing the International Program Committee's role of exploring multi-year Memoranda of Agreement with select global university partners. This agreement can possibly provide long-term stability for travel and in-depth study abroad that can potentially benefit students and faculty in pursuing ongoing research. Infusing the international program by starting the "Diversity Competency Series" at Burrell High School is a potential best practice and demonstrates important linkages from college-based programs to high school curricula, which may have a positive effect on high school students' diversity appreciation.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Placing prominence on people flourishing because of their differences is a novel view of diversity that could be shared with other units.
- ❖ A focus on the distribution of diversity programming messages is apparent and should evolve as trends in students' adoption of new media norms change.
- ❖ The *Wheel of Respect* program could be considered for implementation by student leaders at other campuses.
- ❖ Determining which diversity programs are going to receive strategic emphasis will be important in view of declining campus revenues.

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ Setting standards for desired response times for reported incidents of discrimination against any individual or underrepresented/underserved group such as outlined by the GLBT committee is commended.
- ❖ Quantifying daily usage of the Adult Learner Resource Center and holding an annual open house are notable.
- ❖ Identifying specific faculty and staff members as *Safe Zone* participants/advocates provides important community building for students, faculty and staff.

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ Sustaining and refining the programming currently in place at Penn Hills High School, Valley High School, Pittsburgh schools and at high schools with Talent Search programs, such as Clairton, Aliquippa, Farrell, New Kensington, Arnold and Sharon, will be important for sustaining a long-term enrollment base at New Kensington.

- ❖ Offering scholarships for low-income and underrepresented/underserved populations is praiseworthy and could help drive enrollment growth.
- ❖ The Campus may realize additional enrollments from its efforts to develop and offer programs such as FIRSTE, which introduces pre-college girls to STEM fields.
- ❖ Enhancing the funds available for low-income students to enroll in the summer “math boot camp” is positive; most likely there will be increased demand and need for the funding.

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ Attendance at professional development programs such as the “Cultural Competency Workshop” is identified for staff members but not for faculty.
- ❖ The baseline year from which new hires are measured was unclear.
- ❖ Hiring nine and retaining seven from underrepresented/underserved groups is a result of good hiring processes and ongoing retention efforts. Additionally, appointing a Diversity Advocate on each hiring committee is commendable and is a potential best practice.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The year-long country of focus program is a potential best practice.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Having the chancellor appoint a diversity advocate on each hiring committee is noteworthy and is a potential best practice that evidences a commitment to diversify leadership and management.

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The new vision and mission established since the arrival of the new chancellor solidifies the importance of preparing students to be competitive in a global environment, collaborating across the University, and using outreach partnerships that enhance quality of life and economic development in the area.
- ❖ Emphasis on development activities that have generated an endowment for global initiatives is particularly commendable and identifies New Kensington as a campus with a significant international perspective.