

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

While Penn State Schuylkill (PSS) has done a good job of differentiating its plan from the activities conducted by the former Capital College, there are still some confusing vestiges of the previous combined College plan in this update. It is often unclear how much of this update specifically pertains to Schuylkill itself, in contrast to Capital College including Schuylkill. Additionally, some initiatives that were described in the original plan are not mentioned in the final update, perhaps because they were initiatives specific to Penn State Harrisburg. For example, none of the priorities listed in Schuylkill's blue italic responses to the mid-point feedback report were addressed in this update. It would be helpful to reference these initiatives and explain why they are no longer part of Penn State Schuylkill's plan. Finally, it is clear that one of the top priorities moving forward will be to assess the climate for diversity on the campus.

Campus Climate and Intergroup Relations

Challenge 1: Developing a Shared and Inclusive Understanding of Diversity

- ❖ Penn State Schuylkill has done a good job developing its own definition of diversity.
- ❖ The former Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs position seemed primarily focused on student initiatives, limiting the scope of the position's influence. PSS is encouraged to include faculty and staff initiatives within the purview of the new Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives position. ***RESPONSE: The new Coordinator of Residence Life and Diversity Initiatives will continue to focus on student initiatives, while Dr. Charles Law, Academic Program Coordinator for Diversity, will focus on faculty initiatives, and the Diversity Committee, which will include these two staff members, will address staff and broader diversity initiatives.***
- ❖ Schuylkill is commended for offering many different diversity activities. Of particular note are the Multicultural Academic Excellence Program (MAEP) and United Minority Leaders (UML) Program. Attendance data and other outcomes/assessments would help determine the impact of these programs. ***RESPONSE: These programs have been discontinued due mainly to their poor attendance and lack of student interest. Many student leaders of color have shifted their interest [such as the NAACP, Faith Alive, and support and involvement with the Diversity within Community theme] to more inclusive/accepting groups and programs than these initiatives that at times became exclusionary in nature.***
- ❖ Designating 2009-2010 as a teaching year on the theme of "diversity within community" is an innovative and powerful strategy. It is potentially a best practice that others units could adopt. More information about this initiative is needed. ***RESPONSE: As part of the EOPC grant report which is forthcoming, a final report on the Diversity within Community theme will be completed this summer. The final report will be attached to this document as an appendix. To date, we have focused on ensuring that the theme and the Penn State Principles, which are linked to the theme's implementation, are widely displayed in every office and classroom on campus and through several banners on the campus mall, library, and Student Affairs suite area.***

Challenge 2: Creating a Welcoming Campus Climate

- ❖ The mid-point update (December 2006) indicated that the Campus would decide on an appropriate survey tool to measure climate and would conduct climate assessments on a regular basis. It is unclear why this has not yet been accomplished and why it appears again in this update as a "to do." ***RESPONSE: This is due in large part to several position vacancies and the new structure and start up of the Diversity Committee. Despite these setbacks, Dr. Charles Law's class which focuses on student assessment around diversity discussions has conducted focus groups on the cultural climate of the campus. The campus has also participated in the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) twice during the 2004-2009 report. Results of the SSI are used by the Retention Management Team, which meets bi-weekly, to assess and address overall student body concerns as well as individual student issues that are identified.***

- ❖ The Community Assessment and Response Team (CART) was mentioned in the 2004-09 plan and was cited as a potential best practice by the mid-point review team. It is therefore confusing that there is no mention of this team in the final update. Was this a Capital College initiative? **RESPONSE: Yes**
- ❖ The update indicates the Campus has launched a major initiative focused on “Living the Penn State Principles.” More information about what this initiative involves would be appreciated. **RESPONSE:**
 - *Through Penn State Schuylkill’s teaching theme of Diversity within Community, there is emphasis on the Penn State Principles throughout the academic and co-curricular programming across campus. The campus theme of “diversity within community” connects with each of the Penn State Principles in the following ways: Principle One—I will respect the dignity of all individuals within the Penn State community. (Respect for diversity in all its aspects). Principle Two—I will practice academic integrity. (A strong and close-knit academic community is strengthened or weakened by the relative degree of integrity evidenced by the members of the community.) Principle Three—I will demonstrate social and personal responsibility. (Again, community depends upon the degree of responsibility assumed by each of its members.) Principle Four—I will be responsible for my own academic progress and agree to comply with all University policies. (Community depends upon the degree of responsibility assumed by each member for their own actions.) The teaching theme and principles are communicated and modeled in multiple ways including such examples such as,*
 - *Visibly in publications, banners, office and classroom signage*
 - *Academically through classroom assignments, discussions, and pedagogy*
 - *Co-curricularly through leadership position development, the Student Government Associations initiatives, and programmatic discussions and the Civility Discussion Series*
 - *Minor in Civic and Community Engagement and campus emphasis on community service and public scholarship.*
- ❖ The update indicates that the Campus’s commitment to creating diversity among faculty and staff is integrated into all position searches, but does not describe how this is done. Details are needed. (This is also applicable to Challenge 4.) **RESPONSE: In both faculty and staff searches, the Director of Academic Affairs and/or the Manager of Human Resources reviews reported racial and ethnic data for candidates and consults with the respective Search Committee Chair to do all possible to ensure finalist pools that are as diverse as possible. Each search committee is charged to seek diverse applicant and finalist pools.**
- ❖ Requiring a diversity section in every First Year Experience class is commendable. (This is also applicable to Challenge 5.)
- ❖ Including diversity-related accomplishments as part of the selection process for key administrative positions on campus is a potential best practice. (This is also applicable to Challenge 6.)

Representation (Access and Success)

Challenge 3: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Student Body

- ❖ The 2004-09 plan mentioned student focus groups. Information about when these took place, who participated and what were the results would be helpful. **RESPONSE: Dr. Charles Law’s class on Group Process, focused on student assessment around diversity discussions, has captured useful measurements on the cultural climate of the campus. These student led surveys and discussions began during the 2008-2009 academic year and included students who volunteered to participate. Dr. Law will continue to supervise these student-led groups to reach out to staff and faculty as well in the coming year(s).**
- ❖ PSS participates in recruiting events in major East Coast cities with large minority populations. It would be helpful to provide data on the number of students enrolled and their composition from those urban areas to document the success of this strategy. Appendix A, referred to on page 20, promises useful enrollment data; however, it was not attached to the update. **RESPONSE:**
 - ***Please see Appendix A [attached] for specific demographic numbers as outlined by the Director of Enrollment Services, Tammie Durham.***

- *Out-of-state student numbers for the past three years are as follows, 2007-177; 2008-210; 2009-160. Currently, out-of-state new student numbers are up 53 compared to last year. The majority of urban, minority students at PSS come from the greater Philadelphia area and New York City.*
- ❖ Given the success of recruiting students from underrepresented groups, PSS is encouraged to provide more emphasis on student retention. **RESPONSE:**
 - *There are several retention related initiatives occurring at Schuylkill. The Retention Management Team meets every-other week to discuss strategies, review data, improve systems, and act on specific student issues when necessary. There is a sub-group of the RMT that works as an early alert team to intervene with at risk students. The campus has also instituted the Noel Levitz – College Student Inventory, a pre-test inventory that provides both aggregate and specific data on the class and individual students to advisors.*
 - *Our Center for Academic Achievement (CAA) is the second-highest utilized learning support center at Penn State, second only to University Park. The CAA has expanded beyond student tutoring to support Supplemental Instruction for particularly challenging math and science courses.*
 - *Penn State Schuylkill's current graduation rate is the fifth highest of all Penn State campuses and above the University average.*
- ❖ The update notes that considerable resources have been invested in the development of the Center for Academic Achievement. A description of the Center and its purpose would be informative. **RESPONSE:**
 - *The Center for Academic Achievement (CAA) is to promote educational opportunities and enhance academic achievement for all students. As an integral part of the University's academic structure, learning centers interact with faculty, staff, and students to provide a range of services specifically designed to meet individual needs and goals.*
 - *As noted above, the CAA is the second highest utilized learning support center at the University.*

Challenge 4: Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce

- ❖ The mid-point assessment (December 2006) cited use of Professional Entry Program (PEP) funds within Capital College for minorities in entry-level positions for a three-year period. Was this program used at the Schuylkill campus? **RESPONSE: No.**
- ❖ There is no mention of staff retention strategies. **RESPONSE:**
 - *The campus has participated in the Intercultural Staff Mentoring Program and will continue to do so.*
 - *Professional development is supported and expected of all staff and is reviewed as part of the SRDP process. Dollars are budgeted to support ongoing staff development.*
- ❖ No statistics are provided regarding gender and racial/ethnic diversity among faculty. **RESPONSE:**
 - *Diversifying our faculty continues to be a challenge. As noted elsewhere in the report, we charge all faculty search committees to seek both diverse applicant and finalist pools. Our DAA follows up and works with committee chairs to ensure that follow-up occurs. Our Human Resources Manager oversees staff searches with the same focus on diversity.*
 - *We are making progress at diversifying our staff at the campus. The Coordinator of our Center for Academic Achievement is a person of color, and we are in the final stages in filling the position of Coordinator of Residence Life and Diversity Initiatives.*
- ❖ HR reviews the *Diversity Talent Bank* to identify minority applications for staff positions. This is a commendable practice.

Education and Scholarship

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

- ❖ The update notes that continuing “to strengthen diversity themes in graduate programs and courses” is an area targeted for improvement. However, no graduate degree programs are listed on the Campus Website. **RESPONSE: No longer applicable to the Schuylkill Campus.**

- ❖ The Campus has instituted the Civic and Community Engagement minor. Enrollment data should be tracked to determine if the Campus is successful in promoting this minor. **RESPONSE: *These data are tracked by the Campus Registrar and Director of Academic Affairs. To date 10 students have graduated with the CIVCOM minor.***
- ❖ The formation of the Schuylkill International Programs Committee, with its four major areas of interest, has great potential to create more opportunities for students to develop cultural competencies. **RESPONSE: *In Fall 2010 the campus will welcome its first two India IST students. We will build upon this program by becoming an international campus, as designated by the Office of Global Programs, as soon as possible.***
- ❖ PSS is commended for offering American Sign Language instruction.
- ❖ Providing Elementary Education majors the opportunity to do their pre-service student-teaching in urban school settings is commendable.

Institutional Viability and Vitality

Challenge 6: Diversifying University Leadership and Management

- ❖ Penn State Schuylkill has made notable progress in diversifying senior leadership, especially in terms of gender. **RESPONSE: *Yes, the majority (five of nine) of our Campus Cabinet members are women.***

Challenge 7: Coordinating Organizational Change to Support Our Diversity Goals

- ❖ The overall structure for diversity planning is unclear, particularly in terms of the formal communication/linkages between the many groups listed as having discussions on diversity topics. **RESPONSE:**
 - ***The Schuylkill Campus has a decentralized structure to address diversity initiatives and to support diversity related topics. This system is highlighted by two main positions and the Diversity Committee.***
 - ***The Coordinator of Residence Life and Diversity Initiatives will continue to focus on student initiatives, while Dr. Charles Law's, Academic Program Coordinator for Diversity, position will focus on faculty initiatives, and the Diversity Committee, which will include these two staff members, will address staff and broader diversity initiatives.***
 - ***This decentralized system works very well on campus, due in large part to the overall commitment of the administration, faculty, and staff to infuse diversity awareness, acceptance, and support into all aspects of campus life.***
- ❖ The fact that the Campus strategic plan includes diversity as one of its six goals is commendable.
- ❖ The Campus has taken a positive step in creating a Diversity Committee and a Coordinator of Student Support Services and Multicultural Affairs. **RESPONSE: *The Coordinator of Residence Life and Diversity Initiatives will continue to focus on student initiatives, while Dr. Charles Law's, Academic Program Coordinator for Diversity, position will focus on faculty initiatives, and the Diversity Committee, which will include these two staff members, will address staff and broader diversity initiatives.***

Appendix A

Penn State Schuylkill Degree-seeking Undergraduate Enrollment by Racial/Ethnic Category 2004-2009

[All data is based on the campuses official fall reporting data]

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	2	1	0	0	2	
Asian or Pacific Islander	26	19	18	20	24	22	
Black or African American [non-Hispanic]	133	160	234	239	296	257	
Hispanic	32	25	23	22	28	41	
International or Non-Resident Aliens	4	1	1	2	0	0	
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	0	
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	37	
Two or More Races	-	-	-	-	-	16	
White, non-Hispanic	577	571	513	544	557	533	
Total	774	778	790	827	905	908	